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Journal of
Finnish Studies

**Counter-Readings on Finnish Nationhood:
Minority Strategies and the Making of the Nation**

Guest Editors
Raluca Bianca Roman, Peter Stadius, and Eija Stark

Theme Issue of the *Journal of Finnish Studies*

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Editorial

This *Journal of Finnish Studies* theme issue, entitled *Counter-Readings on Finnish Nationhood: Minority Strategies and the Making of the Nation*, guest-edited by Raluca Bianca Roman, Peter Stadius, and Eija Stark, brings to our readers a highly relevant cluster of articles about Finland, as seen from minority perspectives. Finland is often understood as a monolithic and ethnically homogeneous country, with strong Lutheran affiliations. These traits of ethnic and cultural unity were, naturally, underscored when Finland was working toward its independence from Russia during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even though at the time socioeconomic stratification and language issues certainly provided reasons for deep divisions, those working toward Finland's independence chose to put their focus on the unifying characteristics. The social issues, of course, could not be kept under a cover for long, as the 1918 civil war showed.

Investigations of Finland's nation-building process have paid relatively little attention to the ethnic and religious minorities, and today's more diverse Finland has been perceived as a somewhat new phenomenon. Roman, Stadius, and Stark's edited collection shifts the focus from the ethnically white majority of a culturally homogeneous nation, showing convincingly that Finland has been home not only for its "core citizens" (see Roman, Stadius, and Stark's introductory chapter) but also for the Roma (Stark; Roman; Gasche and Holler), Tatars (Elmgren); Sami (Stadius), and Swedish-speaking Finns (Björk-Winberg). The six articles in this collection highlight various aspects of nation-building, through viewpoints of Finland's minorities. Aspects of the lives of Finnish Roma are discussed in three chapters: Stark juxtaposes the Finnish peasant man (the idealized "core citizen") and his antagonists, the Roma. Gasche and Holler address Finland's official policy toward the Roma in the context of the tumultuous decades of the 1930s and the 1940s, and Roman explores Pentecostal Finnish Roma, a "double minority" in Lutheran Finland. Elmgren sheds light on a rarely discussed minority, Finnish Tatars. Even though this minority has often been labeled as a "successful" minority, Elmgren shows the complexity and sometimes conscious strategies used by Tatars in Finland to secure a place in the nation. Focusing on Finnish Scandinavism as a relatively rarely addressed ideology, Björk-Winberg tells its story through Emil von Qvanten, a Finland Swede who lived in exile in Sweden because he, in the Grand Duchy of Finland, chose to be a proponent of this minority ideology. Stadius tackles the challenging topic of Petsamo from the angle of colonialism, discussing both official and individual attitudes toward the Sami and the plans for incorporating this area in the far north in the rest of Finland.

All six articles are based on recent research that reveals underlying majority viewpoints and minority experiences in the budding and newly formed nation. The perspectives are fresh, and the story told of Finland's

nation-building is new, often surprising, and at points even disturbing. We are pleased to present this theme issue to our readers, and we believe that you will find it interesting and illuminating.



We also want to use this opportunity to inform our subscribers and readers about the upcoming changes for the journal. After over ten years at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, the *Journal of Finnish Studies* will move to a new editorial home: the University of Wisconsin–Madison. From the next volume (*JoFS* 25) forward, Professor Thomas A. DuBois will take charge of the journal as its editor-in-chief, with Dr. Hilary-Joy Virtanen as co-editor.

Professor DuBois is a long-term member of our editorial board, and he is well known in Finnish Studies circles. He is a folklorist, scholar of Sami culture, and author and editor of several books, with topics ranging from Finnish folk poetry and the Kalevala to Nordic religions, Shamanism, and the Sami—to mention just a few areas of his expertise. DuBois' articles have been published in *Scandinavian Studies*, *Journal of American Folklore*, *Oral Tradition*, and, of course, the *JoFS*. He has served as President of the Society for the Advancement for the Scandinavian Study, has been awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Umeå (Sweden), and was inducted as a foreign member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters (Suomalainen Tiedekatemia). These are merely examples of Thomas DuBois' impressive academic accomplishments. We are very pleased that he has agreed to take over the editing of the journal.

Dr. Hilary-Joy Virtanen, Assistant Professor of Finnish and Nordic Studies at Finlandia University, and assistant editor in our current *JoFS* editorial team, will, starting from volume 25, serve as a co-editor. Dr. Virtanen holds a PhD in Folklore and Scandinavian Studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and she is also a familiar name within the Finnish American and Finnish scholarly communities. Dr. Virtanen's scholarly interests include Finnish American cultural practices, music, folk dance, Finland's national romanticism, and early twentieth-century American industrial heritage, and worker culture. The courses that Dr. Virtanen teaches at Finlandia University include Finnish American Culture, Finnish Language, History and Culture of Finland, the Kalevala, and Upper Peninsula Folklore. Her dedication to building bridges between Finland and Finnish America materializes regularly when she leads study trips to Finland for Finlandia University's Paloheimo Fellows. Among Virtanen's publications are several articles published in the *Journal of Finnish Studies*, as well as co-edited theme issues. Virtanen also serves as a Finlandia Foundation National trustee.

Dr. Sheila Embleton from York University will continue as the journal's book review editor.

One of the many rewards of editing the *Journal of Finnish Studies* has been the interaction with a large network of people who share our interest in Finnish Studies. As we (Helena, Scott, and Hanna) step aside from the *JoFS* editorial team, we want to thank everyone for pleasant and productive encounters: the contributors to the journal, peer reviewers, book reviewers, and editorial board members. Especially, we wish to thank our subscribers and readers, both individuals and libraries, who make it possible for the *JoFS* to continue disseminating knowledge about Finland and Finnish America for the English-language audience. While Dr. DuBois assumes the role as the editor-in-chief and while Dr. Virtanen steps into her new role as co-editor, we can assure our readership that the journal will be in extremely competent and caring hands. We wish to thank Drs. DuBois and Virtanen for assuming this responsibility and wish them the very best in continuing to carry out the mission started by Dr. Börje Vähämäki as he launched the *Journal of Finnish Studies* at the University of Toronto in 1997. We also thank Dr. Beth L. Virtanen for her contributions as editor-in-chief during the years 2009 to 2010.

Scott and Helena also thank Sam Houston State University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences for past reassigned time from our teaching duties for the tasks of editing the journal, as well as the Department of English for important institutional support. In addition, Helena wishes to extend her thanks to her husband, Professor Robert Adams, who for the past ten years has always been available, behind the scenes, for quick and competent native-speaker language consultation.

*Helena Halmari
Scott Kaukonen
Hanna Snellman*

Core Citizens, Imagined Nation: Historical Security Practices of the Majority and Strategies of the Minorities in Finland; An Introduction to the Issue

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Historically, since the 1930s, Finland, much like the other Nordic countries, has rested upon ideas of openness and civic participation as a political project of modernity. The core principle has been that of a comprehensive welfare state—in Sweden, referred to as *folkhemmet* ('the People's home'), a society with social equality and solidarity between all citizens (e.g., Kettunen and Petersen 2011; Esping-Andersen 1990). This was initially a response to what has been called the breakthrough of mass society, referring to both the legal and cultural leveling of citizenship. Over the course of the twentieth century, the welfare state was constructed on the basis of providing services and security for its citizens. Health, housing, working life, education, and social and political efficacy were considered aspects of this core citizenship. The Nordic, or Social Democratic, welfare regime was built on the principles of universality, where comprehensive and usually not means-tested welfare services were provided. This included an idea of reciprocity: the citizens were understood to gain these rights by participating in society, mainly through work. This has been seen by some scholars as a historical continuum, transforming pre-modern Lutheran values into a dynamic understanding of secular modernity (Stenius 1997). In this interpretation, the tolerance for cultural deviations has been seen mainly as a question of normative enlightenment and a search to bring everybody into a modern concept of a Nordic society. The universalistic

¹ This special issue was written as part of the "Roma and Nordic Societies: Historical Security Practices of the Majority and Strategies of the Minority" research project, funded by the Academy of Finland (2015–18) and based at the Centre for Nordic Studies, University of Helsinki. The articles presented within this issue nevertheless reflect only the authors' views, and the funding agencies are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

imperative has, however, been subject to particularistic and culture-bound values. In fact, social stratification has persevered, and the standard of living has not been equal to all members of society. Ethnic minorities, such as the Finnish Roma (or, as they refer to themselves, Finnish Kaale), the Tatars, and the various Sami groups, who have practiced traditional livelihoods, have been—and continue to be—not only excluded from many social arenas, but also have faced discrimination and rigid assimilation strategies, mainly from within state-provided education. State authorities have exercised the power to control traditional culture inside its borders and to distance it from anything outside (Noyes 2007).

The study of nations, nationalism, and nation-states received much attention in academic scholarship since the twentieth century (Anderson 1983; Pakkasvirta and Saukkonen 2005; Tamm 2017). Some of the questions posed have been, for example, “What is a nation?” and “Who/what does a nation consist of?”

Historically, this goes back in nineteenth-century Europe and the processes of national awakening, according to which each nationality was considered to form a state and each state was expected to include all members of that nationality. A sense of national identity thus implies the identification of the state or nation with the people—or at least the desirability of determining the extent of the state according to ethnographic principles. From the end of the eighteenth century onward, the nationalization of culture went hand-in-hand with the nationalization of state and political loyalties. The idea of citizenship can be divided in two main principles. One is *jus soli*, the right of territory, which is the idea that everybody born in the national territory is part of the nation. Immigration-based nations, like the United States and many Latin American countries, adhere to this principle (however, not without obvious cultural particularistic dimensions in their respective histories). The other principle is *jus sanguinis*, the principle of blood right. The inclusion in a nation is then based on the idea of ethnic belonging. This idea includes members of a nationality both inside and outside state borders, and it potentially excludes ethnic and religious minorities living within the state territory, while at times directing claims on linguistic-ethnic irredenta areas. Most European states, including the Nordic countries, have been created in this tradition.² In Finland’s case, this tradition was clearly exposed when the Ingrians were given the right to “move back” to Finland in the 1990s, a decision that clearly differed from the country’s general immigration policy.

In the nineteenth century, the Finnish nationalist movement, Fennomania, contributed to the development of the Finnish language and its literature and achieved for Finnish a position of official equality

² However, it is worth pointing out that some Central, South-Eastern, and Eastern European powers, such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, also had the principle of domicile, which shaped somewhat distinctive understandings and experiences of these issues (Marushiakova and Popov 2021, 593–98).

with Swedish—the language of the dominant minority (Anttonen 2012; Alapuro 1988). The nationalistically oriented bourgeoisie then constructed the basis for the political claims for national statehood soon to be raised by the people in whom they had kindled the spirit. One may argue that the people as such formed a class of their own because they shared many social realities—or social constructions of reality—in their daily lives. The term “class” usually implies a group of individuals sharing a common situation within a social structure, usually their shared place in the structure of ownership and control of the means of production. Class may also refer to groups of individuals with a shared characteristic relevant in some socio-economic measurement or ranking. Social stability, however, need not imply consensus (Burke 1992, 109). Because of this, within some forms of Marxism, the core ethnic members of a nation or “the folk” were interpreted in terms of their opposition to the upper classes. This resulted from the interpretation of the Marxist paradigm, according to which the modes of production were supposed to form the basis of a society’s infrastructure. Some anthropologists and ethnologists, for example, have shown how the lower classes have possessed ways to resist power and the upper classes by using folklore or acting against the ideals of the rich or the rising bourgeoisie (Scott 1985; Holbek 1987; Frykman and Löfgren 1987).

However, in most societies, there have been, and still are, inequalities in the distribution of wealth and other advantages, such as status and power, drawing social boundaries within the members of “the folk.” This is often a consequence of the structuring of social life and the definition of inclusion and exclusion within it. In fact, as Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993) has argued, as a key component in the very definition of citizenship, “nationalism stresses the cultural similarity of its adherents and, by implication, it draws boundaries vis-à-vis others, who thereby become outsiders” (6). This would point to a complex process by which certain groups or individuals are deemed as not belonging to the nation-state on grounds of cultural, religious, or social distinctiveness. Furthermore, this emphasizes the ways that boundaries between groups are not only put in place but also, more importantly, continuously enacted and crossed by “majorities” and “minorities” themselves. In other words, when talking about minorities, what needs to be strongly emphasized is how both distinctive cultural, social, or political groups (and group identities) develop in a continuous contact with one another, rather than in complete isolation.

In this issue of the *Journal of Finnish Studies*, we aim to examine the historical, cultural, and ideological forces that have shaped Finnish national identity and the ways in which perceived “outsiders” of the nation-state have positioned themselves in relation to state ideologies and the majority society, as well as in relation to their understanding of their own communities’ boundaries. Furthermore, though less explored ethnographically, religion plays an undeniably fundamental role in the

construction of identities and experiences of belonging for all members of a nation-state, from the role of religion as a state prerogative (i.e., the Lutheran state church) to that of religion as a lived experience, referring to individuals' own experience of religious life. As such, a central aspect within this special issue is also a discussion of the relationship between ethnicity, religion, and nationalism in Finland from historical, sociological, and cultural perspectives. The focus is, in other words, on the role of broader social-historical changes in shaping diverse and often contradictory understandings of nationhood, citizenship, and national identity. As an example of this, mass media and other forms of communication technology have had an enormous influence in shaping self-esteem, public opinion, and underlying sentiment. Apart from majority-minority relations, it is, therefore, crucially important to discern ethnic minorities' "own histories" and experiences.

To this purpose, the main drive of this special issue is to bring together articles highlighting the distinctive manifestations and understandings of "the nation" and "national belonging" in Finland, from the perspectives of both so-called "majorities" and "minorities." We will do so, first, by looking at the construction of a national narrative of "Finnishness" and the expanding connection that Finnish intellectuals have had with other Nordic states, in the form of "Scandinavism." Unlike Finnish nineteenth-century nationalism, "Fennomania," "Scandinavism" strived to unite the Nordic countries into one state. While the Fennoman movement advocated for the Finnish language becoming the national language together with Swedish (while also highlighting the Finnish-language folk culture), the Scandinavists addressed their interest toward the West, in other words, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. Moreover, Scandinavists openly opposed Russia and claimed that Fennomans were too loyal to the Russian empire. As Mikael Björk-Winberg argues in this volume, the Scandinavists in Finland consisted of only a handful of activists and, in the nationalistically oriented atmosphere of nineteenth-century Finland, they were considered too radical. Although most of the early Fennomans were Swedish speaking themselves, the Scandinavists were pushed to the margins of society and even into exile, as was the case with Emil von Qvanten, who was one of the most prominent Finnish Scandinavists.

Second, we will look at the ways in which particular aspects of folk culture have been utilized and played a role in creating particular images of minorities. According to the ideals cherished by the Fennoman nationalists, the most authentic Finnish people were to be found among the landless populations of the country's hinterland. The idea of the common Finns as one undivided people, however, served to simplify the actual diversity of rural life. As Eija Stark points out, many rural inhabitants failed to fit into the model of ideal Finnishness. Indeed, town-dwellers, industrial factory-workers, peddlers, or some of the ethnic and linguistic minorities, like the Finnish Roma and the Finnish Tatars or the Swedish-speaking population, were all excluded from the idea of the Finnish nation.

Consequently, the search for an authentic Finnish nation determined how folklore was collected and indexed.

Finally, we will look at how minorities themselves, with a focus on Finnish Roma and the Tatars, have utilized the mainstream narrative in the construction of their own sense of national belonging. The Finnish Tatars, as the country's oldest Muslim minority, have been depicted as an ideal case of successful integration. As Ainur Elmgren points out, the Tatar minority did not create its own identity and history in a national vacuum but, rather, with inspiration from Turkish nationalism or Tatars in other countries with whom the Finnish Tatars maintained active contacts. Lacking a strong sense of belonging to the Finnish nation, Tatars saw themselves as members of a worldwide community of Muslims.

On the other hand, according to Raluca Roman, another example of minorities holding the mainstream narrative is through the role of religion in re-shaping understandings of social embeddedness and social engagement among the Finnish Roma. The case presented concerns the conversion of Roma to Pentecostal and Evangelical congregations, within a mainstream Lutheran context. Additionally, from a distinctive point of view, Finnish Roma also appear to have adopted a positive narrative about Roma soldiers fighting in the Finnish Army, for their home country. As Malte Gasche and Martin Holler argue, this narrative strategy has been successful, since it perfectly matches the mainstream narrative about a brave and fair "Continuation War," which Finland is seen to have fought against the Soviet Union independently, and separately from Nazi Germany. According to Gasche and Holler, not only the memory of discriminatory Finnish legislation against the Roma minority before and during the war, but also uncomfortable questions about the potential involvement of Finnish Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht volunteers in Nazi atrocities against the civil population—including Roma—in the German-occupied parts of the Soviet Union were suppressed both by the Finnish majority and the Roma minority themselves.

As such, a connection between majority and minority narratives of national belonging are clearly manifested through diverse means and forms of expression, be it the adoption of particular memories of the Second World War or the relationship with the Lutheran state church. This shows not only the ways in which minority groups' social lives are inextricably embedded within the mainstream societies they inhabit, but also how this embeddedness continuously informs and shapes narratives of national, as well as group, identity. Therefore, through this particular selection of articles, this special issue will help further illuminate the complexities and contradictions of identity politics within Finland, and the role that both mainstream and minority discourses have played in the experience and expression of national belonging and, to some extent, of the "nation" itself.

On the whole, this collection of articles deals with some of the Finnish minorities that have had a more complex relationship to the majority

and its national narratives. However, this issue will not present a comprehensive and systematic study of *all* historical minorities in Finland. For instance, the Swedish-speaking element of the Finnish nation is not present here explicitly, even if the Scandinavian connections presented in Björk-Winberg's article connect to later twentieth-century Finland-Swedish identity building. Moreover, unlike the Finnish Roma, the Tatars, or the Sami, the Swedish-speaking Finns have historically formed a minority group that has enjoyed considerable political, economic, and cultural agency and power in Finnish society (see Mikkola, Olson, and Stark 2019). Finally, albeit in Swedish, they often share and share in the grand narrative of Finnish nationhood.

Since this issue of the *Journal of Finnish Studies* stems from the results of the research project *Roma and Nordic Society: Historical Security Practices of the Majority and Strategies of the Minority* (funded by the Academy of Finland 2015–18), more focus is cast on the relationship between majority society and the Finnish Roma. As such, the Roma case permits the analysis of how hierarchies have been constructed from a majority perspective, and how these have been both contested and subject to minority strategies in Finland. However, the Sami, as one of Finland's minorities, will be highlighted only partially in the article of Peter Stadius, since it deals with the “sociology of absence” of indigenous people in many of the Finnish national narratives on Lapland (and, in this case, Petsamo in particular). We want to stress that the issue highlights only a few examples within the minority frame, but it does so in combining the historical constructions of majority narratives and their mechanisms of power, and the views of the minority itself in contemporary time. For this reason, after the analysis of several historical case studies, the special issue ends with Raluca Roman's ethnographically informed article, which moves the focus from the historical to a contemporary perspective, while also highlighting the connection between the two. Furthermore, this approach and the chronological organization of this collection help us move across historical timelines and bring the minority-majority issue to the present day, while also providing the minority's own voice, which in the past, more often than not, has been lacking from scholarly analyses.

Minorities vs. “Minorities”: A False Opposition?

On Land Ownership and Citizenship

Historically, the core citizenship or the ideal member of the nation in Finland was constructed on the foundation of home-ownership. Owning a house was the ideal shared both by individuals and by the state, which implemented three land reforms in the twentieth century. Unlike the majority population, however, Finnish ethnic minorities' livelihoods were different from those of rural peasants and forest workers. As some examples of this, the Finnish Roma were generally considered to be itinerant, the Sami were nomadic reindeer herders, and the Jews and Tatars often were urban merchants.

Farmers' interests also played an important role in the making of the Finnish welfare state, and agricultural policies were closely connected with social policies. The system, whether a family was big or small, was organized according to the rights and responsibilities assigned to the sedentary married couple, with the husband enjoying more rights and privileges than the wife (L. Stark 2015). The institution of the pre-modern Christian family, which set the norms for participating in society, kept its central role in the Finnish welfare-state project well into the latter half of the twentieth century. As a result, many of the fruits of economic growth, social security, and access to education went to those who performed rural livelihoods, not the groups that lived apart and on the margins. For example, farmhouse loans were only given to married men. As the Finnish Roma did not have the custom of Christian marriage, they were automatically blocked from ownership of a dwelling place.

Furthermore, Finnish Roma, much like the Sami, are considered to be a traditional minority in the country, both in terms of their present-day official status (based primarily on their long-term presence on Finnish territories) but also in terms of what concerns the internal organization of the community. As an example of this, Finnish Roma pride themselves in upholding community-specific norms, rituals, and taboos. Among these, a crucial aspect of community social relations is the practice of what some have called non-institutional marriage (Grönfors 1997). Marriage itself is not publicly celebrated among Finnish Roma. In this sense, the majority norms required for the ownership of land and the acquisition of farmhouse loans would most likely be inaccessible to members of the Finnish Roma community, and so, for the longest time, the Finnish Roma have been continuously excluded from full citizenship rights within the country.

In fact, the first Roma-focused organization within the country, *Suomen Mustalaislähetys Ry* (later renamed Romano Missio), was not established until 1906. At its inception, this organization was led by non-Roma Christian Evangelicals, such as Oskari Jalkio, who himself was a Finn, with the main purpose of bringing the Christian faith to the Finnish Roma. It also contributed to the establishment of several Finnish Roma children's homes in the country, primarily in the first half of the twentieth century. After the 1940s, however, the organization temporarily joined with the state in its encouragement of making Roma into full Finnish citizens, including attempts to eradicate any signs of cultural distinctiveness (Roman 2016, 27). It was only decades later that the first Roma director of Romano Missio was elected, and, with this new leadership, the aim of the organization again shifted toward its social one. Currently, though mainly aimed at addressing wider social concerns faced by Finnish Roma (education, housing, elder care) and deeply connected to its Evangelical ethos, Romano Missio nevertheless plays a crucial role in recommendations toward wider national policies concerning Roma in the country. This particular organization's story, therefore, shows a clear historical

shift from an institution led mainly by non-Roma toward one led by the Roma and connected to wider policies of nationalization, to one in which Roma themselves play an active and engaged role within the shaping of policies that address them (Roman 2020). Yet, despite some possibilities for social mobility into mainstream society, Finnish Roma have historically been (re)presented as being on the outer margins of Finnish society. Along with the Roma, the Sami groups have long felt marginalized in the decision-makings regarding Sami issues. For example, recent Sami interpretations of their history as a history of colonialization has been partly contested by Finnish majority historians, who view this approach to writing the Sami history of Finland as too focused on victimhood (see Lehtola 2015, 24). This critique, presented by various historians, points out that archival sources in Finland do not manifest a clear Sami subjugation on the part of Finnish state authorities and suggests that the Sami were not systematically treated as a distinct group. The encounter between Finnish settlers and Sami was not a systematic extinction of the latter (Lähteenmäki 2006, 204). This certainly holds a partial truth, but this complex question still contains a quite explicit history of othering the Sami, as not being part of the concept of the Finnish nation, at least in the case of the Petsamo Skolts during the first years of Finland's independence.

Minorities from the Majority Point of View

If one wants to study how Finnish minorities lived and experienced their distinctive lives in the past, the task is challenging. Despite our contemporary understanding, for a long time, archives were not primarily designed as centers of historical research, nor did they function as such. In the first place, archives served the authorities of the state (Müller 2013) and, for that matter, the ones who held power. For example, population statistics, parish registers, in-depth descriptions of everyday life and customs were seen to represent the nation—in other words, the very core of the Finnish-speaking majority.

The ways in which knowledge about the old minorities has been gathered, used, and, at times, abused, leads us to consider the institutions that have housed and controlled the information and views on the given minorities. Finnish Tatars, the Sami people, and the Finnish Roma, at the levels of both local and state government (not to mention in everyday life), tended to be ignored or considered different from the norm even within the archive collections from the early days of collecting traditions (see Mikkola, Olsson, and Stark 2019). From the archival documents and extracts made by the majority members of the Finnish society, minorities were often objectified. As Eija Stark shows in her article, Finland's traditional minorities showed up as strange or comic, or sometimes they were simply absent, as Peter Stadius argues in his analyses of fictional literature, handbooks, and policy-oriented documents on the Finnish Arctic Ocean territories. In 1920, Finland was given a corridor to the Arctic Sea, the area of Petsamo, situated along the eastern side of the present

Russo-Norwegian border. For the Finns, expanding the state borders fitted perfectly into a Greater Finland expansionist ideology. According to Stadius, a colonialist discourse, which conditioned the silencing of the local Sami presence, was the outcome of a nationalistic interpretation of modernity. The colonialist discourse was produced according to a logic of international competitiveness, although a certain plurality and debate of methods existed. Those who took an interest in the Sami, however, seldom questioned the development of the region by Finnish farmers, promoting a Finnish way of life. This was the case of the state geologist Väinö Tanner, while others, such as Jalmari Kara, saw Petsamo first as a potential Eldorado for its economic benefit. This latter discourse tended to see the region as more or less empty ground for a modern experiment.

As shown in the previous pages, although all of the traditional minorities of Finland have had their own customs and views distinctive to the majority society, they also have shared a great deal of cultural knowledge with the majority (Blomster and Mikkola 2014, 15). This is because of the universalistic nature of Finnish governmental institutions; in other words, all Finnish citizens, regardless of their mother tongue or ethnicity, have been entitled to benefits, such as child allowance, primary school, old-age pension, and access to public health. Historically, welfare society has involved its members in a national project where nationhood is constructed through shared practices. However, many of the minorities still suffer exclusion, discrimination, and a lack of political power; such is the case in Lapland where different Sami groups have sought to protect their traditional lands and, for that matter, livelihoods. Currently, this issue has arisen in connection to a projected Arctic railway that routes from Helsinki through Rovaniemi to the Arctic Ocean, and the town of Kirkenes, Norway. Expectations of increased world trade in the Arctic as a consequence of global warming has given the northernmost part of Finland a new national interest from the perspective of Helsinki. In the initial planning stage, local Sami groups have raised their discontent with the process, and it is likely that this question will receive extensive media coverage if advanced. Hearings with Sami groups have been conducted by Finnish authorities, but still there seems to be a problem acknowledging Sami agency and rights. In the light of the goal set up by the Nordic Council of making the region the most sustainable in the world, this appears as a potential paradox.

Although the points of departure in this special issue of the *Journal of Finnish Studies* are in the concepts of nation-state and nationhood in relation to Finnish old minorities, we are well aware of the relationship between national minorities and the broader legacy of colonialism, as well the national and transnational effects that have resulted from the struggles and barriers that ethnic and linguistic minorities have continuously encountered. Oftentimes, majority societies have remained blind to the social and cultural obstacles that minority groups face in their everyday lives. For this purpose, the aim of this special issue is to bring together

perspectives and experiences from both “sides,” minorities and majorities alike, and form the starting point for a larger conversation concerning the everyday understanding and experience of nationhood. Thus, rather than looking at the impact of “majority” policies on “minority” lives, or the ways in which majorities perceive and engage with national minorities, all the articles in this collection focus on the contradictions and the spaces in between, as well as the undeniable interconnectedness between both minority and majority narratives of nationhood and national identity.

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Opposition from Abroad: Emil von Qvanten and Finnish Scandinavism in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

Scandinavism was a political idea in the nineteenth century that strived to unite the Scandinavian countries into one state. In Finland, Scandinavists were few in number but formed networks with Scandinavists in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, networks that have been largely ignored hitherto in Finnish historiography. This article focuses on the Finnish Scandinavianist Emil von Qvanten, who proposed a Nordic federal state including Finland in 1855 in the pamphlet “Fennomania and Scandinavism” (von Qvanten 1855a). Moreover, his correspondence reveals an influential exiled Finnish patriot, who became a Nordic politician and a trusted person to the Swedish King Karl XV. Von Qvanten corresponded extensively with the Finnish architect Nestor Tallgren, European dissidents such as the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, the Russian socialist Alexandr Herzen, and Polish separatists like Josef Demontovicz and Walerian Kalinka, as well as Swedish and Danish politicians and Scandinavian intelligentsia. An alternative option of Finland having a Scandinavian political dimension during the age of autonomy will be discussed here with a focus on the letters that Nestor Tallgren wrote to Emil von Qvanten.

Keywords: Scandinavism, Fennomania, Emil von Qvanten, Nordic history, Finnish history

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Introduction

The Finnish poet and journalist Emil von Qvanten (1827–1903) has been overshadowed in the historiography of Scandinavism for probably two reasons. In Finland, he is not considered part of the central nation-building process since he advocated for an approach toward Scandinavia, which was a politically radical strategy in mid-nineteenth-century Finland. Von Qvanten's political activities did neither lead to a Scandinavian union nor to an advancement of liberal ideas in Finland. In other Nordic countries, his work has been mostly overlooked because the plans for a Scandinavian union did not achieve any political results. He was originally from Finland, and he has not been noted in the national historic narratives of other Nordic countries as much as Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian Scandinavists.

The American historian H. Arnold Barton notes that Scandinavism has been dismissed by modern Finnish historians as something “relatively insignificant,” but that loyalist Fennomane and Russian reactions at the time suggest that it may have been more widespread than modern historiography has stated (Barton 2009, 182). Barton emphasizes the role of von Qvanten's pamphlet “Fennomania and Scandinavism” from 1855, which presented a Scandinavian vision of Finland's future as a source for ferment among liberal Fennomanes, who were not loyalists to the Russian Emperor but had bolder ideas about Finnish separatism and who would have leaned toward the Scandinavian community as “a subordinated, however free, link in a common and larger entity, such as a common Nordic federal state”² (von Qvanten 1855a, 47).

Some research has been done in Finland concerning von Qvanten's legacy, but because of von Qvanten's “insignificant” role, as Barton concluded, the number of academic articles has been small and has not been a focus of contemporary scholarly debate. Runar Johansson's article about Scandinavism in Finland is from 1930, and Hugo E. Pipping's similar one is from 1921 (Ru. Johansson 1930; Pipping 1921). Arvid Mörne's studies of von Qvanten's work “Fennomania and Scandinavism” and a smaller article about Nestor Tallgren's letters to von Qvanten date from 1932 (Mörne 1932a, 1932b). During the 1920s and 1930s, Scandinavism was relevant in Finland, as the newly independent republic was seeking to establish a Nordic orientation in foreign policy and to build a Nordic society. However, the Nordic orientation was not well established at that point. In the 1920s, there were other options, and different political factions argued for other alternatives, but in the 1930s, Finland's orientation

2 The translation was made by the author from the Swedish text: “[. . .] bildande en underordnad, dock fri, länk i en allmännare och större enhet t.ex. en allmän Nordisk förbundsstat.” The original title of the work is *Fennomani och skandinavism* (Fennomania and Scandinavism). All the translations in this article have been made by the author. Most titles and excerpts have been translated from Swedish into English. The English translations are marked with parentheses. The translations from languages other than Swedish are marked with the English translation in parentheses and with a footnote from which language it has been translated.

toward the Nordic community became apparent. This explains why a number of Finnish historians around 1930 paid attention to Finnish Scandinavism. After the Second World War, the distance to nineteenth-century Scandinavism became more evident, even though Mikko Juva wrote an academic article in 1957 in the Swedish journal *Historisk Tidskrift* about Scandinavism and Finland (Juva 1957). Still, the discussion about von Qvanten and his political Scandinavism has not been in focus in Finnish historiography. Even if Finland was engaged in Nordic cooperation during the Cold War, interest in Nordic history was directed toward other issues, partly because Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian historians also did not pay much attention to the political Scandinavism of the mid-nineteenth century. It was mainly considered a failure, even if some new research on this theme saw the light during the mid-twentieth century (e.g., Holmberg 1946; Lundh 1950). Research on nineteenth-century Scandinavism has experienced a certain upswing since the 1990s, but also here Finland and the role of Finns in research about Scandinavism seems to be overshadowed by Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian actors (e.g., Haarder Ekman 2010; Hemstad 2008; Hemstad, Fabricius Møller, and Thorkildsen 2018). Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian historical researchers have been more active in this field since Scandinavism was mostly occurring in Sweden and Denmark and to a lesser extent in Norway. The Finnish affiliation in nineteenth-century Scandinavism has therefore clearly been in the margins of Finnish historical research thus far. However, Finns such as von Qvanten took part in Scandinavism, and Finland played a major role within nineteenth-century Scandinavian rhetoric, especially among Swedish Scandinavists (e.g., Strandberg 1845).³ Even Iceland received attention from the Scandinavists, at least on a rhetorical level in student meetings although Icelandic participation was modest.

In terms of the concept “Scandinavism,” I will refer to the mid-nineteenth century movement that sought to unite the Scandinavian countries. Usually this referred to Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, but as sources show us, Finland and Finns were at times also engaged in it and even Iceland was sometimes considered as a part of the idea of Scandinavia. Iceland was a part of Denmark at that time and thus a part of a historical and political “Scandinavia,” but linguistic differences and an emerging Icelandic separatism from Denmark made Scandinavism unattractive from an Icelandic point of view. In Finland, interest was also modest, but not non-existent as this article strives to demonstrate. The antagonistic reactions in Finland and Iceland could also be considered as a part of the

3 Carl Wilhelm August Strandberg was a Swedish poet and a Scandinavianist, who in 1845 under the name of “Talis Qualis” (‘such as it is’ or ‘as such’, translation from Latin by the author) wrote bombastic poems in which he prophesied that Finland would be conquered back to the Scandinavian sphere. The poem “Vaticinium” (Prophecy), in particular, tells how the Finnish brothers will be liberated from the Russian yoke and brought back to the Nordic sphere. The poem was sung for the first time at the Scandinavian student meeting in Lund in 1845.

research on Scandinavism, since it provides answers to why Scandinavism did not succeed in the periphery of the Nordic countries or *Norden*.

As Ruth Hemstad (2018) has pointed out, the concept of Scandinavism has been misused in scholarly works and has been anachronistically adapted to times before the 1840s, during which the concept of Scandinavism was not in use. According to Hemstad, the concept evolved around 1843 contemporarily with the first Scandinavian student meetings, but not before that. In some scholarly works the concept has been used to describe events and phenomena that preceded this. Hemstad uses Reinhart Koselleck's concept "Saddle Time" (*Sattelzeit*) to describe the era between 1750 and 1850, when a myriad of neologisms such as "Scandinavism" were established (Koselleck 1989). In the late-twentieth century a concept of *Nyskandinavisme* (neo-Scandinavism)⁴ came in use when Scandinavism experienced a new "Indian Summer," as Ruth Hemstad has described its reemergence. Hemstad points out the events in Finland around 1900 as one factor, which explains neo-Scandinavism, and therefore the Finnish situation is relevant in research about Scandinavism (Hemstad 2008).

This article will focus on the works and letters of von Qvanten as an alternative Fennomane and a liberal during the mid-nineteenth century who debated for a Scandinavian Finland instead of a Russian one. Von Qvanten's international contacts were vast, and his Helsinki-based acquaintance Nestor Tallgren was one of the Finns who seems to have been an important link in informing von Qvanten about Finnish affairs while von Qvanten was living in exile in Sweden. The material for this study consists principally of Emil von Qvanten's archives in Stockholm at the National Library of Sweden and the Swedish National Archives.

Student Scandinavism and Finland

Scandinavism had developed among Scandinavian students during the 1840s, especially around the academic communities of Lund and Copenhagen, and was liberal in its content. The student Scandinavian culture of the time was directed toward the conservative powers in Europe, including the Russian Emperor, who was seen as a threat both against the "young" liberal culture that was in the making and against the Kingdom of Sweden, which during the Napoleonic wars had lost Finland and the Åland Islands. The capital Stockholm was in the vicinity of the border with Russia, and, in case of a war, it would have been in the immediate line of fire. Since 1812, King Karl XIV Johan of Sweden had upheld amicable relations with the Emperor of Russia, but the more liberal generation of students considered Russia and its autocratic leadership to be threats to both Sweden and Western Europe.

Therefore, the Scandinavists joined forces: the Danish students were concerned about German nationalism in southern Slesvig and Holstein (which were two largely German-speaking duchies and a part of Denmark at this point) and the Swedish students were concerned of their eastern

⁴ The translation was made by the author from Norwegian.

neighbor and former nemesis Russia. Although the King of Sweden had fostered good relations with the Russian Emperor since 1812, the students were more radical in agitating against Russia and its conservative leadership. The boldest statements were songs and poems dedicated to the liberation of Finland from the Russian yoke and the reconquering of it from Russia. The Swedish Scandinvist C. V. A. Strandberg, under the pseudonym Talis Qualis, wrote the poem “Vaticinium,” which was the boldest one in terms of the Finnish question at the Scandinavian student meetings in Lund and Copenhagen in 1845. In this poem Strandberg agitated for a reconquest of Finland to advance Scandinavian unity. Sweden had neither the military capacity nor the will to reconquer Finland, but in a case of a larger war and with suitable allies, a number of Scandinavists thought this scenario might be possible. The conservative monarchs in Denmark and Sweden did not support the idea at first, but the liberal students did support Scandinavism at the student meetings and other academic festivities (Ullstad 2014). Later in the 1850s and 1860s, the monarchs of Denmark and Sweden expressed more support for Scandinavism on a political level, but just as with nationalism in general, it was the younger generation of students who were in the vanguard with this pan-nationalism, which included the whole Scandinavian sphere. The idea of a united Pan-Scandinavia was not unique; it was part of a European trend among other pan-movements. Whether Finland and Iceland had a role in it was obscure. Some supported a “larger” Scandinavia while others concentrated on the core: Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. The strongest support was among Swedish and Danish students. Some Swedish students, as Strandberg expressed in his poems, held that Finland was in fact a part of the Scandinavian community (Strandberg 1845; Ullstad 2014).

Finnish and Norwegian students also attended these meetings even though they were fewer in number than their Swedish and Danish colleagues. In 1843, two Finnish students Karl Edvard Aspelund and Adolf Emerik Olsoni—attended the Scandinavian student meeting, despite the fact that they risked expulsion from the Imperial Alexander University of Helsinki. Aspelund wrote a travel diary, in which he expressed his viewpoints and impressions. The historian Matti Klinge’s interpretation of Aspelund’s writings is that Scandinavism did not have a significant importance among Finnish students (Klinge 1978, 87). However, when reading the source, one might also notice that Aspelund describes a euphoria that he experienced upon his arrival in Uppsala and while attending the academic festivities of the Scandinavists (Aspelund 1843). During later Scandinavian student meetings, the participation of Finnish students was limited although some expatriates living in Sweden seem to have attended the festivities as a part of the Swedish delegation. Emil von Qvanten, who had moved permanently to Sweden in the 1850s, was one of the more active Scandinavists on this front (Ru. Johansson 1930). For example, in 1862, at the student meeting in Lund and Copenhagen, he was listed among the participants from Uppsala (*Studentmötet i Lund och*

Köpenhamn 1862 [The student meeting in Lund and Copenhagen 1862], 1863). In 1869, in Christiania, five Finnish students were listed among the participants, of whom the later senator and lawyer Leo Mechelin is the most celebrated one (*Studentmötet i Kristiania 1869* [The student meeting in Kristiania 1869], 1871, 250). The largest delegation of approximately eighty Finnish students participated in the last Scandinavian student meeting in Uppsala in 1875. At this point, the times were more liberal in Finland, but the verses that were written by the participants also indicate the interest that Finnish students and professors had for contacts to the west. August Ahlqvist, professor of the Finnish language, wrote the poem *Ruotsalaisille* (To the Swedes), using his Finnish-language pen-name “Oksanen,” which also demonstrates that the language question was not a barrier for the delegates: even Finnish-speaking students participated and used their mother tongue (Ahlqvist 1875, 48–49).⁵ The name of the meeting as well had changed, from the “Scandinavian” to the “Nordic” student meeting. Whether the name change was a result of the Finnish participation is uncertain, but a possible reason might be that the Finnish affiliation in 1875 had an influence on the alteration of the name. In other Scandinavian countries, the interest in student Scandinavism was temporarily fading while in Finland it approached its peak around the last student meeting in 1875 (Björk-Winberg 2016b). Even though Scandinavism did not result in a political union, the likes of H. C. Andersen, Henrik Ibsen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Georg Brandes, Fredrika Bremer, and Carl Jonas Love Almqvist were all at some point engaged in Scandinavism and thus their networks and contacts from the Scandinavianist transnational network had an influence on their work later in life as well (Haarder Ekman 2010). Most of them kept contact with one another by corresponding via letters, and thus a web of a Scandinavianist cultural elite still existed in the late-nineteenth century, which most likely also influenced Finland, as Finnish writers, lawyers, and politicians were a part of these Scandinavian networks. These contacts also made it easier for the Nordic countries to start a practical cooperation later in the twentieth century, when Nordic cooperation started to evolve. The foundations had thus been laid much earlier. Especially during the period of Russian national uniformity policy around 1900, the cultural elite in Finland sought political support from abroad. The contacts with Scandinavia and the solidarity that was shown from other Scandinavian countries played a part in emphasizing Finland’s Scandinavian heritage, especially in terms of jurisdiction, which the politician Leo Mechelin, among others, upheld. The foundation for these networks had been laid already during the mid-nineteenth century when Finnish students visited Scandinavian student meetings and established contacts and networks well before the constitutional strife around 1900. The Scandinavianist orientation in Finland was mostly embraced within academic circles and among liberals, who opposed the conservatism of the Russian Emperor and were thus prone to agitate for anti-Russian

⁵ The translation was made by the author from Finnish to English.

sentiments. These sentiments culminated during the Crimean War of 1853 to 1855 and were politicized by Emil von Qvanten from exile in Stockholm.

Emil von Qvanten: The Compatibility of Fennomania and Scandinavism

Emil von Qvanten was born into a Finnish family of nobility rank in southwestern Finland in the city of Pori. The family had been knighted in 1650, and it had a lineage of military officers. At first Emil von Qvanten was also an apprentice at the military academy in Hamina, but he dropped out for studies at the Imperial Alexander University of Helsinki in 1846. When Finland had become a Grand Duchy in 1809 as a part of the Russian Empire, a new process of nation-building started to evolve at the university in Helsinki. An interest in the Finnish language among scholars had already emerged during the last years of Swedish rule, but the publication of Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala* in 1835 and the establishment of the Finnish Literature Society in 1831 raised the status of the Finnish language. Most scholars and students in Helsinki spoke Swedish at that time, but an upsurge and an interest in the Finnish language also developed within academic circles into what was to be called the Fennoman movement. During the late-nineteenth century, there was a debate between the Fennomans and the Svecomans over the question of language. While the Fennomans, under the leadership of Johan Vilhelm Snellman, tried to make the language of the majority into the leading cultural and administrative language with the argument that a coherent nation had to be built, the Svecomans tried to defend the position of the Swedish language or, at minimum, to strive for a bilingual nation. However, in the 1840s, an interest in the Finnish language was not considered a hindrance for Swedish-speaking cultural actors such as Johan Ludvig Runeberg, among others. Emil von Qvanten's mother tongue was Swedish, but in terms of his Finnish patriotism, the question of language was in the first half of the nineteenth century irrelevant—most of the early Fennomans were also Swedish-speaking, and therefore it made no difference what language one spoke. From the 1850s and 1860s onwards, the different political language groups started a political debate, which divided them into Fennomans, Svecomans, and, later, into the moderate liberals (who did not take a stand in the language quarrels).

As a young student at the Imperial Alexander University in Helsinki during the 1840s, Emil von Qvanten was influenced by contemporary national-romantic currents. The intelligentsia in Helsinki was nationalistically awoken in the era of romanticism, but spoke mostly Swedish. As shown in the example from 1875 above, the Finnish language was also present at the last Nordic Student Meeting in Uppsala among the Finnish participants and in their poems, and it was thus not considered a hindrance for participation, although different opinions existed (Ahlqvist 1875, 48–49).

The influential “Saturday Society” (*Lauantaiseura*)⁶ gathered the central “Founding Fathers” of Finnish nation-building at this time in Helsinki. Among these were the poet and writer Johan Ludvig Runeberg, the collector of folk poetry and the editor of the *Kalevala* Elias Lönnrot, the historian and author Zacharias Topelius, and the philosopher-journalist and later politician Johan Vilhelm Snellman. Finnish nationalism was defined and made a program to a large extent by the members of the Saturday Society’s intelligentsia. The founders of Finnish nationalism were slightly older than von Qvanten, and he admired especially Runeberg’s poetry. Von Qvanten had also, at the age of fifteen, sent a manuscript of his poem “Suomis sång” (The song of Suomi) to Runeberg in order to receive comments from the poet. Von Qvanten was thus in contact with some of the central figures in the Finnish nation-building process, although he later, in the 1850s, came into conflict with Johan Vilhelm Snellman because of disagreements concerning liberalism and Scandinavism (Björk-Winberg 2016a; Landgren 2002.)

A parallel between von Qvanten and Runeberg exists since the theme in von Qvanten’s poem “Suomis sång” is closely related in time and theme to Runeberg’s poem “Vårt land” (Our land). Both poems were composed and made into music by the German-born Fredrik Pacius. “Suomis sång” was also published in 1844 in the newspaper *Helsingfors Morgonblad* (Helsinki morning journal) (Landgren 2002), and Runeberg’s four years later in the same newspaper. The themes in both songs are identical. Both embrace the nature and landscape of Finland in accordance with the cultural currents of national romanticism. Even though “Suomis sång” is likely von Qvanten’s most celebrated work today, it was Runeberg’s poem that in the long run became the national anthem of Finland. The similarities of both are imminent, but it was the more celebrated and (from an imperial point of view) politically sounder poet, Runeberg, whose work later, in the twentieth century, was to become the national anthem. Runeberg was more established in the Finnish nation-building process, which also promoted Runeberg’s status in Finland, while von Qvanten was promoting his liberal patriotism with Scandinavian elements from abroad. Despite von Qvanten’s alienation, his famous poem and song is in the repertoire of many choirs.

The liberal Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet* (The evening journal) from Stockholm published a large number of von Qvanten’s writings. The newspaper had adopted a contemporary British style promoting debates, but it was forbidden in Finland. *Helsingfors Morgonblad*, under the direction of editor-in-chief Fabian Collan, tried to be liberal in the 1840s when von Qvanten’s “Suomis sång” was published, but liberalism was politically unsound in the Grand Duchy during Emperor Nicholas I, and so the newspaper rapidly changed its course. *Borgå Tidningar* (Porvoo times) and *Helsingfors Tidningar* (Helsinki times) also both published von Qvanten’s poems in Finland (Landgren 2002). Later, in the 1850s,

⁶ The translation was made by the author from Finnish.

von Qvanten published most of his writings in *Aftonbladet* in Stockholm. Therefore, Stockholm and Sweden in general became an asylum for oppositional Finnish liberals with Scandinavian opinions because their works could not be published in the Grand Duchy of Finland. Von Qvanten had a wide European network of people that was able to publish political texts, and these backed von Qvanten's political ideas. Von Qvanten also corresponded with Russian dissidents in exile and with Polish separatists, with whom he had a common interest in the downfall of the Russian Empire. Throughout his life, von Qvanten would correspond with Scandinavian intellectuals and politicians.

Some of von Qvanten's poetry was published in collaboration with Nestor Tallgren in 1845 in the calendar *Lärkan* (the Lark). Tallgren worked as an architect in Finland and was one of the liberal bridgeheads in Helsinki when von Qvanten was living in Stockholm and spreading liberal propaganda from the west. Tallgren also spent some time in Sweden, but returned to Finland, even though von Qvanten did not return. With his national romanticism, his poetry, and his academic background, von Qvanten could have established himself as a prominent figure in the Finnish nation-building project if he had not become openly liberal (Björk-Winberg 2016a). The concept "liberal" changed throughout time and location, and the concept in this context refers to a person who was ready to support constitutional monarchies, open debates in the press, and developments that strengthened the nation-state by giving more power to the parliaments and the people, that is, the nation and its citizens.

However, von Qvanten's life was shadowed by illness. In the 1850s, he was told by physicians that he was going to die because of pulmonary tuberculosis. So von Qvanten went on a long journey to cure himself and ended up in South Africa and India, although the original destination was supposed to be Java in the Dutch East Indies (Bååth-Holmberg 1893, 218–21). From this journey, von Qvanten sent texts, which were published in the Swedish journal *Svensk Illustrerad Tidning* (Swedish illustrated journal). He returned to Europe and Sweden in 1853. His aim was to return to Finland, but the Crimean War broke out in 1853. The war and the possibility that Sweden would engage in it on the French and British side and thus annex Finland back, changed von Qvanten's political views. The possibility of Swedish engagement in the war was debated in the Swedish press, and the liberal *Aftonbladet* gave moderate support for an engagement in the war. Von Qvanten published the text *Fennomani och skandinavism* (Fennomania and Scandinavism) in 1855 in *Aftonbladet*, presenting his idea of a Finland that would be liberated during the Crimean War by Sweden, France, and Great Britain (Barton 2009; Björk-Winberg 2016b; Landgren 2002; von Qvanten 1855a, 1855b). Finland would be made into a state and would be a part of a larger Nordic federal state consisting of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland. He envisioned a Scandinavian constitutional monarchy and concluded that each of these countries was in a union and thus equal

with each other (von Qvanten 1855a, 47). Copies of *Fennomani och skandinavism* were smuggled to Finland and distributed in the Grand Duchy. Finland stayed fairly loyal to Russia during the Crimean War, and the Swedish plans for engagement in the Crimean War were never put into practice, but the officials in Finland were nevertheless anxious and worried that this kind of agitation was potentially harmful to the relationship between the Grand Duchy of Finland and the Russian Empire. Especially during the years directly following the Crimean War, there was turmoil among some of the liberal students in Helsinki, and the first years of Emperor Alexander II's rule were not stable within the empire. Some of the students were expelled, and many of them emigrated to Stockholm. This also explains why Emperor Alexander II was progressive in promoting Finnish Fennomane reforms in economics and politics in accordance with Johan Vilhelm Snellman, whom the liberal Scandinavian fraction in exile firmly opposed. By supporting the elevation of the Finnish language in the 1860s, Emperor Alexander II made himself popular among the Fennomanes, who supported the Finnish language, and thus the distance between Finland and Scandinavia grew larger. This suited the Russian Emperor, who had started to consider a united Scandinavia as a potential threat against Finland and St. Petersburg. In return, the Fennomanes, under the leadership of Snellman, received the trust of Emperor Alexander II for their loyalty to the Russian Empire.

In 1856, the Governor-General of Finland, Count Berg, declared Emil von Qvanten a *persona non grata*, and he was not allowed to enter his former home country again (Berg 1856). Von Qvanten remained permanently in Sweden and became a Swedish subject in 1857. A group of liberal-minded students at the Imperial Alexander University reacted to this in 1855 when, during a dinner in Töölö in Helsinki, they gave speeches directed against the Russian Empire. The leader of this group, K. G. Wetterhoff, was expelled from the university. He also emigrated to Sweden and became a friend and a journalistic colleague of von Qvanten. Another person who was temporarily expelled because of his liberalism and pro-Swedish sentiments during the late 1850s was A. E. Nordenskiöld, a geologist and later famous polar explorer. In 1857, Nordenskiöld gave a speech to a Swedish delegation in Helsinki, where he raised a toast and mentioned that he did not see a bright future for Finland as a part of Russia. Nordenskiöld would have become a professor in geology in Helsinki, but because of his anti-Russian speeches, his grants were withheld, and so he decided to emigrate to Sweden as well. A group of influential liberals remained in Helsinki, but most of those who openly opposed Russia's conservatism were forced to leave the country if they wished to express their views. Most of them lived in exile in Stockholm and formed a community of Finnish ex-patriates (Björk-Winberg 2016a; Bååth-Holmberg 1893; Ru. Johansson 1930). Tallgren was one of those. He spent some time in Sweden but returned to Helsinki and informed von Qvanten about the sentiments in Helsinki in his letters. Many others,

such as von Qvanten, Wetterhoff, and Nordenskiöld, settled permanently abroad.

In 1858, Snellman openly criticized von Qvanten and other emigrants in an article called “Finska emigrationen i Sverige” (Finnish emigration in Sweden) in the journal *Litteraturblad för allmän medborgerlig fostran* (Literary journal for common civic education). According to Snellman, the emigrants had been stirring unnecessary unrest from Stockholm, and Snellman portrayed them as traitors (Snellman 1858). After Snellman’s verdict, von Qvanten and his collaborators were gradually politically marginalized. Snellman, meanwhile, became a successful senator and a statesman in the 1860s, to whom Emperor Alexander II listened. In the early 1860s, Finland obtained its own currency—the *markka*—and autonomy was extended to allow the Finnish Diet to maintain more legislative power and to convene more often and on a regular basis, which it had not done during the years 1809 to 1863.

This development of an extended autonomy has been seen in Finnish historiography as one of Snellman’s achievements. The imperial administration in Russia was aware that Sweden could try to annex Finland back or that the Polish example—a rebellion in 1863—would stir unrest in Finland close to the capital St. Petersburg. Meanwhile, there was unrest in Russia domestically as well, and the Emperor allowed liberal reforms throughout Russia by, for example, abolishing serfdom in 1861. While all this was happening, von Qvanten was corresponding from Stockholm with Russian anarchist Mikhail Bukharin and the Russian socialist Aleksandr Herzen in hope of collaborating with Russian dissidents in a common cause. Von Qvanten also corresponded and had contacts with a delegation of Polish separatists in Sweden: Joseph Demontovicz, Adam Czartoryski’s secretary Walerian Kalinka, and Sigismund Jordan. The historian and priest Walerian Kalinka was the secretary of Prince Adam Czartoryski, who led the Polish National Uprising Government from France. Demontovicz later settled in Sweden, and Jordan was an influential person in Sweden, organizing for von Qvanten the position as the Swedish king’s deputy librarian. The original idea was that von Qvanten could, as the deputy librarian, influence the Swedish court and, thus, help Poland. In return, the Polish delegation promised to use its influence in France and Britain so that texts by the Finnish liberals would be published there (Bååth-Holmberg 1893, 237–38). All of these Finnish, Russian, and Polish dissidents, nationalists, and liberals lived in exile and had a common goal that the Russian empire would fall apart (Bakunin, Herzen, Kalinka, Demontovicz, and Jordan 1862–64). Von Qvanten also tried to start propaganda in the French and British press for Finnish liberation during the Polish rebellion, which he vividly discussed in his correspondence with Tallgren. They both hoped for a breakdown of the Russian Empire, which would allow Finland to break out, possibly by joining forces with Polish separatists and Russian dissidents (Björk-Winberg 2016a; Mörne 1932b).

As a Finn in exile, von Qvanten was surrounded by other expatriates in the Swedish capital. Von Qvanten also published *Finska förhållanden* (Finnish circumstances) between 1857 and 1861 and *Censur-kalendern* (The Censorship calendar) in 1861. The former was a critical series of articles in the Swedish liberal newspaper *Aftonbladet* about the Finnish situation, which, for example, provoked Snellman to defend himself in *Litteraturbladet* (The literary journal) and condemn von Qvanten's viewpoints (Snellman 1858). *Censur-kalendern* was also a collection of critical writings, which was banned in Finland but which von Qvanten could publish in Sweden. Because of his noble descent, von Qvanten could also attend the Swedish national diet in 1859–60 and 1862–63 as the oldest member of his noble family (Landgren 2002). He also had access to the court, since he was one of King Karl XV's trusted assistants, and both were Scandinavists.

During the 1860s, King Karl XV of Sweden had plans for a Swedish-Norwegian-Danish Scandinavian union. This political possibility reached its peak during the Danish-German War of Slesvig in 1864, when von Qvanten, as the secretary of Karl XV, drafted a proposal for a Scandinavian union to King Christian IX of Denmark (Lundh 1950, 15). In the draft, which von Qvanten composed together with Danish Scandinavists, there was a plan for a constitutional monarchy under one crown and a parliament with two chambers (The Draft for a Scandinavian Union in 1864, the National Library). King Karl XV accepted the draft and the plans that von Qvanten presented, but the Swedish-Norwegian government did not. The ministers De Geer and Gripenstedt especially were against it. King Karl XV sent von Qvanten to Copenhagen to meet King Christian IX and the Danish Council President D. G. Monrad. The latter told von Qvanten during his visit that Denmark would accept the proposal for a Scandinavian union, but both kingdoms waited for the other to take the initiative, and so it never happened (Bååth-Holmberg 1893, 280–82). According to Cecilia Bååth-Holmberg, who knew von Qvanten personally and who wrote a short biography of him in 1893, von Qvanten stated that his draft of 1864 followed the same political outlines as *Fennomani och skandinavism* had in 1855. In both cases, according to von Qvanten, to unite Scandinavia in 1864 was also a means of liberating Finland into a Nordic sphere (Bååth-Holmberg 1893, 280; see also Monrad 1864).

On the whole, Emil von Qvanten considered Fennomania and Scandinavism to be compatible ideologies throughout the 1850s and 1860s, as he had already stated in 1855. This point of view was also present in his correspondence.

Nestor Tallgren's Letters to von Qvanten

A large number of the letters in Emil von Qvanten's Archive in Stockholm are from his contacts in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Poland, and Russia. One correspondent, who sent nineteen letters in total, was

Nestor Tallgren.⁷ Tallgren lived in Finland, but was liberal and wrote to von Qvanten critically about the situation in Finland. He encouraged von Qvanten to agitate for open warfare against Russia, writing to his friend: “preach open war against Russia. [. . .] it is Asia, which is about to swallow us” (16 October, 1860).

In 1932, the Finnish historian Arvid Mörne concluded that Tallgren wanted to shed some light about the mindset present among the liberals of the 1850s and 1860s. In this section of the article, the letters from Tallgren to von Qvanten are re-examined. Some of my conclusions are the same as those that Mörne reached in 1932. Mörne wrote of Tallgren’s and von Qvanten’s observations on liberalism and Scandinavism in their letters. One might add the importance of the liberal-radical Italian unification movement and process, *Risorgimento* and *Garibaldism*, which was an important inspiration for von Qvanten, Tallgren, and other liberals during the 1850s and 1860s, but which Mörne did not pay much attention to. Mörne also pointed out that von Qvanten indicated that he would have liked to publish the letters at some point (Mörne 1932b, 43). While on a journey to Paris, Tallgren sent von Qvanten a letter with the introduction: “Dear brother purple!” In the letter, Tallgren has signed his name “N. Ljusblå,” which can be translated as “N. Azure” or light blue (3 October 1854). Mörne’s interpretation of the pseudonym “Azure” was that it was an expression of meekness in the spirit of a romantic poet and an expression of Tallgren’s personality, but it could also be a reference to the Italian color of azure, which was used by the house of Savoy in the Kingdom of Sardinia and Piedmont, one of the central actors in the Italian unification process (Tallgren adored Italy). During the same month, Tallgren writes that he had read von Qvanten’s pamphlet *Finska förhållanden* (Finnish circumstances), and that something like it should also be published in France. Tallgren also mentioned the possibility of using the English and French press as a channel for informing people abroad about Finnish issues. The letter also has the statement, “Is there not anything left of Kullervo’s spirit?” By a reference to Kullervo in the *Kalevala*, Tallgren expressed a sentiment that few people were doing anything to protest against Russian rule over Finland (22 October 1854).

Tallgren also criticized Johan Vilhelm Snellman’s policies and his desire for power by using the Swedish word “öfwersitterilust,” which could be translated to “a will for power” or literally “a will to sit above others.” He urged von Qvanten to face Snellman somehow with this question (19 November 1854). Von Qvanten did continue his critique in literary form, to which Snellman replied in 1858 in *Litteraturbladet* with a sanguine critique against von Qvanten and the other emigrants in Stockholm, who were writing about Fennomania, Scandinavism, and liberalism (Snellman 1858).

⁷ Some of the letters are unsigned or have a pseudonym, but according to Emil von Qvanten’s (1890) necrology of Tallgren (*Finsk Tidskrift*, 1890) these letters were from Tallgren, even though the name has not been written down in some of the original letters.

In 1855, Tallgren also informed von Qvanten about the delicate matter in which the student Gustaf Oskar Tamelander had spied on von Qvanten in Stockholm and discovered that von Qvanten had written *Fennomani och skandinavism*. Tallgren also mentioned to von Qvanten that it was the post director Wulffert who had sent the spy to Stockholm.⁸ Tallgren informed von Qvanten that the atmosphere in Finland (during the years of the Crimean War of 1853–56) was not good, and that if the war continued, the opinion would turn against Russia (Autumn 1855). There is also a transcript of a letter written by Nestor Tallgren from Helsinki on November 3, 1855, to Emil von Qvanten. The letter describes the same situation, but Tallgren adds that he had received a copy of *Fennomani och skandinavism* written by von Qvanten and that Tamelander had spied for Count Berg, the Governor-General in Finland, who later wrote a letter to the governor of the province of Turku and Pori, stating that Emil von Qvanten was under no circumstances to be allowed an entry back into Finland (Berg 1856). Tallgren mentions that the hope of Swedish help the following year in Finland was growing. He adds that “there are still men in Suomi who are ready to die for their country and for the freedom and peace of the Nordic countries.” Moreover, Tallgren details the situation in Finland and about the war and mentions “N. N.” as a contact person, once again signing the letter, “Ljusblå” (3 November 1855).

Tallgren wrote from Paris in 1858, expressing his hopes that *Finska förhållanden* would be published in France and that an interest in Finland would be awakened there. He mentioned plans about meeting von Qvanten the following summer and asked him also if he would be interested in being a correspondent for *The Times*. “Linder” (probably the Finnish liberal politician Kristofer Alexander Ernst Linder, 1838–68) was mentioned as the contact in London. The writings of J. V. Snellman were also commented upon (31 March and 25 May 1858). There were plans at the time to start a propaganda campaign in the British and French press for Finnish liberation, to be conducted by von Qvanten, and Tallgren was eager to tell about the situation in Paris, since he had conducted a long journey from Italy to France (Mörne 1932b; von Qvanten 1890).

In June, Tallgren wrote from Paris about Linder and the question about correspondence from London to *The Times*. He also wrote that “Sweden ought to, in a political sense, as a state look after us a little bit more than it has done thus far” (6 June 1858). In terms of the letters, it is unclear if he was wholeheartedly a Pan-Scandinavist like von Qvanten, but the letters demonstrate that he was liberal and thought that Sweden should have played a more active part in terms of Finland, which it had not done during the Crimean War.

The following year, Tallgren wrote to von Qvanten in a more pessimistic tone: “to talk about political life here would be a most absurd

⁸ Alexander von Wulffert had been in charge of the post office and gone through the mail and started the campaign to identify the writer of Fennomania and Scandinavism. He became a hated person among the liberals, as well as others who opposed censorship.

compliment.” The reason for this—according to Tallgren—was the lack of a free press in Finland, which could have fostered a political life in the country. Tallgren complains about the situation in Finland and mentions Snellman again. The signature is in Italian, “Azurrino” (22 August 1859).⁹ Here the liberal element is clear: the lack of a free press was, according to Tallgren, a problem, and the signature “Azurrino” could presumably be a reference to the Italian unification process at the time. Tallgren also adored Italy from an artistic and an architectural point of view, which might have influenced his political opinions as well.

In 1859, an undated letter from Tallgren states that he has not given up his ideals, but that he is paralyzed by the atmosphere in the country. He writes that people in Finland are whispering surreptitiously in the shadows, but there is no public sphere for debate. Tallgren also makes clear that he is still wholeheartedly for “*la rigenerazione della patria*” (the rebirth of the nation) as before, but that he can do very little from Finland.¹⁰ Tallgren writes that he envies the Italians, who are dying for their country. In the end, Tallgren writes, “we are the most simple-minded and leftist herd of sheep in the whole world.” To this he adds that everybody is following the emperor (probably Autumn 1859). Once again, Tallgren considers the Italian *Risorgimento* as an ideal and describes Finnish political apathy and passiveness as a sign of political ignorance. He might have referred to themselves—von Qvanten and Tallgren—as being “leftist” liberals against the conservative establishment.

In August 1860, Berg, the Governor-General of Finland, announced a ban on the publication of “unsound” and “damaging” texts in Finnish newspapers about the Italian question. This document was written directly in response to von Qvanten’s activities from Sweden (Berg 1860). After this ban, von Qvanten received a letter from Tallgren that said the program the previous summer had stirred some unrest in Helsinki and caused more discussion than had hitherto been seen in the capital. Tallgren wrote that if one would have made a political map of Finland with light and dark colors Finland would be “black as coal” (14 September 1860). He argued that Wäinämöinen, Ilmarinen, Lemminkäinen, and Kullervo—heroes from the *Kalevala*—would be disappointed at the outcome. The characters from the *Kalevala* are an allegory to Finnish patriotism in this context. Even though Tallgren and von Qvanten were not Fennomans in Snellman’s loyalist political faction, they still believed in a Finnish nation, and thus they could refer to characters from the *Kalevala*. Tallgren ends in a pessimistic tone but adds in Italian: “*Eviva Garibaldi, il nostro liberatore!*” (“Long live Garibaldi, our liberator!”).¹¹ Garibaldi is seen here once again as an example for the liberals, whether they are fighting for Finland or for Scandinavism with liberal means (14 September 1860).

⁹ Azzurino refers to the azure blue or bright blue color. (Translation from Italian to English by the author.)

¹⁰ The translation from Italian to English was made by the author.

¹¹ The translation from Italian was made by the author.

Concerns over Russian influence were also discussed. In October of the same year, von Qvanten received a letter in which Tallgren wrote of his dissatisfaction over the fact that the Russian Emperor's loge at the new theater in Helsinki was to be decorated with the emblem of the Russian eagle (16 October 1860). In December, von Qvanten received the message according to which "it is Asia, which is about to swallow us," and Tallgren also urged von Qvanten to agitate for open war against Russia. He asked von Qvanten to send the message to Europe through Paris (17 December 1860). In May 1861, Tallgren wrote that the mistake the Russian government had made gave hope of a possible extension of citizens' rights in Finland. This refers most likely to the reforms that Emperor Alexander II decreed in February of the same year of 1861, when the Russian serfs were liberated. In Finland and Poland, hopes of a more liberal period throughout the Russian Empire were emerging. However, Tallgren noted that political life in Finland had not yet evolved and that hopes for Finnish independence were distant. Poland and Finland were mentioned in this letter as hindrances to Russia's own development (22 May 1861). These concerns over Russia were expressed just before Finnish autonomy was extended by the Emperor Alexander II. These reforms benefited the loyalists, but were seen as threats by liberals like von Qvanten and Tallgren since extended autonomy for Finland under the Russian rule made Finnish separatism less likely.

During 1863, the Finnish Diet convened by an imperial decree for the first time since 1809. Tallgren considered this in a negative light. In May 1863, Tallgren expressed to von Qvanten that he should not trust too much in liberalism because in Finland there was no strong public opinion for it, and officials were, according Tallgren, very "orthodox" and thus not willing to support liberal ideas. Moreover, Tallgren urged Sweden to look around and to do something. He estimated that in fifty years it would be too late. He also speculated that the emperor had received angry letters from the provinces from different officials, which Tallgren believed was a sign that the regime was in an unstable state of affairs (14 May 1863). In July and September 1863, two short letters arrived to von Qvanten. In these letters, Tallgren hoped for a brighter future for Finland and mentioned that there was a strong sentiment for the Russian emperor in Finland (probably because of the liberal reforms that had taken place in Finland). He also asked if Wetterhoff had arrived safely in Stockholm (31 July and 16 September 1863). Wetterhoff had been expelled from the university and moved to Stockholm, just as von Qvanten had done. According to these letters, the liberal reforms in Finland were seen by Tallgren as a threat, as they strengthened the Russian emperor's popularity in the country and made their own agenda less likely to be implemented.

After the reforms in Finland in 1863, Tallgren continued to comment on the Danish war against the German coalition in 1864. In February that year, Tallgren was hoping that Sweden would join the war on Denmark's side immediately without waiting for Great Britain. He said that all the

“loyal Finns” greet him and that he hoped that von Qvanten would spread the word that Sweden ought to join the war. In May, however, another letter arrived from Helsinki in which disappointment was expressed over Sweden’s passivity during the German-Danish War of 1864 over the duchies Slesvig and Holstein (10 February and 25 May 1864). Tallgren did not engage actively in the war, but among the Nordic volunteers, there were eleven from Finland. Most of them returned without any reprisals even though the Russian Empire did not support the Danish cause in the war. The most famous of the Finnish volunteers was Herman Liikanen, a Finnish-speaking adventurer from the eastern Finnish region of Savonia, who had earlier joined Giuseppe Garibaldi’s troops in Italy. In the German-Danish War, Liikanen was wounded and later decorated in Denmark as a war hero. Liikanen lived the rest of his life in Helsinki. Garibaldism had played an important part in Liikanen’s voluntarism (Backström 1993; Ro. Johansson 1999; Nuorteva 2016).

Nestor Tallgren was very active in informing von Qvanten about what was going on in Finland. The liberalism and Scandinavism of von Qvanten has been previously known, but the source material reveals as well that Tallgren served as an agent or informer for the expatriate von Qvanten, after von Qvanten had permanently settled in Sweden. Tallgren also admired the Italian *Risorgimento* in his letters, and the inspiration from the Italian unification process and its importance for the Nordic liberals have received less attention as well. The role of Tallgren must thus be considered to have been important for the Finnish liberals of the 1850s and 1860s, as the source material speaks for itself and as the historian Arvid Mörne (1932b) concluded in *Finsk Tidskrift*. Tallgren was also able to live in Finland even though he expressed anti-Russian, pro-Garibaldian, and liberal opinions in these letters, which he wrote partly abroad but also from the Grand Duchy of Finland. The role of von Qvanten has been known in earlier research, whereas the role of Tallgren has not been emphasized even though Arvid Mörne (1932b)—with his observations of this same source material—tried to demonstrate it in 1932.

Tallgren as the Finnish Link in von Qvanten’s European Network

Von Qvanten’s Scandinavian political testament is mainly to be found in his pamphlet *Fennomani och skandinavism*. The views, which von Qvanten expressed in the pamphlet, combined the political ideologies of Fennomania and Scandinavism, and he presented how one could merge the two ideologies. This was politically unacceptable in the Russian Empire and in loyalist Finland. However, the student Tamelander, who had revealed von Qvanten, was also expelled from the Imperial Alexander University of Helsinki, which demonstrates that even though von Qvanten’s writings and publications were not welcomed by the Russian Governor-General, it was the University of Helsinki and its autonomous leadership under the Vice Chancellor Johan Reinhold Munck that expelled Tamelander. This episode during the Crimean War and during its aftermath caused some

turmoil at the university and among its students, and, as the American historian H. Arnold Barton (2009) has pointed out, the whole episode needs to be discussed more thoroughly in order to grasp the whole liberal ideology that influenced students in Finland in the mid-1850s (182).

There were also contacts between the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin and Emil von Qvanten, as well as between the Russian socialist and *zapadnik* (westerner)¹² Alexandr Herzen (through his son Alexander Herzen Jr., who was the messenger) and von Qvanten. These letters show von Qvanten's extensive networks with Russian anarchists and socialists and even with Polish separatists such as Walerian Kalinka and Josef Demontovicz, with whom von Qvanten corresponded in hope of having a joint cause in liberating both Finland and Poland from Russian rule simultaneously (Bakunin, Herzen, Kalinka, Demontovicz, and Jordan 1862–64; Bååth-Holmberg 1893, 236–37). At the time when von Qvanten wrote *Fennomani och skandinavism* in 1855, it seemed imminent that Russia would be defeated in the Crimean War, and thus it was expected that Finland could be liberated with the help of western European powers, such as Sweden, France, and Great Britain. Poland also revolted in 1863 in the January uprising, and therefore von Qvanten also corresponded during the 1860s with Polish revolutionaries and with Poles in exile in hopes of a joint cause (Barton 2009, 182; von Qvanten 1855a, 1855b).

Tallgren wrote about liberalism and the hope that the Russian Empire would fall apart. In these scenarios, there was a vision in von Qvanten's and Tallgren's correspondence that Sweden would play an active part in liberating Finland. The Italian *Risorgimento* and Giuseppe Garibaldi were sources of inspiration for both of these—Italian slogans and examples were mentioned in these letters, and von Qvanten (n.d.) even wrote a poem, “Giuseppe Garibaldi.” The poem indicates that von Qvanten described his own situation and dedication for the liberation of Finland with Scandinavian help by using Garibaldi and the Italian pan-movement as a metaphor. In general, the Scandinavists of the mid-nineteenth century were liberal and “young” in Metternich's conservative post-Napoleonic Europe, which meant that they favored other European unification movements such as the German *Burschenschaften* and the Italian *Carbonari* (Barton 2009, 162).

The View at Home and Abroad of Scandinavism in Finland

When it was published in 1855, the pamphlet *Fennomani och skandinavism* offered political agitation for a political alternative for Finland. It was smuggled into Finland and read especially among students at the Imperial Alexander University in Helsinki. Russian censorship did not allow publication of the text, and so, after von Qvanten's identity as the writer of the controversial pamphlet had been recognized by the Finnish and Russian officials, he stayed in Sweden. The text itself reveals the political ideas of von Qvanten. These ideas were discussed in the more open

12 The translation from Russian to English was made by the author.

Swedish press during the Crimean War, especially in the liberal newspaper *Aftonbladet* by the editor-in-chief August Sohlman. Sohlman was also an ardent Scandinavist (and a volunteer in the Danish-German war of 1864) and a liberal as well, even though he did not share the same opinions about Finland's role in Scandinavism as Emil von Qvanten did.

The personal, more intimate, unpublished letters written by Tallgren to von Qvanten reveal a more secret agenda, in which the Finnish liberals speak more directly about the means that could be used to liberate Finland from Russia. Even though these plans were not realized, they depict an alternative political movement, which has not received much publicity in Finnish historiography. Strong Russian and Fennomane reactions against the movement suggest that the intrigues of the emigrants—with von Qvanten as a central protagonist—caused some turmoil, as Barton (2009) has described (182). Therefore, it is worthwhile to assess the activities of Emil von Qvanten and his network of people around Europe more thoroughly, in order to understand better why the liberal Scandinavian project failed and why the political factions allied with the emperor reacted strongly against it and took counter measures (such as the extension of Finnish autonomy in 1863 by the Emperor Alexander II) in order to receive more support in Finland for the imperial regime from Russian-loyal politicians, such as senator and Fennomane Johan Vilhelm Snellman.

Moreover, Barton points out that Scandinavism would leave its imprint on the development of Finnish liberalism during the end of the nineteenth century, even though the “Old Finns” clung to their policy of loyalty to the Russian emperor. In the latter phase, according to Barton, it was the Swedish-speaking party and its members who were more active on the liberal front, especially around 1900 and during the era of Russification, but Barton (2009) also states accurately that liberal Fennomanes—like von Qvanten—had faced similar Fennomane liberal opposition already during the Crimean War in the 1850s (182).

The tactic of strengthening Finnish nationalism by the granting of autonomy as a reward from the emperor for loyalty to him was a policy that worked, especially during the 1860s in the aftermath of the Crimean War. While Finland's autonomy was strengthened and it received numerous liberties from Alexander II for having been loyal, this was not the case in Poland, which had revolted against Russia in 1863. In the Polish case, the country was sanctioned for its disobedience by the Russian Empire. As a consequence, the Finnish Diet was allowed to convene more regularly, and Finnish autonomy was extended for the years 1863–99. The Fennomane loyalist policy of obedience to the empire had thus been successful. After the Crimean War, a lenient stance toward Finland by the emperors was vital in order for Russia to integrate the Grand Duchy into the Russian Empire and, therefore, distance it from its Scandinavian neighbors, as long as Finland's officials preferred the Russian emperor to the king of Sweden or some other monarch. Therefore, the political

ideology of the Fennomane movement and its ideological leader J. V. Snellman set an example for the upcoming Finnish Party and its loyalist faction—which sought development of the Finnish nation by cultural means as an autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire in conservative concord with the empire itself. This worked until the late-nineteenth century, when it was contested during the imperialization period as the Russian Empire imposed stricter imperial laws on Finland. However, when Finnish laws were written during the more liberal period 1863–99, the jurisdiction followed a “Scandinavian model,” even though Finland was a part of Russia.

Especially after 1899, during the era of Russification, Finnish liberals were, however, more prone to criticize loyalty to the emperor; however, the Old Finns (a fraction from the Finnish Party) remained loyal to the emperor even after 1899 and during the period of Russification from 1899 to 1917. According to Barton (2009), the liberals carried on the heritage of the Scandinavists from the mid-nineteenth century. Barton underlines the importance of Emil von Qvanten in this process (182).

Two polarizing views of Finland’s role in these years have been presented by Matti Klinge and Martti Häikiö. According to Klinge, the Russian era in Finnish history was an age of progress and prosperity, and, according to this view, political Scandinavism and its realizations in Finland were uninteresting and insignificant (Klinge 1978, 89). In contrast, Häikiö argued in the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War, that Finland, during the nineteenth century era of autonomy, had descended to the same level as the Eastern European countries did after World War II (Barton 2009, 182; Häikiö 1999; Klinge 2004, 17–18). In many ways, the Russian era was a time during which Finland developed its statehood, and the Russian connection provided a basis for Finnish prosperity as Klinge (2004) and, for instance, Osmo Jussila (2004) and Max Engman (2000) have argued. Häikiö’s view was presented after the Cold War and was published simultaneously with Finland’s new political orientation toward the West, when Finland was reassessing its relations to Russia and distancing itself from its eastern neighbor.

The stance of this article lies somewhere in between these two viewpoints. The role of von Qvanten should not be overemphasized, but the role of von Qvanten and his networks provide a focus for new research in terms of Finnish autonomy and its links to the other Nordic countries and how these networks—which, in the long run, formed a legacy for future Nordic cooperation in practical terms—were formed. Not just Emil von Qvanten, but also other exiled Finns in Sweden, such as A. E. Nordenskiöld, Karl Wetterhoff, and Nestor Tallgren, played a part as informers between Finland and the Scandinavian sphere. This spread of liberal ideas from abroad might have had a more important legacy for Finnish liberals of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century than has been recognized thus far. Their activities were known and perceived as a threat, and they, therefore, influenced loyalist Finns and Russian officials. The expatriates

were thus an opposition in exile, which pressured the establishment and led it to enact countermeasures. Following Finnish independence in 1917, the country fairly quickly oriented itself toward the Nordic community during the 1920s and 1930s, because the foundations and networks had already been established. The Nordic option was there.

In contemporary research on Scandinavism within the Nordic region, emphasis has been placed on researching the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century and how earlier Scandinavianist networks and the legacy of mid-nineteenth century academic or student Scandinavism played a part in the revival of Nordic cooperation and Neo-Scandinavism, especially around 1900. Scandinavism experienced a renaissance partly because of the Russification measures in Finland in 1899, but also because the German Empire had a stricter policy against the Danish-speaking minority in German Schleswig around those years (Hemstad 2008, 88). There were different forms of Scandinavism: practical (e.g., the currency union of 1873), cultural (networks of intellectuals and literati, cross-border political debates, and the press), and political (mainly connected to Denmark in 1864 and the plans for a dynastic union) (Haarder Ekman 2010; Hemstad 2008). The archives of Emil von Qvanten have provided insights into these questions.

Conclusion

Emil von Qvanten's liberal viewpoint, which for him meant that the Finnish national project was to be backed by the liberal Scandinavian countries, was a counter-narrative to the implemented Fennoman policy. During the Crimean War, a window of opportunity opened for Finland to break away from Russia, which von Qvanten secretly tried to promote from Stockholm by spreading propaganda. After being detected, von Qvanten could not return to his home country and stayed in Sweden. From Sweden, however, he continued to provoke Finnish politicians, such as J. V. Snellman, who condemned the liberal-national ideas of von Qvanten, which were in opposition to Snellman's dominant—and more conservative—Finnish nationalism.

The aim of this article has been to demonstrate that in both Finnish and Nordic historiography, Emil von Qvanten and Nestor Tallgren represented a liberal Scandinavism. This liberal Scandinavism is not part of the traditional Finnish national narrative, which emphasizes the Snellmanian loyalist political legacy of the 1850s and 1860s. Also, in the history of Scandinavism, the Finnish dimension seems to receive a marginal role, even though the source material on Emil von Qvanten is vast and contains a draft for the union between Sweden-Norway and Denmark from 1864. As a cosmopolitan Finnish expatriate, he upheld his patriotic stance for Finnish independence from Russia and also sought Nordic unity. His influence in the negotiations between Swedish and Danish politicians during the Danish-Prussian War of 1864 was also remarkable, even though the plans for a Scandinavian union did not materialize. Von

Qvanten's networks ought to be researched more, in order to extend the knowledge of how an exiled Finnish Scandinavianist was able to influence Scandinavian and Finnish politics both directly and indirectly—by agitation from abroad that put pressure on both the Finnish establishment and the Russian Empire.

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The Emergence of a Nationalistic Vernacular: The Ideal Peasant Man and the Roma People as His Antagonists

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Abstract

This article discusses ethnic folklore as mirroring the ideals of peasant culture in Finland until the first half of the twentieth century. Using folk narratives about the Finnish Roma and proverbs as told by Finnish rural peasants, I investigate how such elements of everyday communication laid bare notions of social hierarchies. Historically, the sense of belonging to a nation has often been “invented” by the majority or by the people in power. Because the collecting of Finnish folklore was conducted primarily with an idealized notion of the peasant majority in mind, minority folklore or urban elements of life appeared inauthentic and thus not worthy of collection. Unlike the sedentary population, the Finnish Roma were itinerant, and they specifically became an object of ethnic folklore. The aim here is to understand the role of narrative culture in creating and maintaining institutionalized social differences.

Keywords: Finnish folklore, ethnic folklore, nationalism, Finnish Roma, peasants

Introduction

The idea that each nationality formed a distinct organic entity different from other nations was the central element of nineteenth-century European romantic nationalism. According to the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, since no two nations had shared common environments and common histories, then no two nations could share a common national character. For him, the most natural state contained one people with one national character, and thus nothing seemed as unnatural as the wild mixtures of various races and nations under one scepter (Wilson [1973] 2005, 7). In the Herderian view, the cultural pattern through which a people expressed itself could be found in its oral

tradition. Against this backdrop of romantic nationalism, systematic folklore collection activities began in Finland in the 1830s, focusing on the development of the national language and the spiritual value of local customs and traditions. After hundreds of years, first as a part of Sweden, then as an autonomous part of the Russian Empire, Finland had been perceived as a cultural hinterland, with the only authentic Finnish culture “unspoiled” by foreign influences to be found among the poor peasants in rural districts of Finland and Karelia, the territory that is today a part of Russia.

The Finnish Literature Society, which was established in 1831 and which started to collect Finnish folklore, paid little attention to the specificities of the social environment of the folklore users. The individuals from whom folklore was collected, or, the people behind the folklore, were believed to represent “the folk,” in other words, people outside the ruling groups of Helsinki. They spoke the vernacular language, that is, Finnish, they were rural, they were very poor and illiterate, or at least only semi-literate (e.g., Dundes 1980, 4–5). The idea of the folk as a single homogeneous group without boundaries or cultural differences reinforced the image of a unified “nation” with no internal social, ethnic, or cultural tensions. This approach defined how the educated elite, who were often Swedish-speakers, viewed the lower strata of society.

There were, however, various ethnic and cultural minorities within the territory of Finland that had distinctive linguistic, ethnic, or religious characteristics, and irrespective of the views of the upper-class scholars, many of them wished to maintain this distinctiveness (Raento and Husso 2002, 151). Those who did conform to the ideal and authentic inhabitant of the Finnish nation and whose folklore was not considered interesting—and thus not desirable as archive material—included, for example, the Sami, Jews, Tatars, and the Finnish Roma, who were small in number and often suffered from discrimination and subordination (see Elmgren; Roman in this volume).

Unlike the sedentary rural population, the Finnish Roma lived an itinerant life largely outside agricultural production and only partly within the reach of central and local authorities. Usually, they lived in small family-based bands that made their living by combining a variety of low-capital economic activities with geographic mobility. In rural areas, the Finnish Roma engaged in horse-trading and peddling and castrating animals, occupations that were socially stigmatized, although in high demand (Tervonen 2010, 8–9). Because they generally had no permanent dwellings of their own, the Roma in Finland depended on the goodwill of the peasants and sedentary population who provided them with temporary shelter and food. The Roma and non-Roma interacted with each other on a daily basis, and most of their encounters were peaceful. Nonetheless, cultural conflicts did occur.

Using folktales about the Finnish Roma as told by Finnish rural peasants, this article investigates how such elements of everyday

communication laid bare notions of social hierarchies. Because the tales were meant to be humorous, they are comparable to ethnic jokes (Davies 1990), where the figures ridiculed in the narratives live on the periphery or margins of the given culture. I argue that people at the grass-roots level and from all backgrounds exercised a certain agency through storytelling. The aim is to understand the role of narrative culture in creating and maintaining institutionalized social differences. There have been and continue to be narratives and folklore shared among the majority peasant population that articulate fears and suspicions about the Roma people because of their distinctive culture and way of life. This paper thus reveals new insights into the complexity of the cultural knowledge of the common people expressed in folklore. The focus is on the experiences and points of view of the common and often impoverished people of the countryside.

Ethnic Conflicts among a People

This article is based on approximately 800 archived folktale and proverb texts that mainly describe the former peasant way of life but also offer glimpses of “the Gypsies” of Finland. In order to avoid any negative or romanticized images that have been associated with the term “Gypsy” (e.g., Glajar 2008; Landon 2008; Mayall 2004), I will use either the terms *the Finnish Roma* or *Kaale*. The term *Kaale* is used by the Finnish Roma to refer to themselves, and it literally means ‘dark’ in the Romani language. However, the source materials, that is, folktales, without exception, refer to the *Kaale* with the Finnish word for Gypsy: “*mustalainen*.” The materials were sent to the folklore archives over the decades in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Throughout history, because of their distinctive way of life, the *Kaale* have been viewed as both threatening and morally debased in comparison to the rest of the population (Viljanen 2003, 63), an attitude that persists in contemporary Finland.

If we take a closer look at the folklore collections in the archives, many folk narratives were built around the very idea of difference, and thus they had the power to “other” people. In general, mentions of the Finnish Roma were replete with prejudices. Folklore is a mirror of culture, and the view has always included the ugliness of it. As Alan Dundes has pointed out, ethnic folklore, as is the case in this article, can be interpreted more as a symptom rather than a cause of stereotyping and prejudice (Dundes 1987). The peasant society was not a society of equal distribution of power and resources, and it was more diverse than the archived ethnographic descriptions suggest. If we read old folklore carefully enough, there was no such thing as a homogeneous folk culture.

According to the ideals cherished by the dominant high culture, the most authentic Finnish people were to be found among the landless populations of the hinterland. In fact, large segments of the then population, about 70 percent, represented the rural working class. In other words, these people worked as farmhands, farm servants, and tenant farmers (see Alapuro 1988). In the terms of the time, people who did not own

their land were called “the estateless” (*säädytön*) and consisted mostly of individuals who did physically demanding work. Almost invariably, they were poor and often illiterate, too, thus rendering them experts of oral tradition.

According to the major narrative created by the nineteenth-century educated romantics, the self-sufficient rural laborer was destined for extinction because of industrialization and urbanization, the loss of what was thought to have been a golden age and its transformation into a degraded present (Knevet and Gammon 2016, 48). This idea was adapted from Herder, who had idealized the lives of peasants and artisans and who harbored an anti-urban sentiment in eighteenth-century Germany. In the Finnish context, Elias Lönnrot, the folklore collector and the compiler of the *Kalevala*, believed that the best folklore was to be found among the illiterate country people (e.g., Anttonen 2014, 56). Large-scale folklore collection projects became central mechanisms for creating an “imagined community” among the elite (e.g., Noyes 2007; Wilson [1973] 2005, 15). In practical terms, the idea of the common people as one undivided people served to simplify the actual diversity of the rural population and consequently determined how folklore was collected and indexed.

The image of an ideal nation and its people did not, however, include the Kaale, most of whom had lived in Finland for centuries. Based on the language and customs of the Kaale, the oldest layer of the Roma population has been supposed to have probably come from the British Isles via Denmark and Sweden in the sixteenth century and was comprised of the German Sinti subgroup (Viljanen 2012, 416). When Finland gained its independence in 1917, the constitution guaranteed equal citizenship rights for everyone, the majority as well as the Finnish Roma. During World War II, Roma men fought in the Finnish army, which later strengthened their sense of national belonging. The nation-state managed to create a widely shared sentiment among all groups of the population and, therefore, a particular characteristic of the Finnish Roma was their strong cultural identity as Roma combined with an emphatic sense of themselves as Finns; a common identity, thus, also focused on the nation-state (Nordberg 2007). The same cannot be said, however, for official policies regarding the Kaale that included practices, such as children’s homes, which aimed to “normalize” the Roma and assimilate them (Pulma 2006). Moreover, housing and social and health services that became the cornerstones of the Finnish welfare state were reluctantly offered to the Roma groups, because most of the social assistance was conditional. In order to get housing support, for example, applicants needed a permanent residence—a dwelling and its address—which many of the Roma did not have. In practice, the exclusion of the Kaale families from almost all of the nationally shared spheres of society left them as social outcasts (see Thurfjell 2013, 58).

Throughout history, the Roma people in Finland have hence been located at the very bottom of the social hierarchy. The constraints of life

on the margins, therefore, have compelled them to cultivate and maintain their traditions, such as strict sexual taboos, rules of cleanliness, and codes of dress, to name a few (see Cvorovic 2006, 129). It is interesting to observe that many of the Finnish folktales concerning the Kaale use the common mechanism of ostracizing: the tales underscore the social and cultural practices of the Roma that contrast most strongly with those of the tale-tellers, while generally tending to ignore the similarities (Schmiesing 2014).

The notion that folklore represented what was authentically Finnish was invented in the seminar and meeting rooms in Helsinki and at the Finnish Literature Society. There, leading scholars and intellectuals, who were part of the Fennomans movement,¹ decided what kind of folklore and folk culture was appropriate and worth collecting and storing in the archives (see Björk-Winberg in this volume). These archived sets of folklore were signified as valuable by the dominant sections of society, who lacked a knowledge of folklore but who exercised power in society. David Hopkin (2012, 376) has argued that early folklorists were “social tourists” unable to bridge the chasm of understanding that separated them from the rural working class. In this process, naturally, minority folklore was ignored, because it was not regarded as authentically “Finnish” (see Blomster and Mikkola 2014). The historic-geographic method, in which the distribution and travel routes of folklore were of special interest, contributed to the archives being catalogued topographically. The Finnish Literature Society’s aim was to map the peasant-based cultural landscape of Finnish speakers as thoroughly as possible. The various geographical regions represented different corners in the “building of the nation.”

Some scholars have proposed that the approach of “the archeology of cultural thought” focuses on old and enduring models at the mental level of culture (L. Stark 2015, 125; Apo 1998). According to this approach, archived folklore texts offer the possibility to discern broad and systematic patterns of culturally shared and recurring patterns of thought as well as behavior and meaning. The study of these patterns thus exposes the complexity of relations among and between the scholars, lay-collectors (who often were school-teachers, i.e., the rising middle class), and the people who narrated their lore to the collectors. For example, when folklore collecting reached its peak in the Kalevala Jubilee Year Collection Contest of 1935–36, the assistance of rural lay-collectors, many of whom had little or no formal education, was remarkable. Over the decades, this activity has resulted in the vast collections of the Finnish Literature Society, which nowadays include over three million folklore texts (L. Stark, 2006, 21; 2015).

¹ The Fennomans movement was the nineteenth-century Finnish nationalism movement that advocated the Finnish language becoming the national language together with Swedish. Most of the early Fennomans were Swedish-speaking themselves (Fewster 2006; Anttonen 2014).

The materials sent to the Finnish Literature Society by land-owning peasants, crofters, or rural craftsmen reflected the interests and priorities of rural populations and thus provided a picture of the cultural knowledge they possessed (L. Stark, 2015, 128). Tales about the Roma served as a platform for integrating shared views of both the middle-class folklore collectors and the peasants. The narratives and stories about others, such as the Finnish Roma, were deliberately collected to underscore just how dissimilar these stigmatized groups or individuals were (see E. Stark, 2018). With their emphasis on given features in the plots, the folk narratives depicted the Roma way of life within the peasant society in contrast to that of the sedentary rural peasants to highlight the right way to live. In this article, I argue that the narratives projected qualities of stupidity or foolishness onto individuals with different ethnicity.

The point of departure here is that the peasant stratum of the people represented the cultural ideal for not only the nationalistically oriented academic intellectuals but also the rural lay-collectors. This article thus addresses the following questions: What were the cultural images attached to this cultural norm that was constructed in Finnish folklore? What were the stigmas attached to the Finnish Roma, and, more broadly, what do folklore texts tell us about the norms of the rural communities of the past in Finland? To analyze whether folklore and its collecting practices can provide insights into the cultural norms, ideals, and stigmas of the rural society requires an awareness of the nationalistic projects and the social facts that were left out in the making of a coherent nation. The source materials have been analyzed to identify recurrent patterns of cultural images, which include the following: 1) a farm house was a sign of normative behavior, an ideal way of life, and a goal that one should strive to attain; 2) a peasant farmhouse was composed of a man and a woman whose daily chores were gender-dichotomized but in balance; 3) a peasant household represented an independent entity with its own rules. The arrival of outsiders, such as begging Roma and itinerant peddlers, represented violations of household harmony.

The Farmhouse as a Sign of Prestige

When the nationalistically minded intelligentsia launched a massive campaign to collect Finnish-language folklore in the 1880s, it was true that the majority of Finns earned their living from small farms based on dairy cattle and forestry. In fact, until the 1950s, more than half of the Finnish population earned its living from a small farm with extra income from forest work (Hjerppe 2008). Finland was an agrarian country. Small-holding peasant ownership, and the rural sedentary lifestyle it provided, came to represent the cultural norm and was supported by the several land reforms. In this small-holding way of life, which was strongly subsidized by the state, husband and wife were co-workers. From the basis of this “social fact,” that is, the peasants as “us,” scholars tended to collect, index, and display materials that received their meanings as nationally

significant symbols (Anttonen 2012, 329). The Finnish peasant and rural traditions were thus seen as native values, as they had been during the period of nineteenth-century national romanticism.

The small-holding was considered to be the basic unit of social organization and economic production. In contrast to the peasant, who was essentially sedentary, the Finnish Roma were believed to be fated to travel. A popular tale describes the origin of the Kaale as such: “Gypsies are the descendants of Cain, cursed by God for his brother’s murder, and therefore doomed to travel because God’s curse weighs upon them.” The tale recalls Christian European narrative tradition, in which the curse of Cain was commonly believed to have been inherited by “other” races (Allahar 1993, 46). Unlike the fate of the Kaale, a trustworthy peasant had a field to cultivate and livestock to tend, as reflected in many pithy sayings: “A peasant boy, a field boy” (*talonpoika, pellonpoika*) or “doing things is a peasant’s self-praising” (*laittain talonpoika itseensä kehuu*). The attitude toward food production, food, and tools was rigorously disciplined: “Everything is needed in the house, small needles and sparse sieves” (*Kaikkia talossa tarvitaan, piänet neulat ja harvat seulat*). Moreover, the peasant man appears in Finnish folklore as a determined, hard-working, and moderate man who places more value on austerity than on aesthetic pleasures (Kuusi 1954, 91–93).

The male head of a farming household enjoyed autonomy both in the eyes of the law and the community, thus entitling him to “represent” others (Apo 1999; Liliequist 2011, 5–6). The family patriarch had authority not only over the women of his household but also over other men, including his sons, farmhands, and male tenant farmers and cottagers living on the farm’s lands. The honor accorded to a farmhouse hinged on the number of farmhands and maids—and their physical appearance—as the proverb concisely puts it: “It is the honor of the farm, if maid and pig are fat” (*Se on talon kunnia kun piika ja sika lihava on*). A peasant man was defined by his deeds and his wealth, not his outward appearance. The Finnish Roma, however, were equated with their physical appearance, as in the following example: “When God created people, one fell from his hands into sludge with some coal. There he turned black and became a Roma.” Describing people as black or dark inevitably served as a negative moral judgment upon their character. In the tale tradition in general, blackness abounds with negative connotations: night, the underworld, death, and moral or physical impurity (Schmiesing 2016, 211). As in the previous tale, the existence of “other” races was explicitly an accidental act of God.

The Finnish Roma typically lived in small nuclear families, and the number of family members depended on the horse cart—that is, family size was limited to the carrying capacity of the horse-drawn cart (Grönfors 2001, 161). As a result of their traveling way of life, the number of family members remained relatively low. The typical setting of a folktale event is in a farmhouse that a Roma group approach to ask for food and temporary accommodations. From the teller’s point of view, the punch

line makes the Roma look naively superstitious and possibly mentally unsound, as in the following tale:

Because they have been a nuisance to the people and they were not nice to anybody, I will tell you a tale that offers tips on how to drive away Gypsies. There was a house and the Gypsies always went there without permission. The farm master and his wife together decided that next time the Gypsies showed up, the farm master would pretend to be dead and so they did. The farm master went to the granary, stretched himself out on some planks and covered his body with a sheet. When the Gypsies arrived, the farmer's wife said that the farm master had died. Now one of the Gypsies asked to see the master, who always had been so kind to them, and when he was saying farewell to the farm master, the master squeezed the Gypsy's hand, making him leave the place immediately.²

The perspective of the narrative is of the “people,” the term that denotes an idea of individuals who share uniform values, actions, and outcomes, which all together form a normative category. The Roma doubtless belonged to the category of “not people,” and were thus seen as anomalous. From the very beginning of the folklore collecting activities in the nineteenth century, charms and verbal expressions referring to an assumed pagan mythology were the most cherished type of folklore that scholars wished to obtain. In fact, the Finnish Literature Society regarded the old folk poetry in metric form and the material concerning folk religion, such as spells, as so valuable that its collection was deemed urgent. Furthermore, scholars and collectors perceived the heterogeneity of the vernacular belief system as a hierarchy with distinctions whereby mythical elements, narratives about the origins of things and places, for example, were ranked higher than the everyday beliefs, for example, about the dead. While the former represented an ancient religion, the latter merely served as proof of the irrationality of those who believed them.

In the tales, the Roma were stigmatized as irrational, childlike, and impulsive. Unlike the old and “authentic” charm tradition, which was considered to reflect the last vestiges of the age-old Finnic mythology, the Kaale belief system merely revealed their lack of reason. Thus, people undoubtedly told tales at the expense of the minority, a group regarded as static and unenterprising by the majority members who, in turn, saw themselves as dynamic and competitive (e.g., Davies 1990, 322). If we consider the premises of early folklore collecting, the principal characteristics of the term “folk” were defined primarily in relation to the elite, but also in contrast with so-called savages or primitives, who were thought to occupy the lowest position on the evolutionary ladder (Dundes 1980, 2–5; E. Stark, 2018). In this model, the Finnish Roma were relegated

² All translations are the author's.

to the position of primitives, below “the folk,” that is, peasants and lumberjacks.

The suspicious nature of the other is a recurring motif in strategies for drawing cultural boundaries. The Finnish Roma were itinerant, and they maintained a strong taboo system concerning hygiene, sexuality, and issues of reproduction (see Roman in this volume). The folklore circulating among the rural sedentary people that expressed standards of normality contained numerous examples of Roma confounded by what the majority regarded as normal and commonplace behavior. This occurred, for example, when the farm master offered meat to a beggar. The latter immediately became suspicious. The normality here is that they are not given anything (much), against which the actions of the farm master that day were unexpected and the farmer deemed “mad.” It is not so much about the Kaale not knowing the habits, but rather of them knowing the (usual) habits too well. The holy day adds an extra layer, a sort of a trigger, for the story:

It was a holy day when the Gypsies entered the farm house. The farm master decided to give them a bale of hay, the best piece of ham from the granary, and a loaf of bread, so that they wouldn't disturb the farm household any more on the holy day. When they realized how much they had been offered, the Gypsies left the house. When they arrived at the other end of the village, they said, “Matti has gone mad.”

The Roma refused to accept what they were given because such generosity was not customary. The abundance made them suspicious about the food's origins. Despite the arguments for the cultural distinctiveness of the Roma, these tales reflected how the Finnish Roma lived among the majority Finnish society, and were thus embedded within and interacted with them on a regular basis.

At the grassroots level, the lives of the Kaale and the inhabitants of the farming households that often received them were entwined, not only through the activities that the Kaale groups carried out as they sold and delivered goods, animals (e.g., horses), and services to the people on the farms, but also by the conventions of accommodation extended to itinerants by the peasant households (e.g., Engebriksen 2007, 181; Tervonen 2010). While staying for a couple of days or weeks at a farmhouse, itinerants were expected to contribute by doing farm work, which, according to the folktales, led to tension and ambivalence. In this way, work served to organize social inclusions and exclusions (Koch 2012, 155). The distinction dealt with the different concepts of work:

It was the busiest time of haymaking and the farm master hired a Gypsy to work for him. The Gypsy worked a day, but he felt it was too hard. In the evening, the Gypsy asked for his payment

for this chore. As the salary, the farm master offered the hay piles that the Gypsy had done himself. The Gypsy then responded by saying, “Oh my, farm master. This is not enough, there is too little hay.”

It is important to note that the narratives about the Finnish Roma were the tales people were telling among themselves about themselves, both their fantasies and fears. In fact, the ways in which the Finnish Roma were stereotyped in narratives—as loath to work—reveal a great deal about the majority society. Prejudice and stereotyping have always existed with or without folklore (Dundes 1987). The themes of the narratives underlined the right way to live, in other words, by doing honest physical work in agriculture and logging and living in sedentary dwellings. The work to which people dedicated themselves reflected the core knowledge and values of the rural communities (see Koch 2012, 154). The Finnish peasant community had a work ethic based on hard physical effort. Work was thus depicted as exercise individuals did for sport: they toiled until they were exhausted and sweaty, but at the end of the day, people enjoyed a sense of satisfaction. Therefore, unsurprisingly, a recurring theme in both the folklore and oral history of the Finnish majority is a life made up of hard work. According to the tales, the Kaale acted differently: they were reluctant to engage in hard work.

Husband and Wife: Vital Components of a Peasant Household

Unlike the traveling Kaale, most of the rural population’s identity was embedded in fixed social networks; they were dependent not only on their families but also on their neighbors, their village, and the bureaucrats of the time. Prior to developed transportation, members of the peasant society were tied to farms or crofts. Finnish proverbs expressed the ideal norms of the peasant culture and its hierarchy. The standard expectation for a man was to establish a farmstead in partnership with a wife: “The farm master’s steps harrow the field, the farm wife’s chores beautify the house” (*Isännän askeleet pellon höystä, emännän toimesta talo kaunistuu*). Without a farm master, a peasant household could not function; indeed, his efforts garnered praise: “It’s the farm master’s foot that dungs the field, and the farm master’s eye that caresses the horse” (*Isännän jalka se on, joka pellon sonnittaa, ja isännän silmä se on, joka hevosen silittää*). Proverbs often cautioned about unseemly or reckless behavior that could result in disastrous and long-term problems, such as expressed in the following: “Hang the farm master, toss the farm mistress to the beam, daughters to the backwoods with the knapsack, devil inside the pack with his ears pricked up” (*Isäntä hirteen, emäntä orteen, tyttäret korpeen kontti selekään, piru konttiin korvat pystyyn*). In modern terms, one could claim that a peasant household worked like an institution; it was hierarchically ordered and goal-oriented.

In a culture of poverty, a lack of proper roads combined with insufficient irrigation systems resulted in greater work intensity. For this reason, women were as important as men in the farm households. Proverbs emphasized how a farmhouse without a farm wife was an anomaly: “A farmhouse without a farm mistress is like a field without fence” (*Talo ilman emäntää on kun pelto ilman veräjää*). Women thus had their important duties and roles as a component of the household. Man and wife were work partners but also a couple: “It is the farm master who sleeps with the farm wife” (*Sebän on isäntä, joka emännän kans makaa*). The proverb also prioritizes the farm wife and hints that she was in the highest of the hierarchy. In comparison with the peasants and their ideals, the gender roles of the Roma were strictly defined. Kaale women were considered non-sexual, and they had to behave with proper decorum to comply with such expectations (Roman 2015). For the Kaale, anything remotely connected to sexuality customarily required extreme avoidance, which meant silence on this topic of conversation; sexuality was an issue not to be talked about or even acknowledged. For example, simply asking a Roma individual how many children he or she had could cause offense because the question ultimately referred to the Roma as a sexual being (Grönfors 2001, 160; Åberg 2015, 63–64; Thurfjell 2013, 31–32).

A central feature of the Roma culture was the male-female dichotomy whereby a man was always above a woman. Descriptions of encounters with traveling Roma present the internal relations between them as deviant or abnormal:

We were evacuated to Lapua [from Karelia]. One day, a Gypsy woman with a child in her arms entered the farmhouse where we were staying. She asked for a drop of milk for her child. While the good-hearted farm mistress was getting some milk, a Gypsy man stepped into the house. When the farm mistress passed over the milk jug, the Gypsy man took it and drank it. The farm mistress got angry and said: “You asked for milk for your child, but you gave it to the man.” The Gypsy woman answered, “From man to me and from me to the child.”

In another version, after getting some milk from the farmer’s wife, the Roma woman drinks it herself and defends herself by baring her breasts and saying, “That’s where all the milk goes anyway.”

Honesty and plain-spokenness were peasant values, although they were more likely to have reflected cultural ideals than actual patterns of behavior. By contrast, there was a commonly held belief about the dishonest dealings of the Roma in pursuing a livelihood. The following tale reflects this:

Once some Gypsies entered the house, and one of the Gypsy men commanded his wife to get some hay for their horse. It was

evening, and the farm master had promised them they could stay overnight in the house. But at the same time, using their own language, the Gypsy man commanded his wife to steal more hay from the shed. The Gypsy wife went out, but the farm master, who was able to speak some Romani, heard all this and threw the Gypsies out of his house.

This is the oft-mentioned situation in the tales: a Roma man silently giving commands to Roma women who obey him without questioning. Interestingly, the narratives depict pity for the Roma women and poke fun at the expense of the Roma men, as if breaking the cultural order. Another tale, which has a couple of modifications, expresses this more explicitly:

When Gypsies entered a farmhouse, it was customary for the Gypsy women to do the begging and for the Gypsy men to remain quiet, sometimes even countering the begging with, “Why are you whining? You’ll get something without needing to whine anyway.” But, straight away, the Gypsy men would add in their own language, “Whine, whine, and whine more.” In Finnish, it meant, “Beg, beg more.”

Both the peasants and the Roma adhered to a gendered division of labor, but for the Finns, begging was considered shameful to both sexes. For the Roma, however, begging was considered a valid livelihood for women. The practice of going door-to-door and asking for food or shelter even had a specific term: “walking” (*käveleminen*). Like fortune telling, begging was a task designated only for women—for Roma men, it would be humiliating. Kaale men, on the other hand, engaged in more specialized trades, which took place at markets or with designated trade partners (Tervonen 2010, 105–17). In the tales that described instances of begging, this distinction was noted at the expense of the male Roma. According to folklore, women openly begged, walking from one farmhouse to another, whilst Roma men attempted to retain their dignity by not asking for anything so directly. The majority population, however, could see this, making the male Roma a constant object of ridicule.

Violators of Household Harmony

Unlike their Western European counterparts, Finnish landowning peasants had only limited agricultural resources. Nonetheless, they did own forests, which they were able to sell to the growing lumber industry. Tenant farmers and cottagers lived on land belonging to farmers, and servants and itinerant laborers received room and board from the farm. An ideal peasant household was firmly bound together, as expressed in the following proverb: “A dog barks for his master and a cow milks for her matron” (*Isännälleen koira haukkuu ja emännälleen lehmä lypsää*).

The farmhouse economy was predominantly based on self-sufficiency with occasional sales of surplus at local market places. However, the main aim was to provide for the needs of the family and the demands of the state, church, and landlord, if the house was a tenant farm. The peasants consumed most of their own products, and most income was generated from the farm. A proverb sums it up like this: "A house must have three reserves: a part for itself, a part for guests, and a part for savings (*Talossa pitää olla kolme varaa: oma vara, vieraan vara ja seinän vara*). In this way, the peasant household was considered as wealthy or at least wealthier than those who were itinerant and could not own much.

Beggars, such as the Kaale, were not part of a peasant household although they, too, were almost entirely dependent on the charity of farms for their survival. Folktales of kindness and hospitality to beggars, although not Roma beggars, were also recorded in the Finnish Literature Society's archives, and these were usually narrated in the Eastern Orthodox parts of Finland (Järvinen 1981, 29–32). Often, folklore about the Finnish Roma dealt with incidents of Kaale individuals asking for food and shelter from farmhouses:

As is known, Gypsies whine about everything and use their child's illness as an excuse. Once a Gypsy woman whined and cried, explaining how her child was quite ill. This moved the farm wife, and she said, "Let me see the poor little one." When she looked at the child in the bundle, the child just laughed. "This child laughs; this child can't be ill," the farm wife said. Then the Gypsy woman answered, "The poor child is laughing from his pain."

The folktales depict various methods of begging used by the Roma. According to the majority point of view, Roma employed excessively good manners to achieve their aims. Farmhouses had rules, as is expressed in folklore: "The rules of the house, the walks of the guests" (*Talo ellää tavallaan, vieras käy ajallaan*). This proverb has many variants, and it is still used in contemporary Finland. Some of the informants have explained its meaning; for example, one informant gave the following interpretation: "This was said when a guest arrived unannounced, so the people of the house go about their chores as always without worrying that everything isn't at its best for guests who, on the contrary, just happen to show up."

Because the Roma always arrived at the farmhouse unexpectedly and were undesirable visitors, they were not treated hospitably: "When the Gypsies came to a farmhouse, the farm mistress pretended to be sick and asked her children to tell the Gypsies that she was suffering from scarlet fever. The Gypsies left the house immediately." Another story with a similar motif pokes fun at the Roma's fear of death:

The Gypsies entered the farmhouse and they left their horse by the granary. When the horse started scraping the ground, the

Gypsies asked why it was scraping. The mistress of the house lied, saying that there was a dead body in the granary. The Gypsies took fright and left the place right away.

In both narratives, the punch line is constructed on the peasant's ability to get rid of the begging Roma. The Kaale have no idea that they are being cheated or mocked, and, for that matter, the humorous story is only meant to be shared within the core members of the group. Interestingly, the target audience for these narratives were in-group members, not the outsiders, as the Finnish Roma were in many respects. Such stories were probably told only among the rural sedentary population. From this perspective, most of the archived Finnish folklore deals specifically with the peasant worldview and was meant for people who shared the same ethnicity and culture as the speaker. Therefore, tales about the Finnish Roma functioned to point out deviations from the norm.

In a culture of constant struggle for livelihood, begging was powerfully stigmatized. In his famous study on stigma, Ervin Goffman categorized types of stigma: tribal stigma, the type most relevant for the present article, was connected to race, nation, or religion, and therefore transmitted through lineages, equally considered contaminating of all members of a family (Goffman 1963, 4). From the sedentary peasant's point of view, the Kaale received food, resources, and goods for which they had not struggled. This was cause for resentment and justified mistreating them. Nonetheless, this viewpoint appears rarely within the corpus I have analyzed here. In fact, there is only one folktale that not only describes violent punishment of the Roma but also voices the sentiment that it was well-deserved.

An old man called Rusi used to live in the deep forests of Uramo, "a wicked-minded man, he was said to be, a witch, too, but above all, an angry man." He had been in the forest, a good ways from his house, when a group of Gypsies came to his house. They took food from his wife by force and started to eat. The wife went to the forest, calling for her husband. When he came and saw the swaggering Gypsies behind the table, the man took the table and turned it over so that the Gypsies fell backwards; then he took his gun from the wall. The Gypsies panicked. One who tried to escape through a window got killed by a bullet; the others started to beg for mercy. The man told the Gypsies to go to his boat and to row across the River Lautiainen. He held a scythe with a pole to threaten them. After getting to Nurmes [the town], he took the Gypsies to the rural police chief: "These are the robbers." The Gypsies tried to explain. "You can't say anything, you did things high-handedly," said the police chief. "Where do I put that corpse?" Rusi asked. "Put it where ever you want to," the police chief answered. Those kinds of things weren't a big deal back

then. Rusi went back home, put a necklace on him, pulled the body to the old turnip pit, and covered it with dirt.

Even though this tale and its motif are idiosyncratic, it reflects not only some aspects of the Finnish peasant culture but also the Finnish archival practices. First, it was encouraged to preserve tales exactly as they were, because they represented “the true voice of the folk” (Apo 1998, 64); second, when viewing the tales through a sociohistorical lens, as Jack Zipes has suggested, discrimination, disrespect, and even violence toward the Kaale existed *de facto* in the peasant society, and the tales thus reflected these attitudes (Zipes 1979, 141). Third, it also shows how the authorities and rural folk shared a common view: a peasant’s property was a solemn matter, and it was acceptable to defend it with violence and murder, if anyone dared to violate it.

Conclusion

When folklore collection activities began in nineteenth-century Finland, the concept of *the folk* consisted of the idea of the peasant underclasses who engaged in hard physical labor in remote areas of the country. The folk lacked full literacy but, by contrast, held oral tradition as their primary source of knowledge. Yet almost all of the people who were outside the unfair estate system and who did not belong to the ruling groups of the society shared a common plight: they suffered from poverty, hunger, often poor health, and a lack of development. Although “the folk” lived in poverty, it was believed they had a rich belief tradition and narrative culture. Moreover, their agrarian way of life demanded a working partnership in which both sexes were needed. Nonetheless, many people living in rural areas failed to fit into this model. Indeed, town-dwellers, industrial factory-workers, peddlers, or some of the ethnic and linguistic minorities like the Finnish Roma and the Finnish Tatars or the Swedish-speaking population were all excluded from the idea of the Finnish nation. Often the non-peasants, that is, those who were not engaged in farm work, had their own distinct traditions and livelihoods, but they also shared a great deal of cultural knowledge with the rural peasant majority.

Because folklore-collecting was conducted primarily with an idealized notion of the small-holding peasant majority in mind, minority folklore or different ways of life appeared false and inauthentic. As a consequence, for a long time the oral traditions or worldviews of minorities were not documented, preserved, or displayed as a part of the existing socio-historical reality. In fact, it was not until the 1960s that any folkloristic and ethnological materials from the Finnish ethnic minorities were gathered. Accounts of people who did not fit into the category of the folk showed up in the folklore materials only as a distinctive element within the core members of the nation. For example, the Finnish Romas’ external identification was marked by their darker skin color. In addition, the mobile Kaale not only had a different way of life from the sedentary peasant

population, but they also had different views on many crucial aspects of everyday life, which made them an easy target as projections of the peasant majority culture.

In the folklore materials, the ideal member of the nation was a male peasant who lived in his own house together with his family. Ownership of a house signified full membership as a human being in the society and the entire culture. In this context, mobile Roma groups appeared as anomalous in contrast with a way of life that was perceived as morally right and, therefore, normal. The mutually dependent partnership between husband and wife—requiring each other's labor contribution in daily life and aid in subsistence and social reproduction—created a clear-cut gender hierarchy. The division of labor was flexible, but mainly in men's work; in other words, women helped men if assistance was needed but not the other way around. Among the Finnish Roma, the gender division of labor was tighter. For example, Kaale men did not openly perform "walking," that is, they did not openly beg from people as the Kaale women did. This distinction was often pointed out in Finnish folktales that poked fun at the Finnish Roma men who, while the women asked for food or shelter, sought to maintain their dignity without saying a word but hovering in the background. Interestingly, the tale tellers, imagining that the Kaale women suffered because of their lower status vis-à-vis men in Roma culture, articulate their empathy for the Roma women.

Finnish folktales present the peasant household as a harmonious site, a place where outsiders were either unwelcome or were treated as strangers. Consequently, the Roma, who traveled to obtain their livelihood, were deviant and thus fell into the category of harmony violators. Although these circumstances led to conflict and illegal violence, from the tale tellers' point of view, giving the Roma a beating or even killing them was logical and justifiable. The Roma were unequivocally outsiders, and when seeking entry into the house, they were actually regarded as intruders. It is good to bear in mind, however, that these tales were told among the adults, and more specifically the men.

What compelled scholars, possibly the first generation among their ancestors to earn a university degree, to archive violent and often vulgar folk narratives? The answer is in the ideology of the common folk: the notion that rural laymen represented something more authentic and genuine than the literate middle and upper classes. On the one hand, folktales once formed a part of the vernacular oral tradition, which was deemed valuable and interesting in the construction of the nation and in searching for its origins. On the other, oral tradition and its inappropriate topics had a more practical purpose because humorous and often obscene narratives about the itinerant Roma were "social facts" in the sense that they illustrated best how dissimilar "Gypsies" were and how the majority population viewed the minority group.

Source Material

The Finnish Literature Society, Material on traditional and contemporary culture: Historical tales (“historialliset tarinat”) cards, Proverb cards including the word peasant (“talonpoika”)

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“Our Secret Weapon”: Minority Strategies of the Finnish Tatars 1880–1945

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Abstract

The reception of the first generation of Finnish Tatars by representatives of the majority population in Finland, including state authorities, intellectuals, political movements, and the press, shows that geopolitical circumstances and local interests outside the Tatars' own power determined to what extent they were perceived as enemies or brothers-in-arms. Events such as the independence of Finland and the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 influenced public perceptions of Muslims in Finland. Minority spokespersons felt pressured to address mutual fears, justify their presence in Finland, and put the majority representatives at ease. These strategies did not always succeed without ruffling feathers within the Finnish Tatar communities. Behind the “success story” of the Finnish Tatars we find a century-and-a-half of struggles that were not always happily resolved.

Keywords: Tatar minority, Muslim identity, minority strategies, citizenship

Introduction

The Finnish Tatar community, as Finland's oldest Muslim minority, is often depicted as an ideal case of successful integration. However, the first Tatar merchants appearing in Finnish marketplaces in the 1880s encountered prejudices and suspicions. In the following decades, rumors of alleged nefarious activities by the Tatars, from the sale of low-quality goods to animal cruelty and political conspiracies, made the rounds in the national press. Their religion, culture, and appearance were described as fundamentally alien to the Finns, and their presence, along with other eastern immigrants, was an uncomfortable reminder of Finland's precarious position within the Russian Empire.

Under the onslaught of popular and persuasive stereotypes in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Finland, Tatars had to learn to defend themselves against discrimination. In Imperial Russia, they had already had to learn to navigate an obstructive system of justice. The

Grand Duchy of Finland, albeit autonomous and defensive of its separate constitution, did not fundamentally differ from Russia in this respect. Foreign subjects did not have the same rights as Finnish citizens, but they could sometimes negotiate with local authorities to find legal loopholes. Eventually, they also learned methods to pre-empt prejudice. This article explores these methods and how they may have contributed to the perception of the Finnish Tatars as a success story.

The Tatars, along with the Jews, the Roma, the Sami, and the Russians of Finland, are often called “historical” minorities. The Tatars in particular have been perceived as a successfully integrated minority, although the law in Finland does not grant them any special status except the right to maintain their language and culture on their own initiative and with their own means (Leitzinger 2006, 246–57). Even studies that dwell on the challenges and problems faced by the Tatars include positive generalizations and relativizations: “In Finland, the reception was at any rate more positive than in Russia, where Tatars and other minorities were discriminated against in many ways. The immigrants were industrious and generally blameless in their ways of living” (Halen and Martikainen 2015, 90).

Tatars in Finland have also proactively disseminated a “success story” to the general audience. One of the earliest formulations of the specifically Finnish Tatar experience as a success story was published in 1932. A representative of the community, Alimcan Idris—a controversial intellectual who shall be discussed below—visited the office of the Turku newspaper *Uusi Aura* to present an essay on the Muslim community in Finland. The newspaper’s editor translated the essay from German into Finnish, and it was published with an introduction by (presumably) the said editor. Idris expressed the deep gratitude of the community toward Finland, its government, and its people.¹ According to Idris, the community’s success was attributed to three factors: the support of leading intellectuals in the Tatar diaspora; the publication and study of Turko-Tatar and Finnish literature and press; and the rich cultural and educational life in Finland. There was a concrete reason for the appeal to the public. In 1932, a third of the community, as former subjects of the Russian Empire, were stateless and subsisting on Nansen passports (Asikainen 2017, 28). In the *Uusi Aura* article, Idris mentioned the high cost of the citizenship application and hoped that the solution would be found in Tatar cooperation and “the kindness of the Finnish government” (Schir 1932, 8). Thus, the original success story was composed under political urgency. Ramil Belyaev, imam and historian of the community, notes that individual Tatars in Finland were threatened with deportation during the tense years after the Civil War of 1918 (Belyaev 2017, 147–48). There were also unsubstantiated rumors of collective extradition to Soviet Russia throughout the interwar

¹ All the translations of source materials into English are by Ainur Elmgren, unless indicated otherwise.

era. More research on the origins of these rumors is needed (Belyaev 2017, 219–20).

Historians of the Finnish Tatars have commented on a “double identity” among members of the community (Leitzinger 2006, 256). On the one hand, Tatars in Finland today maintain the success story by emphasizing their industriousness and financial independence. In an interview in 2015, the chairman of the Helsinki congregation stated that the Tatars have “integrated by working” (Salminen and Pietarinen 2015). On the other hand, the community’s internal memory culture records the negative effects of the pressure to assimilate and the experiences of racism. The survival strategy of keeping a low profile has made the Finnish Tatars appear to some as an “unknown” or “invisible” minority (Ståhlberg 2012; Martens 2013).

Before independence, Tatars were assumed to be well known to the public in Finland: “[. . .] surely those matters, familiar to everyone—Kazan – the Khanate of Kazan – Tatars – [. . .] gateway to Asia—evoke desire, curiosity [. . .]” (*Päivälehti*, August 12, 1893). The earlier familiarity with the Tatars was a product of the popularization of Finnish linguists’ and ethnologists’ travel accounts in the nineteenth century. Finnish scientists and scholars took advantage of the opportunity to explore the territory of the Russian Empire. One of the main goals of their research was an answer to a politically sensitive question: Were the Finns members of the “Mongol” or “Yellow” race? The origin of this question was the hypothesis that the Finno-Ugric languages were related to other agglutinative languages in Eurasia, such as Turkic and Mongolian. Encounters with Tatars and other Turkic-speaking peoples in Eurasia complicated the picture because Tatars were also difficult to classify racially. Finnish scholars, such as linguist Matthias Alexander Castrén (1813–1852), were initially not hostile to the potential connection, but during the late-nineteenth century, extremely hierarchical racial theories extolling the “Aryan” or “Nordic” race were popularized in the West (Isaksson 2001, 78–85, 200). As a result, Finnish scholars strove to “prove” Finnish whiteness by any means necessary. Because of the conflation of language and race, linguist and Turkologist Gustaf John Ramstedt (1873–1950) was expected to pronounce the final judgment on the racial makeup of the Finnish people. Ramstedt, who was careful to differentiate phenotypically between Volga Tatars and Mongols while classifying them under the same racial category, called the Finns not only white, but “the whitest race” (Ramstedt 1919a, 44).

Although Tatars were imagined to belong to a different race, they managed to blend rather seamlessly into Finnish society from the 1920s onwards. In 1924, a local newspaper published an essay by the vicar Wilhelm Hagfors, who opposed the right for non-Christians to apply for citizenship, in the assumption that it was still under debate (1924). Jews had been granted the right to apply for citizenship by a special act in 1918, and the constitution of 1919 and an amendment of 1920

finally guaranteed freedom of religion as well as equality between foreigners regardless of religion (Leitzinger 2006, 211–14). Hagfors cited the low number of a hundred Muslim residents to prove that their rights were irrelevant. His number was a severe underestimation but based on available statistical data. Leitzinger estimates that 123 Muslim families arrived in Finland as refugees between 1921 and 1924 alone, in addition to the already resident population (Leitzinger 2006, 116–17). Johannes Asikainen (2017) has shown how the fact that the official population statistics, produced under close cooperation with the Church of Finland, led to the distortion of statistics to the detriment of minorities. It was not deemed important to represent minority numbers accurately; instead, it was important to prove the absolute dominance of the Lutheran faith among the population (29–34).

Because of the tightening of border controls between Finland and the Soviet Union, and the political tensions and persecutions of minorities in their former homeland, Tatars in Finland were more than motivated to prove their allegiance to the Republic of Finland, while also striving to develop and maintain the separate identity of their community as a part of a transnational Turko-Tatar network. A key role in the formation of this “double identity” is played by privileged individuals striving to shape the public image of their group. In the early twentieth century, the interactions between these minority representatives and their desired allies among the majority population’s elite were far from equal. The latter, with a stronger position in Finnish society, tended to appropriate newcomer minorities for their own causes. Aspiring Tatar leaders and intellectuals felt the need to navigate both local and global political turmoil and to handle the demands of their would-be benefactors as well as the demands of their own communities. Some brought upon themselves the ire of their peers, their allies, and even the Finnish authorities. The negative experiences were relegated to the shadow side of the success story. Even historians who have promoted the Finnish Tatar success story have explored the notion of keeping a “low profile”. According to Leitzinger, the community learned to be careful in disputes to avoid solving internal disagreements in public at Finnish courts. The descendants of the disputing parties have mostly partaken of attitudes and hints of unsure origin, because the older generation stopped speaking openly about matters (Leitzinger 2006, 193). Belyaev (2017) identifies this “low profile” strategy as particularly present during the wars with the Soviet Union, when the Finnish Tatar community had many vulnerable relatives in the USSR (150). The survival strategies of the Finnish Tatars could have effects far beyond the borders of Finland.

The title of this article is taken from my Tatar grandfather’s wartime anecdote. When an officer found out that my grandfather had been drafted despite not being a citizen of Finland, the officer called him “our secret weapon.” The quip shows how Finnish Tatars, as not-quite insiders, and not-quite outsiders, could be an asset to the majority’s needs, but their

existence could also be conveniently forgotten—to be re-discovered when needed again. At the same time, the fluidity of their identity (as Muslims, Volga Turks, Finnish Tatars) and their indefinable appearance (some Finns depicted them as Asian in cartoons and stage costumes [Elmgren 2020]; others saw them as “Southerners,” and still others marveled at how “normal” they were) meant that individual Tatars could hide, if necessary, or instrumentalize their public identities to appeal to the majority, or recreate themselves to empower their own community.

Minority Survival Strategies

The study of what can be termed immigrant and minority survival strategies is vast. Studies on the maintenance of group identities range from cultural explanations to structural; the relation to the majority population, as well as to other groups, can also be studied through interaction theory, or ideas of “mixed embeddedness” (Karan 2017). I focus on individual practices, successes, and failures in a historical perspective from the 1880s to 1945.

The history of the Finnish Tatars is also the history of Islam in Finland until the arrival of greater numbers of other Muslim groups as refugees in the early 1990s. The Finnish Tatars have constituted a relatively homogeneous group, ethnically, religiously, and professionally. The first known Tatars to arrive in Finland came as conscripts of the Imperial Russian Army. Muslim worship had taken place in the fortress of Sveaborg outside Helsinki by the early nineteenth century. Few soldiers settled permanently in the country, but there was some continuity, as the military mullahs of Sveaborg also served the early civilian community of Muslims in Helsinki (Belyaev 2017, 73–74). Most of the current community traces back its lineage to traveling merchants from a handful of Mishär (a sub-group of Volga Tatars) villages in the Sergach district in the Nizhny Novgorod government in the Russian Empire. The migration of Mishär Tatar merchants and peddlers began in the late 1800s (Halén and Martikainen 2015). Belyaev (2017) notes that the railroad connection between St. Petersburg and Riihimäki, north of Helsinki, was completed in 1870, connecting the capitals of the Empire and the Grand Duchy (73). The development of rail connections within Finland in the 1870s and 1880s aided the settlement of Tatar merchants in important cities and market towns (99).

Both poor peddlers and wealthier merchants belonging to ethnic and religious minorities occupied a particular position in the agrarian-dominated society of the previous turn of the century. Edna Bonacich’s concept of “middleman minorities” may be used to describe the risky but potentially rewarding roles, both socially and economically, such mobile ethnic groups could fulfill between different social classes (Bonacich 1973). In the case of the Finnish Tatars, similarly to the Finnish Jews, this middleman position was historically contingent and, as its specific preconditions—a stratified, hierarchical society with rigid social roles—gradually changed, the “middleman minority” also disappeared from public view.

The eventual diversification of occupations among the Tatar minority resembles the equivalent process within the Jewish community in Finland (Ekholm 2014).

Peddlers offered desirable products and services, but they were also condemned by journalists and authorities for skinning poor peasants, spreading diseases and rumors, and committing crimes. Wealthier merchants looking to regularize their stay in the country were often caught in the middle of legal disputes between the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland and the Russian Empire. The reception of the Tatars in the Finnish press revealed a conceptual confusion around the Tatar population in Finland. They were difficult to classify in statistics. They came from Russia but were not Russians. The legality of their presence was disputed. Their religion, language, and details of their costume distinguished the Tatar peddler from the “rucksack Russians,” itinerant traders from the Archangelsk and Olonets regions in Russia, who were considered to be familiar marketplace visitors by the 1880s (Wassholm and Sundelin 2018, 133; Wassholm 2020).

The independence of Finland was a tumultuous process. The revolutionary year of 1917 and the bloody civil war in the spring of 1918 also meant that some Tatars lost their lives in the conflict, although the local Tatar communities remained passive bystanders. After the Bolshevik revolution, the next wave of Tatars arrived in Finland. In addition to political refugees, Finnish Tatars sought to bring relatives over the initially porous borders. Following independence, many Tatars lived under threat of expulsion, some for illegal trading and some for suspicions of intrigues against Finland. Nevertheless, settling down and acquiring citizenship became possible (Baibulat 2004, 22). The first official religious congregation for the Muslim Tatars was founded in 1925. The population of Tatars in Finland has always fluctuated around a thousand individuals, but there are no exact figures. Membership of religious congregations has not included all self-identified Tatars.

In the turbulent times of the February Revolution and the October Revolution in 1917 as well as the Civil War in Finland 1918, Tatars became a “pet minority” for some Finnish intellectuals and political activists who wanted to utilize them in the struggle against Soviet Russia. However, positive attention could also sow the seed of discord within the community itself. A closer look at these conflicts reveals that the “success story” of the Finnish Tatars was not yet formed in the decades before the Second World War, and that many different strategies were tested by members of the community to gain status and relevance in Finland.

How Does One Become a “Model Minority”?

Throughout the twentieth century, Finnish Tatars actively discussed their identity and role as a community in numerous self-published books and magazines (Halén 1979). The Tatar minority did not create its own identity and history in a national vacuum. Some of the community’s leading

members were inspired by Turkish nationalism, while others maintained contacts to Tatars in other countries. Finnish Tatars saw themselves as members of a worldwide community of Muslims and welcomed individual Muslims from other ethnic groups into their places of worship (Halén 1991, 76–77).

Finnish Tatars could also use their imagination and knowledge of history and myth to build an idiosyncratic identity. As long-term historical minorities in many countries, Tatars have been struggling with—and appropriating—historical and ethnic stereotypes. Internal disagreements about the meaning of a “Tatar” identity have affected Tatar communities throughout the world. Before modern nationalism, Tatar was perceived to be an exonym, possibly an insult (Bukharaev 2000, 12–14). However, the influential Islamic scholar and historian Shigabutdin Marjani (1818–89) stated that, regardless of which ethnonym the Turkic-speaking Muslims of the Middle Volga region used for themselves, the Russians would find a way to twist it to a slur, and therefore they might as well go by “Tatar” (Leitzinger 2006, 78). In the modern era, activists have championed political or cultural identities as Turks, Mishärs, or Volga-Bolgars, while scholars note the potentially lasting appeal of the Golden Horde to the Volga Tatar diaspora (Shnirelman 1996, 59).

Despite the efforts of scholars and writers studying the Tatar communities in Finland, the appeal of a success story must also be understood in the context of widespread ignorance. In 2012, the Finnish Tatar politician Jasmin Hamid, having been elected to the Helsinki city council for the Green Party, was presented as “one of the first council members of immigrant background” on public service television (YLE Aamu-TV, October 31, 2012). Meanwhile, the Tatar “success story” has been used polemically against other Muslim groups. In xenophobic rhetoric, the Finnish Tatars become the exception that proves the rule that Muslims cannot integrate successfully into Finnish culture. Jussi Halla-aho, the leader of the right-wing Finns Party since 2017, claimed in 2005 that discrimination experienced by Roma and Somali people was not based on racism, because “people don’t have a negative attitude toward Tatars or Japanese, although they are as different in appearance and culture” (Halla-aho, April 20, 2005). He revised his prejudices after meeting a Tatar couple at a neighborhood playground. Halla-aho described the husband as “normal and pleasant, a cultivated man, speaking about normal things, wearing normal clothing,” and the wife, “also a Tatar, is a normal and pleasant woman in normal clothes” (Halla-aho, September 11, 2007). He added that the Islam that he criticized was not “their” Islam. In the first example, Tatars were tolerable to Halla-aho—despite their Otherness—because they were well adjusted. In the second example, they were tolerable because they were not the Other, after all.

These contradictory notions of exoticism and ordinariness may be shared by many Finnish Tatars themselves. Some believe sincerely in the success story and promote it as inspirational. Others may prefer to avoid

public debate and keep a low profile. Finnish Tatars may cherish “just getting along” and being able to take a joke (Kervinen 2004). Some have had the experience that outside of Finland, a Tatar or part-Tatar identity is an asset and that they are not merely a curiosity or the butt of a joke (Ståhlberg 2012). In such contexts, “Tatarness” might become the individual’s own “secret weapon.”

But success stories must not be taken at face value. More than a century ago, the Hungarian Turkologist Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913) wrote about the perception of meek contentment among Tatars in the Russian Empire:

Yet despite these emigrations [. . .] the general opinion has held that the Tatars have never had any complaints about Russia; contrariwise, that they, in their firm conviction in the impossibility of avoiding fate, have never desired to speak one word of discontent or displeasure, even less to show any sign of revolt or to express more biting criticism [. . .]. (Vámbéry 1908, 55)

Today, it is uncontroversial to discuss the situation of Tatars in the Russian Empire as fraught with real repression (Bekkin and Ståhlberg 2015). Vámbéry himself wanted to inform Western readers that Tatars did indeed actively criticize their living conditions and fight against the suppression of their religion and language (Landau 2004, 174). Tatars might have shared the experience of oppression that made a virtue out of the necessity to keep a low profile, but many of them did raise their voice for various causes, got involved in activism, and ended up being perceived as troublemakers.

Stereotyping and Self-Defense in the Grand Duchy

To deconstruct the success story, we must take a closer look at the local reception of the first Tatar migrants in Finland. Until 1917, the descriptions and depictions of these Tatar peddlers and merchants were colored with general xenophobia and religious prejudice toward non-Christians but also with “infectious” prejudices aimed at other disadvantaged groups, such as anti-semitic and anti-ziganist stereotypes. Tatars have a complicated presence in the historical consciousness of many European nations. Translated sayings, works of fiction, and news reports from distant countries are numerous among the hits of a general search of the term “Tatar” in early twentieth-century newspapers in Finland (Kaisko 2012, 96–97). Tatars were accused of being “as disgusting as Jews and [. . .] behaving more insolently” (*Hämäläinen*, May 22, 1889; see also Wassholm 2020). Newspapers gave colorful descriptions of this “new scourge”:

Already the appearance betrays that the merchant is not a citizen of this country. It is a stumpy man, walks slightly bowed, his face jaundiced, usually pock-marked, an old fur hat on his head,

wearing a belted caftan, dirty, feet in high boots (*Mikkeli-lehti*, March 16, 1898).

The peddler's small trade took place in a legal gray zone. Itinerant trade was illegal for non-citizens in Finland. However, local authorities often lacked means or motivation to enforce the law (Wassholm and Sundelin 2018, 133; Wassholm 2020). Attitudes were dependent on changes in the greater political climate.

A specific case illustrates the political tensions within Finnish society that also affected minorities during that time. In 1899, the February Manifesto of Emperor Nicholas II threatened to erase the constitutional autonomy of Finland as a Grand Duchy directly subject to the monarch. Leading Finnish activists collected signatures for a protest petition to be delivered to the emperor. In the press, rumors began to circulate that peddlers had been collecting signatures for obscure purposes around the country. Many newspaper articles put the blame on Tatars, claimed that these counter-petitions professed loyalty to the Tsar, and accused Tatars and other foreign peddlers of spreading rumors that land was going to be distributed to the poor.²

The "petition panic" spread so rapidly that a few newspapers recommended that their readers keep calm, at least so as not to scare the children with unsubstantiated horror stories (*Rauman Lehti*, April 15, 1899; *Hämeen Sanomat*, August 13, 1899). Decades later, the event was considered to be significant enough to be researched and debunked by a Tatar scholar (Räsänen 1941).

At the time, Tatars almost never appeared on their own terms and in their own words in the Finnish- or Swedish-language press. However, a Tatar businessman in Tampere, Mustafa Ismailoff, wrote to the local newspaper to declare himself and his employees innocent of the petition scandal (*Hämäläinen*, April 22, 1899). Ismailoff's case is a micro-historical study of the challenges that a first-generation Tatar trader faced in nineteenth-century Finland. He established himself as a trader in the industrial city of Tampere in 1895 (Baibulat 2004, 23). After receiving a commercial license, he seems to have settled in quickly. In 1897, Ismailoff started to advertise his haberdashery in the Tampere newspaper *Aamulehti* (June 3, 1897). The local newspapers included him in their lists of noteworthy taxpayers (*Tammerfors Nyheter*, May 14, 1898; *Aamulehti*, February 26, 1899). In 1898, he could afford to move to a central location at Hämeenkatu 25, the main street (*Aamulehti*, June 16, 1898).

Even though Ismailoff showed evidence of success, it seems that his business annoyed some locals. In September 1898, an anonymous letter in

² A selection of headlines from newspapers associating the term *tattari* with the rumors: "Tattarit adressiinsa nimiä houkuttelemassa" [Tartars luring signatures to their petition] (*Aamulehti*, April 8, 1899, 2); "Onnettomuus tuli tattarien adressille" [Tartar petition out of luck] (*Tampereen Sanomat*, April 11, 1899, 3); "Tattarit puuhassa Kotkassakin" [Tartars busy also in Kotka] (*Päivälehti*, April 19, 1899, 3).

Tammerfors Nyheter was remarkable enough to get distribution in other newspapers in the country. The letter called Tampere “the promised land of the Tatars” and described their appearance, religion, and businesses mockingly, feigning surprise at the fact that the traders were using bicycles. Ismailoff’s address was mentioned as “their headquarters.” The letter writer implied that illegal business was afoot: “I don’t think I can judge if such peddler trade is legal or not, but surely a poor ‘rucksack Russian’ will get caught if he offers his goods in the countryside” (*Wiborgsbladet*, September 17, 1898, 3). It was possible to interpret this as an encouragement to denounce the traders, or at least to undermine general confidence in them.

Sometimes professional disagreements took more brutal forms. In February 1899, Ismailoff was involved in a market brawl (*Aamulehti*, February 15, 1899). In March, someone threw a brick through Ismailoff’s shop window (*Tammerfors Nyheter*, March 17, 1889). Multiple incidents must have raised tensions and prepared Ismailoff to defend himself, no matter against whom. Soon after the February Manifesto in 1899, the “petition panic” reached Tampere. *Tampereen Sanomat* reported in April that a Tatar in Pori had tried to trick a small boy to sign a strange paper, but the boy managed to snatch the paper and delivered it to the police (April 11, 1899). A few weeks later, the newspaper published a similar story about schoolboys in Tampere stealing a “petition” from a Tatar. Ismailoff undoubtedly felt threatened by the gossip. Together with Josepoff, a fellow merchant, he tried to raise a libel suit against *Tampereen Sanomat* (*Tammerfors Nyheter*, May 10, 1899). The newspaper facetiously claimed not to know what nationality the accusers might belong to (*Tampereen Sanomat*, May 10, 1899). Because the offending article had not mentioned anyone by name, the libel charges were dropped. *Tampereen Sanomat* was triumphant: “Don’t go to the sauna if you don’t itch”; that is, if you can’t take the heat, stay out of the kitchen (May 11, 1899). Ismailoff and Josepoff had to pay twenty marks to cover the legal expenses of the newspaper’s editor-in-chief. The unsuccessful libel suit was even seen as a minor victory for freedom of the press at a time when the Governor-General held the press under strict control (*Kansalainen*, May 15, 1899).

Ismailoff had some reason to worry, not only because of his personal experiences. In the spring of 1899, the rural police were instructed to round up for interrogations Russian subjects practicing illegal peddling (Tommila 1999, 247–48; Polvinen 1985, 213–15). Albeit dubious, the petition stories were so numerous that scholars have speculated that actual petitions may have been distributed concerning the rights of foreigners to trade in Finland (Asikainen 2017, 41). The Russification measures in 1900 included a decree that legalized itinerant trade in Finland for Russian subjects. Tatars were rumored of appealing to pro-Russian governors and receiving the necessary permits, despite popular resistance (*Helsingin Sanomat*, June 14, 1914). In 1912, the Russian Duma unilaterally imposed

an “Equality Act” on Finland to allow Russian subjects, including Tatars, the right to trade freely in the country, but the Finnish authorities refused to ratify it (McRae 1997, 45).

Migrating peddlers were often lumped together when accused of various crimes and misdemeanors. Tatars were accused of skinning their easily duped rustic customers and taking their profits to Russia. Their wares were either too cheap or their prices were too high. Their wares were suspected to spread contagion, such as cholera (Wassholm 2020, 19–20).³ Often Tatars were depicted along with other despised groups in cartoons (Elmgren 2020). If Russian nationalists complained about Finnish obstruction or separatism, Finnish newspapers could reply that only misbehaving Russian peddlers and Tatars were treated badly in Finland—and did not Russians themselves have a proverb, “an uninvited guest is worse than a Tatar” (*Länsi-Suomi*, April 16, 1910)? However, it is important to note that the perceptions in the newspapers, often sponsored and consumed by the middle classes, differed from the experiences of the peddlers’ rural and working-class customers (Wassholm and Sundelin 2018).

The class-related matter of horse meat consumption became a concern for the early animal welfare societies in Finland and is a prime example of the high visibility of Tatars in the Finnish public sphere before independence. Russian literature and Finnish explorers spread stories about the custom of eating horse meat, “which seems to be the best delicacy of the Tatars” (*Pohjan Poika*, December 30, 1907, 2; on horse meat consumption, see Svanberg, Ståhlberg, and Bekkin 2020). The Tatars’ reputed taste for horse meat interfered with a change in Finnish law and culture regarding the treatment and slaughter of horses. In the early years of the twentieth century, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Finland, founded in 1901, promoted the consumption of horse meat along with animal welfare. The society’s journal, *Eläinsuojelus* (Animal protection), published articles about the benefits of horse meat penned by intellectuals and officials belonging to the upper middle classes, who were following the example of their peers in Sweden and Germany. Transforming the horse into an economic asset was a way of persuading commoners to submit to new regulations and stricter hygienic control. The introduction of a new taste in Finnish meat consumption became a civilizing act. *Eläinsuojelus* promoted the use of horse meat as an economic alternative and organized horse steak dinners to dispel prejudices about its flavor (Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistys 1905, 156).

Eläinsuojelus also published stories about Tatars buying old horses and butchering them on the outskirts of towns. Some stories were based on reports received by the society, others were fictional. Tatars and Roma were sometimes mixed up, because the slur *tattari* could be used of both

3 Playing with the idea of contamination, a satirical magazine joked that hugging a Tatar was madness because kissing a Mohammedan would transmit polygamy (*Kompia*, 20 April 1899, 8).

groups (Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistys 1912b, 179). However, mentions of Islamic customs and culprits’ names reveal that the journal chiefly targeted the Turkophone, hippophage Tatars, not the Roma. These stories served as calls for increased public surveillance and improved education of the lower classes (Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistys 1907a, 76; 1907b, 91; 1908a, 10; 1912a, 46).⁴ In 1908, the editors promised the public a reward of 50 markka⁵ for any information that would lead to the conviction of Tatars guilty of illicit horse slaughter (Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistys 1908b, 170). The journal celebrated successful convictions and published the offenders’ names (Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistys 1909, 142).

Animal welfare activist Torsten Forstén promoted new methods of stunning animals before slaughter and produced a number of informative pamphlets on the topic. He accused Tatar butchers of cruelty in his pamphlet *The Most Common Methods of Slaughter in Our Country* (F[orstén]1905, 12–13). Their methods were an uncomfortable reminder of the traditional methods of the Finnish peasantry that had only recently been outlawed (F[orstén] 1902). The prime objective of the activists was to reform the customs of their countrymen, and Tatars everywhere served as examples of barbarism. Animal welfare activist Constance Ullner (1903) reported about the customs of Tatars and Turks at the Black Sea coast. She claimed that Tatars mistreated their horses in the belief that they were their reborn enemies and warned that “Tatars were vindictive” (178). The popular press picked up these stereotypes and developed their political implications. A Finnish animal abuser could be accused of being “worse than a Tatar” (*Tornion Uutiset*, January 26, 1909). A complaint addressed by Muslims to the Governor General on behalf of *dabh* slaughter (permitted according to Islamic law) was described as “sabre rattling” and a hostile act against Finnish autonomy. Muslim demands were equated with Russian imperialist policies (*Helsingin Sanomat*, June 16, 1909; *Sosialisti*, March 26, 1910).

Tatars, as barbaric Others, served as useful scarecrows on the path to progress. As late as the 1920s, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Finland appealed to the authorities concerning *dabh* and *shechita* slaughter (conforming to Jewish diet regulations) in its annual report. The society claimed that nothing had been done about an alleged Tatar practice:

[. . .] to make the meat tender, they whip and trample the horse to death. This practice, often a topic during our meetings, and often reported by us to the authorities, must be common knowledge by

4 The society’s journals sometimes published “Tatar tales” promoting kindness to animals. In the tales, Tatar characters were often punished for their lack of compassion (Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistys 1906, 123–26; *Eläinten Ystävä*, December 1, 1908).

5 Roughly equivalent to 212 Euros, or 254 US dollars, in 2020 (Suomen virallinen tilasto 2020).

now. However, the authorities just do not fulfill their obligations [. . .]. (Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistys 1923, 55)

There was ideological power in the imagined distinction between *dabb* slaughter (itself not very different from the practices of the Finnish peasantry before the legal reforms) and new and improved “Finnish” practices, imported from Sweden and Germany by elite reformists. As Jonathan Burt (2006) observes in his article on “Conflicts around Slaughter in Modernity,” which deals with British debates on Jewish slaughter and the introduction of new industrial methods of slaughter in the modern meat industry, “the cultural conflict around slaughter reveals that the manner in which we adhere to this or that mode of animal slaughter”—and, I might add, are persuaded to change those modes—“is one of the constituting elements of our particular social identity” (126).

The Public Sphere of Independent Finland: Access and Allies

After the October Revolution in 1917, unprecedented numbers of refugees arrived in Finland, including relatives of previously settled minorities. Not only newly arrived Tatars felt the suspicions of Finnish authorities, as private correspondence was intercepted and, in some cases, ended up under public scrutiny. Finnish authorities suspected minority communities of Bolshevik infiltration, a direct concern for the Tatar community (Leitzinger 2006, 116–17, 146, 206). A study of the archives of the Turku police reveals that Tatars appearing in the police’s register of foreign residents from 1914 to 1918 were often placed “under threat of deportation,” being Russian subjects (Asikainen 2017, 27). The list of foreign residents from the period 1919 to 1923 differentiated Tatars from Russians by nationality (using the obsolete and derogatory term *tattari*), and they were no longer predominantly designated for deportation.⁶ Asikainen interprets this as a result of the improvement of the legal standing of the Tatars after the passing of the freedom of religion act of 1923—and, paradoxically, of their increased visibility (Asikainen 2017, 27–28).

However, visibility came in many forms, not necessarily positive ones. In Western Europe, Tatars had been used as an explanation of the backwardness of Russia, either in the historical sense of the “Tatar yoke” (Bilz-Leonhardt 2008, 33) or in the racist sense of inherited inferiority. Derogatory notions of Tatars had also been imported to Finland through the Russian press. In both anti-Russian and Russian propaganda, Tatars were used as metaphors of cultural savagery and racial inferiority (*Uusi Suomi*, August 20, 1927). In 1924, German economist and sociologist Werner Sombart held a speech at the Finnish-German Society in Helsinki,

⁶ The word *tattari* was disliked by Tatars in Finland, not only because of its frequent use in negative reporting, but also because it was used as a slur against Roma people (Leitzinger 2006, 67–68; 2011, 56). Tatarophiles like G. J. Ramstedt and Yrjö Jahnsson used the terms *tatarit/tataari* or *tatarilainen/tataarilainen*. Eventually, many Finnish Tatars began to refer to themselves as *turkkilainen* (Turk), which remained in use until the 1970s (Leitzinger 2006, 224–46).

where he claimed that “the Jews had conceived the Russian Revolution, the Tatars carried it out bloodily—Lenin was a Tatar—and the Slavs patiently suffer its disastrous consequences” (*Uusi Suomi*, October 23, 1924). This speech was reproduced in the major newspapers (Asikainen 2017, 52). The notion of a racial stigma was also reproduced in the early twentieth-century context of the rivalry between Finnish- and Swedish-speakers in Finland. Finnish-speaking Finns reported with disgust that Swedish-speakers sometimes called them *tattari* (Tatar). Finnish-speakers bristled at the insult because of the implication of Asian origins, and, therefore, racial inferiority (Elmgren 2020, 28).

Finnish nationalists mocked the Western racism that placed the Finns in the same inferior category as Asian nations, but otherwise accepted the notion of racial hierarchies, as long as Finns had a chance to stay on top. Pekka Isaksson has shown how Finnish scholars adapted hierarchical racial theories in anthropological research on the indigenous Sami (Isaksson 2001, 20). Linguist G. J. Ramstedt was cited to prove that Finns were “the whitest race in Europe,” at least in comparison with the Tatars (*Uusi Suomi*, May 23, 1925; Ramstedt 1919a). Nevertheless, Ramstedt was one of the Tatars’ faithful supporters (Ramstedt 1919b). Already by 1910, he had helped the Tatar author and religious scholar Musa Jarullah Bigi compile information for a Tatar-language book about Finland (*Suupohjan Kaiku*, April 4, 1912; on Bigi and Finland, see Belyaev 2017, 117; Zaripov and Belyaev 2020). Together with another respected scholar, economist Yrjö Jahnsson, Ramstedt became involved in efforts to aid political refugees from Russia, as well as to organize a potential resistance movement consisting of Tatars and other minority nations. Businessman Hasan Kanykoff (1880–1954) was one of Ramstedt’s and Jahnsson’s Tatar contacts. Jahnsson helped Kanykoff to apply successfully for Finnish citizenship in July 1921 and to bring his children to Finland from Soviet Russia (Leitzinger 2006, 117–20).

In a study on the nations of Russia published in the spring of 1919, Yrjö Jahnsson paid considerable attention to the national movement of the Turko-Tatar peoples in the former Russian Empire (Zetterberg 1982, 306). Jahnsson emphasized in his lectures that their representatives should be taken to Finland to receive a Finnish education, which they would spread among their nations. Jahnsson organized asylum for many refugees and helped them to find work and attend schools (Halén 1999, 290; Leitzinger 2006, 231–33). “Imagine the difficult position of the Tatars,” Jahnsson wrote to his wife. “If I should just quit for a moment, other forces will get moving to stop them from arriving.” Jahnsson meant the Finnish authorities, whom he intended to fight “out of principle.” He found the liberal Minister of the Interior, Heikki Ritavuori, “strangely narrow-minded in this case, probably chiefly because of the agitation of the Central [Investigative] Police” (Zetterberg 1982, 307; Leitzinger 2006, 119). The Central Investigative Police (*Etsivä Keskuspoliisi*) had just been founded as a political police force in 1919 (Wiberg and Piispanen 1997,

432). Despite Jahnsson's suspicions, Leitzinger (2011) notes that the chief of the Central Investigative Police, fierce anti-Communist Esko Riekki, showed understanding toward the clandestinely immigrating Tatars (39). It is highly likely that the activities of Ramstedt, Jahnsson, Kanykoff, and their supporters were seen as problematic by the authorities, because they endangered border security at a time when irregular Finnish forces were crossing the border to aid uprisings in Soviet Karelia. Jahnsson had the ear of Rudolf Holsti, Minister of Foreign Affairs, which proved occasionally helpful (Leitzinger 2006, 186–87).

The professor saw himself as indispensable for the cause of the Tatars, but what about the Tatar activists? Hasan Kanykoff had come to Finland at the young age of fifteen from the village of Aktuk in the Sergach district. During the following decades, Kanykoff traded in textiles and built up a successful business network. He was also one of the founding members of the Finnish Oriental Society (*Hufvudstadsbladet*, October 16, 1919). In the autumn of 1919, Kanykoff and another Tatar activist, Sarif Daher, joined Ramstedt and Jahnsson in the Club of Vanguard Nations (*Etuwartiokansojen klubi*) to unite the resistance activities of the minority peoples of Russia (Leitzinger 2006, 180–88; 2011, 39).⁷ There are few public traces of their practical activities, except for a late biographical note that Kanykoff had served as “bursar of the Tatar Military Committee” in 1917, predating the Club of Vanguard Nations (*Helsingin Sanomat*, February 28, 1950). This was probably related to fundraising efforts for the Idel-Ural Republic, a short-lived state uniting Tatars, Bashkirs, Chuvash, and other ethnicities in the Volga region in 1918. If Jahnsson served as the face of the organization to the Finnish public, Kanykoff may have been the actual organizer of refugee rescue operations, utilizing his language skills and his extensive contacts with people on the Soviet Russian side of the border, as well as his experiences as an organizer of military training during the revolutionary years. Russian researcher Yuliya Guseva has found references to Kanykoff in GPU files from this era, which represented him as “enjoying the protection of Finnish officials” and a “great authority” to the Finnish police, a key figure in the transmission of aid to persecuted Muslim intellectuals in Soviet Russia (Guseva 2018, 81–82).

One of the less glorious legacies of the club was a rift between some leading members of the Tatar community in Finland. Hasan Kanykoff and Zinetullah Ahsen Böre had opposing views of the project, and never reconciled after their conflict. Ahsen Böre was also a native of Aktuk and owed his safety in Finland to Jahnsson, who had averted the expulsion of Ahsen Böre and the entire Tatar community from Terijoki, by the local governor (Suikkanen 2012, 50). In December 1919, the irascible

⁷ Leitzinger gives the impression that the Tatars founded the club. Zetterberg names only the Finnish and Estonian members and one Komi immigrant, Igon Mosšeg (Zetterberg 1982, 308–9). Halén claims that the Club of Vanguard Nations may have been a Soviet set-up (Halén 1999, 290).

Jahnsson denounced Ahsen Böre as a Bolshevik agitator to the governor of Uusimaa and claimed that the Tatar had agitated for the murder of General Mannerheim. Ahsen Böre replied that “snot-nosed” Kanykoff with his allies had planned to “sell the Tatars to the English” (Leitzinger 2006, 189). After harsh words on both sides, the governor ordered the expulsion of Ahsen Böre from Uusimaa. Ahsen Böre settled in Tampere in 1920, where he kept a textile and haberdasher’s shop, and continued to play a leading role in the small Tatar community. The Helsinki congregation took his side and approached the governor with an open letter declaring Jahnsson to be an unknown individual who did not represent the Tatars in any way. Ahsen Böre would, in later writings, refer to Jahnsson as “the mad professor” (Suikkanen 2012, 60). The conflict was concurrent with the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–22, which had been instigated by the Western Allies. Britain had promised Greece territorial gains in former Ottoman territory. The Turcophile Ahsen had reasons to be suspicious of activities that would cause repercussions in Turko-Soviet relations, too (Leitzinger 2006, 191).

Although the club was unsuccessful in its political aims, many Tatars believed that Kanykoff’s personal connections had helped them through this transitional period. The benevolence of the professors toward the “poor Tatars” strengthened their self-confidence and “accelerated their Finnishization,” according to Leitzinger (2011, 39–40). In Leitzinger’s opinion, the conflicts that involved the Finnish authorities encouraged the adoption of the Freedom of Religion Act of 1922 (Leitzinger 2006, 192). Even though Jahnsson may have exaggerated his own importance at the expense of the minority activists, the cooperation produced some positive results. The club assisted political refugees such as the Volga Tatar politician Sadri Maqsudi, who had served as president of the Idel-Ural republic in 1918. As a deputy in the Duma, Maqsudi had been known as a defender of Finnish autonomy. He did not stay for long in Finland but continued to maintain contacts with Finland even after settling in Turkey, where he continued his career as a scholar and statesman (Belyaev 2017, 118–19). When Ramstedt was appointed chargé d’affaires for Finland in Tokyo and Beijing, he met Maqsudi in Paris and received a recommendation letter in Turkish for the long journey across the Levant (Halén 1999, 212).

As Soviet power consolidated, the activities of the Club of Vanguard Nations petered out toward the mid-1920s. Other enthusiasts spoke in favor of political co-operation between Finno-Ugric and Turanian nations against Soviet Russia, forming an “iron chain” around the common enemy, but remained doubtful about its immediate feasibility (*Suunta*, July 12, 1919; *Uusi Suomi*, February 14, 1924; *Uusi Suomi*, June 27, 1924). The club was discontinued and disparaged by nationalists as an ideological dead end (Fennobalticus 1927, 73; Leitzinger 2006, 186). Others were fascinated by its legacy. In one of the most famous nationalist science-fiction novels of the interwar era, author and illustrator Aarno Karimo pictured a future total war between Finland and Russia

(see Stadius in this volume). The novel, *Kohtalon kolmas hetki* (The third moment of destiny), was first serialized in the magazine *Hakkapeliitta* in 1925–26, and published as a novel in 1926, with a second edition in 1935.

Finnish technological ingenuity plays an important role in the narrative, but the ultimate *deus ex machina* is a Tatar officer, a direct descendant of Genghis Khan and leader of a secret union of minority nations, who heads a million-headed Mongol horde in the final onslaught against Russia. The author's imagination had evidently been captured by the idea, presented in the novel as an arithmetical fact, that all minorities of the Russian Empire together could outnumber the ethnic Russians. This power fantasy was contaminated with an antisemitic trope: the novel's Russia was led by a crypto-Jew. The racist stereotype that Russians were pathetically incapable of action without "alien" leaders was used to justify the novel's genocidal ending. Karimo was possibly inspired by the adventures of his acquaintance Yrjö Elfvingen, a Finnish-born officer in the Russian Army, who allegedly had fought on the side of the Crimean Tatars in 1918 and later joined the White side in the Finnish Civil War (Karimo 1928, 155–60; Aro 1931, 7).

The "conspiracy of the ten nations" in Karimo's novel was a fanciful invention, but it would appear in a serious guise as an expression of what I call arithmetical pragmatism: the belief that Russia could be defeated by adding up the populations of its opponents until they collectively outnumbered the ethnic Russians (Elmgren, forthcoming). In 1933, the nationalist journal *Suomen Heimo* published Tatar author and businessman Ibrahim Arifulla's (1901–55) essay "Idel-Ural" about the struggle for liberty by the "Volga Turks." An unsigned introduction to the article claimed that only 75 million of the 160 million inhabitants of the Soviet Union were "Great Russians" and that Finnish prejudices against its oppressed minorities were unwarranted: "in the last decades, with increased contacts to Europe and Bolshevik terror, [the hope for independence] has led all minority peoples to organize on behalf of their national interests" (I. Arifulla 1933, 10). This was a way to frame the article as relevant to the Greater Finland project. Arifulla's essay addressed the matter of uniting all minorities against Russia, but he was primarily interested in the Turkic nationalities. The essay was also published as the first of a publication series by the Prometheus association in Helsinki, founded as a branch of the international Promethean League to promote the cause of the national minorities in the Soviet Union (I. Arifulla 2011, 135; Leitzinger 2006, 196–204). Former supporters of the Club of Vanguard Nations, such as Ramstedt, were among its founding members (Halén 1979, 14; 1999, 290–93). Tatars, or rather, Turks, formed a significant proportion of its members. Of the association's 72 members in 1933–34, 42 were native-born Finns, and 20 were "Idel-Uralians" (Leitzinger 2006, 200).

The Tatar community was open to other Turkic immigrants, who were often hired as teachers and contributed to publications. Osman Soukkan,

a native of the Ottoman Empire, became a valued member of the Helsinki community. He left Finland for Sweden after the Second World War and participated in the founding of the first Islamic congregation in Sweden (Sorgenfrei 2020). The Azeri Mehmet Sadik was hired as a teacher by Ahsen Böre and published in Helsinki a magazine for the independence of Azerbaijan, called *Yeni Turan*, later *Turan*, with contributions from Ibrahim Arifulla, among others. Sadik was fired by Ahsen Böre under unclear circumstances, possibly because the Central Investigative Police investigated him, although he was not accused of any crime. A later visa application was denied; the Central Investigative Police stated that Sadik had been spreading discord among the Muslims in Finland (Leitzinger 2006, 194–95).

In the early 1930s, another scandal rocked the Helsinki Muslim community. The Bukharan teacher Alimcan Idris (1887–1959), mentioned above, had gained the community’s trust. He was a proactive community representative who had advertised the success of the Tatar community in a Turku newspaper (*Schir* 1932). After a sojourn in Estonia in 1930 and 1931, Idris lived in Finland as a Turkish citizen. In 1932, the Central Investigative Police received tips from their colleagues in Estonia and Poland that Idris was in fact a GPU agent. His colorful life included serving Muslim prisoners of war in Germany as a mullah during the First World War. After the Bolshevik Revolution, he began to agitate for their return to Russia. According to Polish intelligence, he was caught at the border and sentenced to ten years in the Lubyanka prison for smuggling medicine. However, he was soon sent on various missions to Bukhara, to Kazan in 1920, and to Berlin in 1922. The Gestapo also informed the Finnish Central Investigative Police in 1934 of Idris’s suspicious activities. The Finnish authorities doubted the rumors but recommended the refusal of his visa in the future. Only Hasan Kanykoff supported Idris publicly (Leitzinger 2006, 195; Halén 2007, 40).

A complicating factor was that Idris belonged among those Turkic intellectuals who supported the term “Tatar,” which Kanykoff continued to use. As the relationship between the Soviet Union and Turkey cooled in the early 1930s, the Finnish Tatars increasingly made a symbolic and political choice between Turkish and Tatar identities (Leitzinger 2011, 44). Zinetullah Ahsen Böre, who had had his own share of trouble with Finnish authorities and intellectuals, had his citizenship application refused in 1922. Instead, he applied for Turkish citizenship, which was granted in 1923. He began to promote to the Finnish Tatars a Turkish alignment and the modernizing efforts of Mustafa Kemal, who had a generally positive reputation in Finland at the time.⁸ Ahsen Böre was one of the first Finnish Tatars to embrace Turkish nationalism, but he was far from the only one. As chairman of the Turkish Society of Finland, a cultural association founded in 1935, Ibrahim Arifulla resisted the use of the ethnonym Tatar and promoted the use of “Turk” about all nations

⁸ See, for example, author Mika Waltari (1929) and statesman Urho Kekkonen (1930).

considered Turkic (I. Arifulla 1941). In an earlier interview, his brother Sadri Arifulla had dismissed the ethnonym Tatar as a Russian invention (S. Arifulla 1936). The enthusiasm formed the education of their children. Leitzinger calls the second generation of the Finnish Tatars (1935–65) “those who grew up as Turks” (2011, 43). Similar trends can be observed among Tatar minorities in other countries outside of the Soviet Union. For example, Japanese Tatars acquired Turkish citizenships in the 1950s, and are still referred to as “Turks” in Japanese literature, although the community mainly consisted of Volga Tatars, Bashkirs, and Central Asians until the post-war era (Dündar 2014).

Unlike many Tatar writers at the time, Ahsen Böre advocated the Latin alphabet. The spelling reforms initiated by him finally found a breakthrough in the Islamic Congregation of Finland in the 1950s and 1960s, after Böre’s death. He also proposed the founding of a school for “Finnish-Turkish” children, which became reality twenty years after his death. Two of his sons were sent to study in Istanbul, and the elder brother settled in Turkey permanently. The father may have wanted to put his ideals into practice but also to avoid the danger of assimilation. This included the temptation to become assimilated into a high-status minority. Some of Ahsen Böre’s children went to Swedish-language schools and participated in Swedish-speaking sports associations in Tampere, and eventually moved to Sweden (Suikkanen 2012, 91). The relative multiculturalism of the urban Swedish-speakers in Finland, already successfully assimilating Germans, Russians, and other immigrants, may have contributed to the appeal of Swedish schools and associations to minorities. Many Finnish Jews were also Swedish-speaking until the 1930s (Ekholm and Muir 2016).

Even though the efforts of individual Tatars and Turks were received benevolently, Pan-Turanism—the ideology of the unity of political interests between Turkic and Fenno-Ugric nations—never became a mainstream ideology in Finland. Although an inclusive Hungarian Pan-Turanist like Károly Tornay could take arithmetical pragmatism to new heights with a sum of “600 million [. . .] the largest number among the races of Man,” the nationalist journal *Suomen Heimo* rejected this vast imagined community in its comments to his article: The “doctrine that Turks and Mongols are our relatives is not accepted here” (Tornay 1933, 110–13). Tornay called for brotherly love to forge the Turanians into one people, but the Finnish-language nationalist movements of the 1920s and 1930s emphasized the danger of the small Finnish nation being “submerged” into greater national collectives. To many commentators, the fate of the minorities in Soviet Russia seemed irreversible, and the best course for Finland would be to strengthen its real and symbolic borders and eradicate all internal difference (Kallia 1937; Posti 1937).

The Tatars in Finland, fewer than 1,000 individuals during the interwar era, felt the threat of becoming “submerged in a sea of nations” even more acutely. After the discord caused by the Club of the Vanguard

Nations and the cases of Mehmet Sadik and Alimcan Idris, the Tatar communities may have feared that further internal conflicts would lead to negative perceptions by the majority, and so they adapted a low profile. Already in 1932, a Central Investigative Police agent reported that “[they] associate only with each other and live a completely isolated life that a stranger’s eye cannot penetrate” (Leitzinger 2011, 43). However, the Tatars maintained international contacts within the Volga Tatar diaspora that escaped the eye of the Finnish public. They commemorated the Idel-Ural Republic in a great congress of the diaspora in Poland 1938, welcomed by representatives of the Polish state (Baibulat 2004).

The Redemptive War?

The participation of the Tatars and Jews in the Finnish armed forces as well as the women’s auxiliary corps (Lotta Svärd) between 1939 and 1945 has recently been formulated as the defining moment of their integration into the nation. Dan Kantor writes about the participation of the Finnish Jews in the Second World War: “It has often been said that then, at the latest, the Jews of Finland redeemed their place [*lunastivat paikkansa*] in and the acceptance of the Finnish society” (Kantor 2012). But a closer study of the rhetoric around the war as a redemptive event reveals that the integration process was one-sided. The participation of the minorities in the wars is not as important to the majority narratives as to the minorities’ own narratives (see Roman, this issue).

Although the Constitution of 1919 had given Tatars and other foreign citizens the right to apply for naturalization, a sizable portion of the Tatar population in Finland did not have Finnish citizenship when the Winter War broke out in 1939. According to oral history recorded by community members, stateless Finnish Tatars volunteered for service (Belyaev 2017, 156). However, according to the 1932 Conscription Act, foreign citizens or stateless refugees could be conscripted to military service by the order of the governor (Merikoski 1933, 7, 68).⁹ Many may have felt that they volunteered out of patriotic duty, but they were legally obliged to obey the governor’s decision.

Although Tatars were numerically few, their presence at the front and at home evoked cognitive dissonance in Finnish journalists: The Tatars appeared to be both exotic and overwhelmingly normal. In a description of the gathered mourners at the funeral of a “Turkish” soldier, a columnist wrote that “especially the women were so Finnish-looking, and the men, too, dressed so familiarly, [. . .] that on first appearance you would have thought them to be Finnish through and through, but on a closer look the color and twinkle of their eyes proved them Southerners” (Suomen Islamiseurakunta 2006, 103). The columnist confessed daydreaming about “Turanian tribal ties of blood,” for “our Turks, commonly called Tatars,

⁹ My grandfather Abbas Bayautdin was among these stateless conscripts. He preserved the conscription order signed by the governor of Turku and Pori Province. This type of document ought to be studied further.

are great patriots and feel warm tribal affinity to the Finns.” Despite the affection, he felt confused observing a group of men in Finnish uniform speaking “such a strange language [. . .] that one could not understand a single word” (Suomen Islam-seurakunta 2006, 103).

The reaction was not always benign. In September of 1942, a uniformed soldier on leave was shot by a stranger while walking and conversing in Tatar with a friend in nocturnal Helsinki. The “shooter was suspected of believing [the victim] to be a spy or a *desant* [Soviet agent],” although he was never found (Suomen Islam-seurakunta 2006, 115).

Many Tatar women volunteered to serve in civil defense. In one case, this opened the way for Finnish Jews to participate in the “redemptive” process and overcome potentially lethal stereotypes. The Lotta Svärd organization, the prestigious women’s auxiliary corps, had previously excluded Jewish women, officially because they were not Christian. In the yearly meeting of the Lotta Svärd organization in 1923, it was stated that “Jews will probably be at pains to commit to the defense of the first clause of the Lotta pledge: our faith” (Vasara 1997, 150). This discrimination seemed to be amplified by political and racial prejudice. In 1925, the central board of directors received the guideline that “when considering membership applications by Jews and Russians, refuse them as a rule” (151). Later, when Jewish women applied for membership after the Winter War in the spring of 1940, the association also initially rejected them. But then, only a few weeks later, the applications of two Muslim women were immediately accepted by the board of directors. At the same time, the board accepted two applications by Jewish women. Although the board did not comment on the ideological change, it seemed as if the Muslim women had opened the way for their Jewish sisters (151).

During the Continuation War (1941–44), Finnish newspapers started to pay attention to the country’s minorities again, especially the Tatars. Ibrahim Arifulla was interviewed in the popular journal *Seura*, where he consistently referred to his people as “Turks” and their language as “Turkish” (Arti 1944). Some articles were devoted to their warlike past and successes against the Russians as well as their patriotic service in Finland, even debunking the petition panic of 1899 that apparently was still remembered (I. Arifulla 1941, 110). The Arifulla brothers served in various intelligence-related tasks during the Winter War 1939–40 and the Continuation War 1941–44 (Suomen Islam-seurakunta 2006, 26–27). Tatars seem to have been over-represented in military intelligence and propaganda duties in 1939–44, considering the small size of their naturalized population. Several Finnish Tatars participated in Operation Stella Polaris, a secret transfer of intelligence material and personnel to Sweden in case of Soviet occupation in 1944. Some of them remained in Sweden after the war to avoid repercussions (Leitzinger 2006, 184). Halén mentions a specific “Turkish section” of military intelligence under colonel Reino Hallamaa, who participated in the planning and execution of Operation Stella Polaris (2005, 24). The same individuals, who were

involved in the Tatar community’s public relations, evidently provided a “secret weapon” for the Finnish war effort.

The policy of territorial expansion awakened interest in ethnic minorities as potential allies. Ahsen Böre contributed to this tendency by painting a spectacular picture of a “peaceful” Europe ruled by Greater Germany, Greater Finland, and Greater Turkey (*Helsingin Sanomat*, August 28, 1941). However, at the same time, Finnish authors reproduced the Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory, augmented with racist descriptions of the Bolsheviks and the Russian people as “Tatarized,” that is, Asian, hence autocratic and despotic (Ruuskanen 1944). Turcophiles and Tatarists alike had to continue defending their community against the unfortunate implications of such anti-Russian propaganda.

To improve the community’s public standing, Zinetullah Ahsen Böre had already by the 1930s started to promote information about Islam. He had a religious education and had functioned as an imam in Viborg before moving to Terijoki, where he was elected imam in 1916. His interest in spreading information about Islam to the Finnish majority was kindled around the same time as his pro-Turkish activities. In 1931, he translated a book by a famous convert, Lord Headley, also known as Shaikh Rahmatullah al-Farooq, into Finnish. He also translated the Quran into Finnish in collaboration with the Russian emigrant Georg Pimenoff. The project was finished in 1942. In the foreword, Ahsen Böre flattered the Finnish reader: “I have lived in Finland for more than a quarter of a century, and I have noticed that the Finns are enlightened and want to get the right understanding about all things” (Suikkanen 2012, 111). He sent a copy to the Commander in Chief, Gustaf Mannerheim, and received a telegram of thanks on December 18, 1942, for “your gift of the Holy Quran in the memory of the young Muslims who faithfully fulfilled their soldier’s vow until their heroic deaths” (Belyaev 2017, 150). Ahsen Böre, who had been denied citizenship based on the accusation that he had insulted Mannerheim, must have received some satisfaction from this reply.

There is some potential to explore to what extent Russians, Jews, and Tatars collaborated in their charity efforts for the ethnic and religious minorities among the Red Army POWs in Finland. By 1942, the prisoners of war under Finnish control had been sorted into separate categories, one of which was “soldiers and NCOs belonging to minority nationalities sympathetic to Finland” (Danielsbacka 2013, 82–84). Tatars and other Turkic nationalities were placed in this category. This helped the organization of private initiatives to their aid. It is possible that the Jewish businessman and humanitarian Abraham Stiller (1885–1972) helped the Tatar community to distribute aid and Qurans to Muslim prisoners of war.¹⁰ It was not an unproblematic task. Zinetullah Ahsen Böre supplied Muslim prisoners of war with Qurans and textiles, but was forced to give

10 Mentioned in the unsourced biography by Roni Smolar, *Setä Stiller: Valpon ja Gestapon välissä* [Uncle Stiller: Between the State Police and the Gestapo]. Helsinki: Tammi 2003.

up his charity after reprimands by the State Police. His colleague, Georg Pimenoff, was imprisoned for two years for informing the International Red Cross about the appalling conditions in the prison camps of Finnish-occupied Karelia (Suikkanen 2012, 120).

Tatars served in military intelligence and in the interrogation of prisoners. After the Moscow armistice in 1944, some of them moved to Sweden in fear of trials or deportations according to the peace agreements (Suomen Islam-seurakunta 2006, 132–34). These literal secret weapons, Tatar refugees from Finland and the Baltic states, founded the first Muslim congregation in Sweden in 1949. The first Swedish imam was Osman Soukkan, who had arrived in Finland in the 1920s and become integrated into the Tatar community in Helsinki. At the time, there were around fifty Tatars living in Sweden (Al-Nadaf 2002, 88; on Tatars in Sweden, see Sorgenfrei 2020).

The ensuing Cold War and uneasy neutrality of Finland forced the Tatars to return to the “low profile.” Already in 1945, when the State Police produced a report on suspected anti-Soviet activities of the Finnish Muslims in compliance with the armistice agreement, the report repeated almost verbatim the results of the 1930s reports: “They associate only with each other and live a completely isolated life that a stranger’s eye cannot penetrate” (Leitzinger 2006, 204). It is possible that the Tatars continued to have friends in high places; alternatively, the majority’s wide-spread ignorance provided a protective veil.

No Shortcut to Success: Conclusion and Prospects for Further Research

The Tatars were compelled to serve various purposes in the interests of the majority population—or rather, its intellectual representatives—during the first decades of Finnish independence. We may imagine four parallel audiences to the success story, as articulated by Finnish Tatars: the Tatar community; the public sphere dominated by the majority population (often assumed to know nothing about Tatars); the global Tatar diaspora and the Turkic world; and the *Dar al-Islam*—the abode of Islam, the Muslim world. The resolution remains the same: after initial hardships, a compromise is reached, and the Tatar identity has been maintained, while an external assimilation process has been fulfilled, so that Tatars “pass” as Finns. Although individual stories of discrimination or prejudices are by no means ignored, they are not included in the public balancing of the accounts.

We have seen how Tatars in Finland on occasion provoked the ire of powerful allies and felt persecuted unfairly by authorities. Yrjö Jahnsson’s denunciation of Zinetullah Ahsen Böre to the authorities as a “Bolshevik” may have been groundless, but it had concrete effects: Ahsen Böre’s citizenship application was denied because of rumors substantiated by a respected Finn. Although the congregation supported him, its members must have drawn their own conclusions about the usefulness of provoking powerful people. Researching these everyday survival strategies must

be done through autobiographical accounts and extensive interviews. The topic can only be explored through its negation here: the initial failure of Zinetullah Ahsen Böre to maintain such networks and the lessons he may have drawn from it.

Immigrant groups relied heavily on informal networks of trust and support. Leitzinger has noted that agents of the Central Investigative Police, looking for evidence of business irregularities among Tatars in Terijoki in 1920, evaluated suspects favorably if they knew them personally (Leitzinger 2011, 40–41). When the Central Investigative Police gathered intelligence locally, the methods could be quite informal. Many negative decisions on citizenship applications were based on local authorities making sweeping statements of the “usefulness” of the applicant, the large size of their families, and the “harmful” competition that their businesses would constitute to Finnish entrepreneurs. Senior Detective Arvid Ojasti gave the following advice during a training session for detectives in 1935:

When investigating citizenship petitions, one should talk to janitors and house managers, but then I think that one can quite directly address the person without concern for their particular political color, especially concerning the foreigner’s financial circumstances. (Valtiollinen Poliisi 1935, 1)

Ignorant people could be persuaded to believe that foreigners would just end up living on taxpayers’ money, “and when you present it like this, people will gossip freely about the person in question” (Valtiollinen Poliisi 1935, 1). In Ahsen Böre’s case, the accumulated rumors from Terijoki and Helsinki, including the reputed insult to Mannerheim, became the undoing of his citizenship application in 1922 (Suikkanen 2012, 62). The Central Investigative Police could recommend the refusal of an application even if accusations had been proven to be false, or based on suspicious, albeit legal, behavior (Leitzinger 2006, 194). In one case, the municipality supported the citizenship application, but two members of the municipal council insisted on adding cautions about “Oriental customs” and Islamic permission of polygamy to the protocol. Some applications were refused merely because municipal authorities did not want to encourage more applications (Leitzinger 2011, 41–43).

For members of a minority community that had to rely so much on informal networks because the authorities applied the laws and regulations arbitrarily, it made sense to tell a success story once the opportunity arose to reach an influential audience. It is not surprising that Tatars have insisted on such a narrative, emphasizing values that are extolled by the majority culture, such as industriousness, self-control, and respectability (see Stark in this volume). However, this did not exclude carnivalistic takes on the community’s history. According to an oft-repeated anecdote, the first Tatar traders came to Finland “by accident,” after getting too

drunk on a ferry (I. Arifulla 1941). This anecdote is repeated in many historiographies of the community as a humorous contrast to the emphasis on respectability. Such anecdotes provided a way to bond with Finns and make light of prejudice.¹¹ They also served the most important strategy, informal networking in everyday life. Getting along with one's neighbors, who could testify to one's trustworthiness to the authorities, became a core value. To explore this strategy, more research is needed.

In a strange echo of the geopolitical strategy that I have named arithmetical pragmatism, Leitzinger (2006) has envisioned the defeat of the notion of an "average Finn" within the population of Finland: if all minorities unite, the average Finn becomes a statistical rarity (257). However, the aging Tatar community is disappearing among the mass of new minority groups forming within the Finnish population since the 1990s. New Islamic congregations with larger memberships have pushed them out of the limelight. On behalf of the Tatars, Leitzinger laments the fact that the media seeks out other, more radical spokespersons in matters related to Islam (254–55). I agree with Leitzinger that the strategy of the low profile is no longer enough. There is a danger that outsiders, such as xenophobes, will fill the knowledge vacuum with their own interpretations of Tatar identity and utilize the Tatar "success story" for their own purposes. To be accepted, they have emphasized their similarity with the Finns, but to survive as a community, they have maintained and cultivated difference. Perhaps it is time to emphasize the differences, even if it means to uncover painful conflicts in the past. How else can new minorities learn from these experiences? The legacy of these survival strategies continues to this day.

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¹¹ Such humor can be found in an interview with Osman Abdrahim, an elder of the Helsinki Tatar community (Lönnqvist 2015).

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“Our Secret Weapon”: Minority Strategies of the Finnish Tatars 1880–1945

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Selective Memories: Finnish State Policy toward Roma in the 1930s and 1940s in Its European Context and Post-War Perception

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Abstract

In this article, we argue that the discriminatory acts and laws that the Finnish government issued in the 1930s and 1940s to regulate vagrancy and impose labor obligations on the population were intended first and foremost to put pressure on the Finnish Roma, an ethnic minority consisting of an estimated number of 4,000 persons at that time.² Although the *irtolaislaki* (Finnish Act on the Regulation of Vagrancy)³ of 1936 did not mention the Roma explicitly, its content and intention is comparable to a series of similar acts directed against them in Europe before and after World War II. These similarities show that Finland's vagrancy legislation cannot be fully understood without a European perspective because Roma policies tend to have a supranational character. Up to now, the historiography on Finland's Roma policies has rarely gone beyond its Finnish and Scandinavian interpretive scope (Gasche 2016, 17–19). Yet, even during WWII, the development in Finland was comparable to some other countries allied with Nazi Germany, as we will show. At the same time, however, the *postwar* development in Finland seems to be unique in international comparison. Unlike the Finnish Roma, the Roma in Germany and other (West) European countries began a Roma rights movement and started to demand protection within the majority society along with political equality. This activism was primarily based on a consciousness of the centuries-old discrimination against “Gypsies” practiced

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2 One has to be careful with this estimation. There is no existing statistical information about the exact number of Roma who have lived in Finland (Pulma 2016, 208).

3 All translations of Finnish, German, and Russian quotations, names, and titles are made by the article's authors.

by the majority, which culminated in the Nazi genocide of Europe's Roma (Matras 1998; Rose 1987; Wippermann 2015, 138–50). The Finnish Roma, however, identified themselves with a positive narrative about Roma soldiers fighting in the Finnish Army for their home country (Ruohotie 2007, 12). This strategy was successful, we argue, since it perfectly fits into the official Finnish narrative about a brave and fair “war of continuation” that Finland fought against the Soviet Union independently and separately from Nazi Germany—a point of view questioned in recent years in light of the information on Finnish *Waffen-SS* and *Wehrmacht* volunteers involved in Nazi atrocities against Soviet civilians, including the Roma.

The International Dimension of Anti-“Gypsy” Measures

The “Finnish Act on the Regulation of Vagrancy” from 1936, which became effective at the beginning of 1937, received international attention at the annual meeting of the International Criminal Police Commission in Vienna in January 1939. The organization was founded in Vienna in 1923 with the aim of developing the international cooperation of criminal police (Deflem 2002, 23). Finland became a member in 1928. According to the Dutch historian Leo Lucassen, between 1931 and 1934, at the initiative of Austria, efforts to combat the “*Zigeunerunwesen*” (Gypsy nuisance) were also incorporated into the organization's mission (Lucassen 1996, 186–87; see also Selling 2017, 329–30). At least since the eleventh meeting of the International Criminal Police Commission in Copenhagen in June 1935, the international delegates were also aware of the harsh measures the German authorities planned to approve against the “Gypsies.” In his presentation, the German delegate Karl Siegfried Bader suggested that certain “intransigent Gypsies” should be sterilized. At the end of his speech, Bader stated that the “Gypsies,” as a “foreign element,” would never fully belong to the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* (German people's community in the sense of a “racial” unity of Germans) (Bader 1935). In the Nordic Countries as well, Roma groups were confronted with discrimination and rigid national policies against their way of life. Not surprisingly, the most sensitive issues within the social engineering program of the Nordic welfare states, such as child custody and recommendations for sterilization, were associated with Roma people until the 1970s (Pulma 2016, 210–15; Pulma 2006, 164–65; Mattila 2005, 402–50; Selling 2014, 147–49).

In the spring of 1936, the *Internationale Zentralstelle zur Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens* (International Central Office for the Control of the Gypsy Plague) was established with the aim to set up a transnational “Gypsy” database within the International Criminal Police Commission. Member states were asked to collect photographs, fingerprints, crime records, civil status information, and genealogies of “Gypsies” in their respective countries (Fraser 2000, 258; Lucassen 1996, 186–87), even though there was no clear and inclusive definition of the people who could be identified and registered as “Gypsies.”

Although Martti Koskimies, the chief of the Finnish police, presented the “Finnish Act on the Regulation of Vagrancy,” he did not do so within an explicit discussion on this sub-theme. Koskimies introduced the act to his international colleagues in response to an investigation by the commission to discern whether member countries had inaugurated legal acts against persons who had yet to commit any crime but whose appearance and activities posed a potential threat for public safety. Koskimies explained to his colleagues that Finland, like many other countries, had identified the criminal element as mostly consisting of itinerant individuals either with no fixed address or as individuals who had permanent residences but showed an unwillingness to work. To allow for stricter control, explained Koskimies, the Finnish government enacted the new “Finnish Act on the Regulation of Vagrancy” (Schultz 1939, 10).

In Finland, the Finnish Roma were the only easily identifiable itinerant group of significance. As a result of the new law, the *Mustalaislähetys* (Gypsy Mission)—established in 1906 and the oldest civil service organization for the Roma in Finland—stated that the daily life of the Roma had become increasingly more difficult (Viita 1967, 122). However, the “Finnish Act on the Regulation of Vagrancy” did not mention the Roma at all. But this was not a genuine Finnish pattern (Bernecker 2007, 281–82; Peschanski 2007, 268–70), and can even be discerned during the time after WWII. The “Bayrische Landfahrerordnung” (Bavarian vagrant act) from the 1950s, for instance, showed the same semantic policy. The Bavarian vagrant regulation from 1955 re-enacted discriminatory legislation against “Gypsies,” building on an earlier law from 1926. The Bavarian authorities now avoided the term “Gypsies” but did not make any “substantial change to the [previous] law or its spirit,” states the Israeli historian Gilad Margalit (2002, 72). Traditionally speaking, there has also been an association between vagrancy and criminality in the opinion of the authorities and the public (see, for instance, Bogdal 2013, 337–46; Bernecker 2007, 282; Peschanski 2007: 269–70). The same goes for the perception that the itinerant way of life is connected with work-shyness. The above-mentioned Bavarian law of 1926 for controlling “Gypsies,” vagrants, and “Arbeitscheue” (work-shy people) imposed the obligation of permanent work on every “Gypsy” between the age of sixteen and sixty-five. Also, local authorities or heads of municipalities were authorized to imprison “Gypsies” in workhouses, “without any prior legal procedure,” as Margalit underlined. It was believed that the workhouses would educate the “Gypsies” through hard work and mend their assumed weaknesses, such as “idleness, lack of self-discipline, and lack of perseverance” (Margalit 2002, 32). Similar actions were suggested by the “Finnish Act on the Regulation of Vagrancy” from 1937. Local authorities were obliged to round up all itinerant persons. Those picked up for the first time were supposed to be provided with instructions and support for living a well-ordered life. If all the guidance given failed to achieve the desired result, however, the authorities had to bring the itinerant persons

under the supervision of the state and control their way of life for up to one year. If such supervision still proved ineffective, the authorities could commit these individuals to live in a workhouse for less than a year or to spend up to three years in prison.⁴

Radical Change in the Majority's Attitude toward the Minority during the War

The outbreak of the Second World War also marked the beginning of harsher times for the Finnish Roma. After the Finnish-Russian Winter War of 1939–40, between 1,500 and 2,000 Finnish Roma were among the 450,000 Karelian Finns who were resettled from Karelia to Finland. This traumatic experience (Teräs 2014, 48–52) was accompanied by the loss of former social networks connecting them with the majority population; these relationships had been crucial for the livelihoods of the Roma. After the summer of 1941, when the Finnish army re-conquered Finnish territory in Karelia, only Finnish Karelian Roma families were not allowed to return to their homes. At the same time, it turned out to be extremely difficult for the authorities to provide this group of evacuated people with housing. Even those Karelian Finnish Roma men who found work after their evacuation often had to sleep with their families under the open sky. Other temporary lodging solutions were sauna buildings and farmers' barns. Furthermore, unlike other resettled Karelian Finns, the Karelian Roma were not given any compensation for their losses. This was often the result of the fact that they lacked the necessary documentation of their properties. Also, the Roma rarely owned real estate. The housing situation for the evacuated Karelian Roma remained critical even after the end of the war. Earning a living posed yet another challenge. The most significant source of income for the Roma was horse trading. The horses of the Karelian Roma, however, were either left on the other side of the border, sold to raise money for food, or confiscated by the Finnish Army. The Karelian Roma groups who resorted to traveling around the country and begging for their survival, however, found this strategy less than expedient during the harsh wartime conditions. Some Roma, in order to survive, turned to committing minor crimes, such as selling illegal alcohol (Pulma 2016, 208–9; 2011, 165, 172).

During the summer and autumn of 1942, not only various Finnish authorities but also ordinary Finnish civilians repeatedly demanded that the authorities clamp down on traveling Roma groups and “put them to work.” The Suomen Nimismiesyhdistys (Finnish association of regional police chiefs) in particular argued for more stringent measures against the Roma. The association's position on the so-called “mustalaiskysymys” (Gypsy question), which reflects the authorities' and majority population's biased and pejorative perception of the Roma, was made public in the Finnish Police Journal by board member Harry Blomberg. In his article

⁴ The German documentation of Koskimies's speech here uses the word “Zwangsarbeiterhaus” (forced labor house) (Schultz 1939, 10–11).

“Mustalaisista” (About the Gypsies), he reminded the readers of the association’s responsibility for overseeing the maintenance of public order and the prevention of crime, as well as to offer suggestions to higher authorities in order to tighten measures against certain occurrences (Blomberg 1942, 647). In this framework, Blomberg continued, the association had also paid attention to the Finnish Roma, a group that he identified as “generally criminal by nature.” Besides accusing the Roma of “begging, deception, and stealing,” he also condemned them for illegally practicing professions and moving from one place to another without authorization. Blomberg explained that at this time the Finnish association of regional police chiefs had been pondering the “Gypsy question” because “most Finnish men [were] defending the fatherland, and both men and women, even children, [were] doing hard and useful work” (Blomberg 1942, 652). According to Blomberg, the majority of Finns viewed the Roma with resentment; they regarded the Roma’s itinerant way of life with incomprehension and had no compassion or understanding of any of the underlying reasons for the supposed crime rate among this group. For this reason, the association sent a letter to the Finnish Ministry of the Interior, calling for a tougher course of action against the Roma. At the end of his remarks, Blomberg profoundly regretted that Finnish constitutional law did not consider racial issues and that the Finnish Roma were, according to constitutional law, Finnish citizens, thus rendering it impossible for the association to suggest radical law decrees to solve the “Gypsy question.” The final sentence of the article is clearly motivated by racism: Blomberg and the association maintained that it would be destructive in the long run if the Roma, a distinctly “inferior population”, mixed with “our” Finnish nation (Blomberg 1942, 652).

Juho Lähti shared a similar impression of the Finnish Roma in his article “Mustalaiset” (The Gypsies) in August 1942. It was published in the journal *Huoltaja* (Legal guardian), which was the general voice of municipal and voluntary care service. Lähti claimed that “everybody” knew how “the Gypsies” went about their lives. He identified “begging, stealing, and cheating” as natural inclinations of the Roma and called them a “nuisance” for the country (Lähti 1942, 339). According to Lähti, there had occasionally been suggestions that a “keskitysleiri” (concentration camp) would be the best place for the Finnish Roma to live and the best way “to end” their generally assumed “itinerant way of life.” However, because of the war, and the lack of people in the workforce, he recommended for “this time” a “temporary” solution: He suggested the full exploitation of legal options in order to put the Finnish Roma to work and to relieve the nation of this “nuisance” (Lähti 1942, 340). In the same summer, Johan Berg, the regional police chief from the district of Pietarsaari, shared the views expressed by the common people to the Vaasan lääninhallitus (County administrative board of Vaasa). Berg’s letter reported that the people in his district were particularly disturbed by the wandering of the Roma, and that they had concluded that the Roma

should be put to work, alternatively into working camps, as many Roma were considered sufficiently fit for working life (Ihari 2014, 20–21).

Among those who participated in the discussion about how to solve the “Gypsy question” was Urho Kekkonen, who served as the director of the Karelian Siirtoväen Huollon Keskus (Evacuees’ welfare center) at that time and who later became the longest-serving president of Finland (1956–82). Kekkonen published his contribution under the pseudonym Pekka Peitsi in the Finnish popular journal *Suomen Kuvalehti* (The Finnish illustrated magazine). Kekkonen firmly assured his readers that his comments were not motivated by “mustalaisviha” (hatred for the Finnish Roma). According to Kekkonen, the Roma constituted “a miserable element” of the Finnish nation. Yet he had astutely noted that majority population’s annoyance about Roma groups’ itinerant way of life represented a dangerous development for the unity of the Finnish nation. Kekkonen disagreed with the view that putting the Roma to work could solve the shortage of workers during the war. Nonetheless, he did propose the installation of labor camps, but only as a preliminary measure to make the Finnish Roma settle permanently and abandon their pattern of roaming from one village to the other (Peitsi, alias Urho Kekkonen, 1942).

From October 1939, the Finnish government issued an act on the obligation to work. This law, “työvelvollisuuslaki” (Finnish act on the obligation to work), became even more stringent in May 1942. From this time on, every Finnish citizen between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five had to accept the work that was offered by the Finnish authorities (Lähtenmäki 2002, 163–64). In the following months, several labor camps were set up in Finland. Three groups, however, were considered unfit for work from the government’s perspective: alcoholics, prostitutes, and “Gypsies.” In the autumn of 1943, however, the Finnish government passed a law that allowed putting these three groups into “erikoisleirit” (special labor camps). The Finnish authorities wanted this legal act to close loopholes between the acts on the obligation to work and on the control of vagrancy (Pulma 2011, 168–69). In the government’s bill to the Diet, the naming of an ethnic group as a legal objective was motivated with the reference that the Roma, because of their physical condition, their way of life, and their behavior, could not associate with ordinary workers. The law, explicitly mentioning the Roma as one of the target groups, came into force December 1, 1943 (Pulma 2011, 169). Finland was not the only German ally to tighten measures against Roma around that time. In 1941, the Slovakian Tiso regime, for instance, began establishing stricter policies against both nomadic and sedentary Roma groups in the country. In June 1943, two decrees by the Slovakian Interior Ministry led to a major restriction of Roma mobility and the placement of Roma groups from all over the country in internment camps (Vodička 2008, 56–60).

However, even if a number of Roma had to work in enclosed camps during WWII, the objective to make all Roma in Finland systematically,

comprehensively, and permanently join the workforce failed (Pulma 2012, 159–60). The account of the labor camp in Lappajärvi, which was opened as a site only for Roma and a sort of test camp in February 1943, showed just how difficult it was to carry out such a goal. The camp was supposed to consist of thirty-nine Roma men between fourteen and sixty-five years of age from all over the country. Eventually, the Finnish police managed to bring in twenty-four Roma men, seven of whom escaped that same spring (Ihari 2012, 24). Additionally, the results of the work were unsatisfactory, and the camp was closed with only twelve Roma men left at the end of June 1943. Additionally, the Roma custom of living together in a larger family collective distracted from the daily routine at the Lappajärvi camp. Roma families had followed their male family members to Lappajärvi and were camping outside the fence. Authorities had to drive the Roma families away. An account about the Lappajärvi camp was made public in *Suomen Poliisilehti* (Finnish police journal) (Ahtee 1943). After the new legislation came into force in December 1943, the Finnish authorities sought to set up a special labor camp for Roma in Kihniö. This project also failed because of the authorities' inability to fill the necessary quota of fifteen Roma men for such a camp (Ihari 2012, 96). This was also related to the fact that Finnish police forces and other authorities were understaffed at that time and, therefore, simply unable to enforce the new legislation in a more comprehensive way (Ihari 2012, 26–27).

Positive Memory of the War: Military Service Redeemed the Roma's Place in Finnish Society

At the same time, according to the Finnish historian Panu Pulma, at least 300 Finnish Roma men were enrolled in the Finnish army during WWII. There are no exact figures, however, because the Finnish Army did not record any information on the ethnic origins of its soldiers. The Finnish Roma did not only serve as horsemen in the rearguard, but they were also engaged in active combat at the front lines. In total, approximately sixty Finnish Roma men fell during the Finnish Winter War, the Continuation War, and the Lapland War (Pulma 2012, 162). This involvement of Roma men in the Finnish military service is highly cherished in the collective memory of the Finnish Roma community. Moreover, even today, many decades after the war, the Finnish Roma men's customary dress looks like a soldiers' uniform with dark, straight, loose trousers and black footwear. This dress code still serves as a reminder of the Roma men's involvement in the Finnish army during the war (Stenroos 2012, 428). The narrative of Roma participation in the war is even communicated in Roma literature for children, for instance, in the book *Minne matka, yökettu?* (Where are you headed, night fox?). The illustrated book tells the story of a Finnish Roma family who travel by ferry with two small children to Sweden. There, they, with other relatives, visit their great-uncle in the hospital. In this context, the narrative of a family member's military service in the

Finnish army and his death in a military hospital during the Second World War is woven into the story (Bloméus et al. 2009, 27).

Undoubtedly, participation in the Finnish military service has provided the ethnic minority with a heightened sense of equality and security within the majority society (Roman 2012, 59). Until the present day, according to a common legend among the Finnish Roma, the deportation of Finnish Roma to Nazi Germany had been planned, but Marshal Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim saved them from being transported to the Nazi German concentration camps (Oksanen 2010, A15). The legend is, presumably, based on Mannerheim's refusal to hand over the Finnish Jews to Nazi Germany at the possible request of Heinrich Himmler in 1942 (Torvinen 1989, 140–43). It is even possible to find similarities in the oral history of the war of both Finnish minorities; they did not only wear the same military uniform, but also certainly shared the same fear of deportation to Nazi Germany. In a television documentary called *Suomen romanien tuntematon sota* (The unknown war of the Finnish Roma) from 2004, Väinö Lindberg, a member of the Finnish Roma community, mentioned rumors among the Finnish Roma that a boat was on its way to Finland to collect them.⁵ A similar tale circulated within the Finnish Jewish community: Rumors that “two boats [were] waiting in Helsinki to carry [the Jews] away” became known to the wider public in a documentary film about the Finnish Jewish wartime experience seven years earlier, in 1997.⁶

It has been very important for both the Finnish Roma community and the Finnish authorities to communicate the idea of brotherhood-in-arms to the mainstream society. In 2003, in honor of the Finnish Roma who lost their lives during the Second World War, a monument was erected in the Hietaniemi cemetery in Helsinki, not far away from the tomb of Marshal Mannerheim. Made by the Finnish sculptor Heikki Häivöja, the monument, with its broken wheel and wagon axis, was meant to show the Finnish Roma people's love for their country and the Roma culture. The erection of the monument had the official support of the leadership of the Helsinki Parish Congregation.

Electronic teaching material provided by the Finnish Ministry of the Interior in co-operation with the Valtakunnallinen Romaniasian neuvottelukunta (National advisory board on Roma affairs), online available until 2020, emphasized that the Finnish Roma participated in defending Finland as every other Finnish citizen did during WWII. What was puzzling here, however, was the claim in this online material that over 1,000 Finnish Roma men served at the front lines. This inflated figure can only be understood against the background of the minority's profound

5 <https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2010/04/16/suomen-romanien-tuntematon-sota>.

6 The documentary movie *David: Tarinoita kunniaista ja häpeästä* (David: Stories of honor and shame) was directed by Taru Mäkelä. The documentary highlights the controversial and unique situation of the Finnish Jews who fought at the front line alongside Wehrmacht soldiers during the Continuation War, from 1941 to 1944.

desire to receive acknowledgment and respect for their war efforts from the majority society. According to researcher Camilla Nordberg's observations, Finnish Roma activists emphasize a strong Finnish identity to distinguish themselves from more recent Roma arrivals from the Balkans. The Finnish Roma underline their shared language, religion, and history with the Finnish nation, particularly highlighting the Roma soldiers killed in action during WWII (Nordberg 2007, 68).

Sustaining this positive war narrative—both on the part of the minority and of the representatives of the majority—has required experiences of injustice to be silenced for many decades. Nonetheless, this compelling narrative that has served to foster a sense of national belonging for the Finnish Roma has been modified by younger Roma who have a more nuanced view of history and who emphasize that military service did not improve the social position of this minority after the war and that discrimination continued for war veterans, too (H. Hedman 2014, 9). Others have also spoken up about Roma victimization during the Holocaust, for instance, on public occasions, in the community's journal *Romano Boodos* (Roma news), and in artistic works (<https://www.kulttuuriespoo.fi/fi/node/5937>; S. Hedman 2015, 3; Kylmä 2013, 3). In 2012, the Finnish Roma activist Janette Grönfors commented on the Roma genocide during the Second World War in the aforementioned newsletter: "We [the Finnish Roma] also have a common history with the rest of Europe's Roma, even though Finland's Roma were reportedly not sent to the European concentration camps" (Grönfors 2012, 13). The Finnish Roma artist Veijo Baltzar has produced an exhibition that tells the story of the Slovakian Roma girl Miranda who, along with other family members, was sent to a concentration camp during the Second World War. Through the exhibition project "MIRANDA—Mustalaisten holo-kausti. Kuka pelkää valkolaista?" (MIRANDA—The Roma Holocaust: Who is Afraid of the White Man?), Baltzar sought to present "recent European history from a Roma perspective," the "dynamic culture of the Roma," and their "current conditions."⁷ The exhibition was also shown during 2013–14 at the National Museum of Finland in Helsinki.⁸ This identification with the Holocaust represents much more than an attempt to be recognized as a victim group in history. It has to be understood as a minority's strategy for gaining security within the majority society and an international political agenda aimed at ensuring that "future generations" also "understand the causes of the Holocaust and reflect upon its consequences."⁹ Nonetheless and until now, the historical narratives told by the Finnish Roma of different generations appear to complement rather than to contest each other. However, ongoing research on Finnish men's

7 <https://www.kulttuuriespoo.fi/fi/node/5937>.

8 <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/europe-for-citizens/projects/efc-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/8041632a-3c48-4562-bb7d-1998316afb77>.

9 Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust from January 2000, <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/about-us/stockholm-declaration>.

participation in atrocities on the territories of the former USSR during WWII might pose a challenge for the Finnish Roma community's positive narrative on their war engagement.

Research Outlook: Were Finns Involved in Mass Killings of Roma During WWII?

In the discourse regarding the potential involvement of Finns in Nazi atrocities against Soviet civilians during Operation Barbarossa, scholars have thus far focused on the role of the Finnish Volunteer Battalion of the 5th SS Panzer Division *Wiking*, which was not only an elite military force, but also an active tool of the Nazis' war of extermination against the Soviet Union, especially regarding the Jewish population, communists, and other "undesired elements" (Boll 2002; Stein 1967). Postwar Finnish historiography, however, has ignored this aspect and focused almost exclusively on military and diplomatic aspects of the Finnish Waffen-SS history. Moreover, its conscious disregard has led to the assumption that Finnish soldiers did not participate in any war crimes, but fought a fair war to secure their country from bolshevism. This assumption perfectly fits into the thesis of a "separate war," according to which Finland fought its "war of continuation" against the Soviet Union independently and separately from Hitler's Germany (Holmila 2013, 218–19, 226–30). This interpretation was corroborated by memoirs of Finnish Waffen-SS veterans and postwar interrogation protocols of the Valpo (Finnish state police). Some of the veterans admitted that they had witnessed war crimes and atrocities by the *Wiking*-division and other units, but asserted that none of the Finnish volunteers had taken part in them (Lappi-Seppälä 1945; Parvilahti 1958). In recent years, however, the recurring pattern of veterans' self-representation as mere witnesses or bystanders has been questioned (Holmila 2013). In January 2018, Efraim Zuroff, the director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Jerusalem office, asked the President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, to start an enquiry into the role played by Finnish volunteers in the *Wiking*-division's mass killings of Jews between 1941 and 1943. In February 2019, the Finnish National Archives of Finland published an investigation entitled *The Finnish SS-volunteers and Atrocities against Jews, Civilians and Prisoners of War in Ukraine and the Caucasus Region 1941–1943* (Westerlund 2019).¹⁰ According to this archival report, Finnish SS men were most likely involved in the atrocities of their division. So far, there is no concrete documental evidence that *Wiking*-units on their way from Galicia to Northern Caucasus also murdered Soviet Roma, but this should not be generally ruled out.

Another area where Finnish-speaking volunteers served in German uniforms on a larger scale was the northwest of Russia, occupied by Heeresgruppe Nord (Army Group North) in late summer 1941. In Ingria, where there was a Finnish-speaking minority of 76,342 people, the German occupiers preferred Estonians and Ingrian Finns as village elders,

¹⁰ For an in-depth review of Westerlund's book, see Lubotina (2020).

since they did not trust the local Russian majority for “racial” and political reasons (Nevalainen 1991, 268; Musaev 2004, 295). Furthermore, the German military administration recruited local Estonians and Finns as auxiliary forces for the Wehrmacht and the Security Police, including guards of POW camps. Approximately 1,000 Ingrian Finnish volunteers served in the 18th Army (Kilian 2012, 172–83, 442; Mallmann et al. 2014, 268). In February 1942, the so-called Finnische Sicherungsgruppe 187 (Finnish Security Group 187) was established in order to guard objects of the infrastructure and to take part in the combat against partisans. In the fall of 1942, the group transformed into Ost-Bataillon 664 (Eastern Battalion 664) with similar tasks and a contingent of approximately 800 Ingrian Finnish soldiers. At the end of 1943, the battalion was relocated via Tallinn to Hanko, where it was integrated into the regular Finnish Army under the name Erillinen pataljoona B (Special Battalion B), and later on Erillinen pataljoona 6 (Special Battalion 6). It consisted of 25 officers, 54 sergeants, and 601 soldiers. In June and July 1944, the battalion fought in Karelia against the Red Army, before it was removed to the rear area (Mutanen 1999, 45, 65–67, 97, 100, 110–14, 126).

To answer the question to what extent the Ingrian Finnish volunteers took part in Nazi atrocities, it is necessary to have a closer look at the character of the extremely harsh German occupation policy. “Securing” the area and “combating partisans” implied the murder of mere suspects and the systematic annihilation of the Jewish and Roma population. These crimes were not only perpetrated by the Security Police of the SS, but also by Wehrmacht unions. According to the current state of research, the Germans killed at least 1,300 to 1,500 Roma in the operational area of the Army Group North (Holler 2013, 159). In some cases, the genocidal executions of Jews or Roma took place in public and were additionally legitimized by alleged “partisan support,” “stealing,” or “refusal to work,” in order to intimidate and discipline the witnessing population. According to Soviet investigations, in Krasnogvardeisk (today Gatchina), Jews and “Gypsies” were even hanged together in the center of the town (ChGK Gatchina 1944). Aleksanteri Jakman, a former member of the Finnish Security Group 187 in Ingria, who had moved from Karelia to Finland in 1994, described such a public execution that he had “accidentally” witnessed in a village near Luga: A whole “Gypsy family,” including children and elderly people, was hanged in line by the Germans. Officially, they had been accused of stealing from houses while the villagers were bringing in the harvest from the fields (Mutanen 1999, 89). Jakman gives no exact date and describes himself as a mere bystander, a strategy reminiscent of the exculpatory pattern of argumentation by the Finnish Waffen-SS members mentioned above. It is possible, nevertheless, that the execution had already taken place in the fall of 1941, before the recruitment of Ingrian volunteers.

According to a report of the Soviet Chrezvychainaia gosudarstvennaia komissiia (Extraordinary State Commission or ChGK) from the Gdov

district, there is at least one example of a presumably concrete involvement of (Ingrian) Finnish soldiers in a Nazi mass shooting of Roma in the area of Army Group North. At the end of February 1942, a “retaliation unit” consisting of “Germans, Finns, and Estonians” searched the village Filippovshchina and recognized twenty-six Roma who were deportees from Luga in 1941 and quartered with Russian peasants as work forces. The next day, these Roma, among them ten children under the age of twelve, were driven out of their houses and shot on a bridge at the entrance to the village. The entire village community had to assemble nearby and watch the mass execution, which was carried out in an especially sadistic manner, since the perpetrators forced the victims to dance on the bridge prior to their death. The soldiers officially declared that “the Gypsies” had been “in contact with partisans,” although they did not interrogate the victims at all. Instead, the Russian villagers were completely shocked by the brutal murder of “defenseless Gypsies and their children” (ChGK Gdov 1945).

The Soviet Extraordinary State Commission was not able to find out the exact units involved. It is possible that members of the Finnish Security Group 187 took part in the operation, but since Estonian soldiers were also present, it seems more likely that it was an Estonian unit under German command with some Ingrian Finns in their ranks. Further research might bring to light more examples of war crimes and atrocities committed by the German occupiers with the immediate help of Ingrian Finnish volunteers. A promising source type would be the NKVD files concerning trials against “traitors of the fatherland,” among them filtered Ingrian Finnish repatriates from Finland, but the Russian FSB archives of St. Petersburg, Novgorod, and Pskov are still inaccessible to foreign scholars.

Conclusion

One might argue that the Ingrian example with its Soviet Russian context is a separate case and cannot be added to or compared with the role of the war engagement of Finnish Roma men, other Finns, or Finnish Waffen-SS volunteers from Finland itself. At the same time, however, it must be recognized that the Ingrian matter became an immediate part of Finland’s history when the Ingrian Finns were transferred from the occupied territories to Finland in 1943 and 1944. From that time on, the ranks of the Finnish army had included soldiers of Soviet Finnish origin, who might have taken part in the Nazi mass murder of Roma, Jews, and other Soviet civilians. At the same time, this incorporation of the Ingrian Finns made them brothers-in-arms with the Finnish Roma.

For decades after WWII, not only was the memory of the Finnish discriminatory legislation against the Roma before and during the war silenced by both the Finnish majority and the Roma minority, but also uncomfortable indications about the potential involvement of Finnish Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht volunteers in Nazi atrocities against the

civil population—including possible actions against the Roma—in the German-occupied parts of the Soviet Union were ignored. The mutuality between the minority and the majority society, in many cases represented through state authorities, manifests most visibly in the erection of the monument for the fallen Roma soldiers during WWII at Hietaniemi cemetery in Helsinki. However, this tribute also serves to emphasize the assumed unique character of Finnish warfare during WWII, with Finland having fought a separate war, and to detach it from the Nazis' war of extermination in the Soviet Union.

In contrast to such a traditional Finnish perspective on history, those members of the Finnish Roma community who are speaking up about the victimization of Roma in the course of the Holocaust are providing these dark events with a European historical context. Such a wider supranational contextualization is also necessary for the evaluation of Finland's acts and laws on the regulation of vagrancy and labor obligation in the 1930s and 1940s, which predominately affected the Roma and were obviously directed against parts of this particular minority.

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¹¹ Lapatossu is a fictional character from a Finnish movie series from the 1930s and 1940, known for his laziness.

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Petsamo 1920–1940: Rhetoric of Colonialism and Finnishness

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Abstract

In 1920, Finland obtained a corridor to the Arctic Ocean, a land area that, until then, had been part of Russia. Petsamo, as the corridor was named in Finnish, was part of Finland from 1920 to 1944. As a new territorial acquisition, Petsamo raised expectations and was projected as a potential space for national expansionist policy. To answer the question of how Petsamo was to be put in use for building a strong and vital Finland, and not to become a burden and failure of Finnish state agency, many experts published views regarding how Petsamo should be developed. A dominating feature in this body of texts is a colonial mindset and rhetoric, promoting a comprehensive Finnish majority culture policy. These plans, including concrete actions, paved the way for a change in the region's environment and ethnic balance. The dominating discourse was that of ethnic Finnish settlement, and local features contradicting this were articulated as problems. From a Finnish majority perspective, Petsamo was often conceptualized as almost empty space waiting for a civilized and modern nation to take it into its possession and to develop it. The local Skolt Sami population became subject to much incomprehension and were viewed as a group doomed to perish under the pressure of a modern Finnish state.

Keywords: Petsamo, colonialism, Arctic railroad, Skolt Sami

Introduction

In 1920, Finland obtained a corridor to the Arctic Ocean, as part of the Tartu Peace Treaty between Finland and Soviet Russia. It was one of many border changes in post-World War I Europe, and typical at a time when other similar corridors were created as part of the redrawing of the map of European sovereign states (Engman 2009a, 24). The area added to the territorial domain of the young republic was named Petsamo, and would remain part of Finland until 1944, when it was lost to the Soviet Union.

In later Finnish history writing and collective spatial memory culture, Petsamo has not played any notable part, but rather been acknowledged as a minor episode during the inter-war years. However, at the time, this acquisition raised vivid expectations and satisfied the need for territorial expansion among the many Finns working for and dreaming of a Greater Finland. At the time of the 1920 peace treaty negotiations, many in Finland had fostered hopes for even greater territorial expansions of the Finnish borders eastwards, which did not materialize. Since Petsamo, or Petchenga, was the only new territorial acquisition, it became subject of a self-projection of an expansive and vital young Finnish nation. The conceptualization of Petsamo as a “New Finland,” formally not a colony but often treated as a colonial space, became obvious. Another new factor was that now Finland had an Arctic Ocean shore, a physical natural environment not included in the canonized National Romantic Finnish landscape. Soon after the acquisition, government agencies sent experts to Petsamo in search of information as well as insight into how to develop the region.

This article will examine the ways future strategies for Petsamo were articulated in Finland, primarily during the 1920s, when the acquisition of this territory was recent and the assumption was that it would belong to Finland in perpetuity. The inter-connectedness of modernization and nationalization is at the core of these processes. The article will pose the following questions: What were the strategies proposed for Petsamo? What context and logic guided these strategies and policy recommendations? In which ways was a colonialist discourse articulated? How was an ideal Finnishness defined when projecting Petsamo’s future? The article will approach these questions through three sub-themes. First, the idea of Finnish colonization of Petsamo will be looked at. Second, the plans for building a railway to the new Finnish Arctic coast will be presented. Both state commissioned reports and literary fiction material will be looked at in that case. Third, the consideration, or rather lack of consideration, for the local Skolt Sami community will be briefly presented and analyzed.

Since Petsamo was never officially in a strict administrative sense defined as a colony, this conceptualization needs further clarification. The colonialist discourse present in the reports, pamphlets, travelogues, and, even in one case, a novel, was not primarily official and sanctioned by explicit colonial laws, but rather a public debate expressing general attitudes and expectations. In fact, the term *settlement* was used more often than *colony* and *colonization*. The debate over Petsamo has a strong contextual connection to the idea of a Greater Finland and the idea of an irredenta Finnishness under pressure outside the national borders. The irredenta context is different from a colonial context; however, the reality in Petsamo was far from a pure Finnish-irredentist situation. This was in many cases nonetheless the understanding, conceptualizing Petsamo as a space in waiting for the execution of a Finnish national modernization process.

The Petsamo case is an example of active Arctic policy of the Finnish State, and also an example of deliberate and articulated, although not always that successful, colonialist intentions. With colonialism, we understand a system of naturalizing differences, and the creation of hierarchies to justify domination. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, colonial domination also involves, “the deliberate destruction of other cultures” (Sousa Santos 2016, 18). He describes the lack of estimation for, and eventual destruction of, indigenous knowledge with the term *epistemicide*. The Petsamo case presents such a tendency, which is, however, not entirely void of a certain consideration for indigenous knowledge and agency. Recent research has also presented a more varied view of agency versus victimhood concerning the Skolt Sami community, also pointing to positive actions taken by certain Finnish authorities and actors (Lehtola 2018). Nonetheless, the dominating story is that of a colonial situation where cultural and ethnic diversity are subjugated to nationally framed strategies of expansion, modernization, and uniformity.

The colonialist discourse has an international context, making colonial capacity a point of comparison between nations and a measure of its vitality. In Finland, as in the other Nordic countries, the general assumption has traditionally been to see these countries as excluded from the Western legacy of colonialism, and the colonialist past has been addressed only randomly. The idea of this Nordic exceptionalism has been a part of the branding of the region as progressive and a conciliating agent in global conflicts. Only recently have there been major contributions on the Nordic colonialist past by Nordic scholars. The whole question of Finnish colonialism in the twentieth century has, up until recently, been a mere footnote in Finnish historiography, where questions of nation-building and even small-state victimhood have dominated the mental landscape. Among the few exceptions to this general tendency are the works of Veli-Pekka Lehtola and Olli Löytty. Kuortti and Löytty note:

Finland has not had any of its own colonies, even if a wishful gaze at times was projected in the direction of the Amboland [current Namibia] and in the direction of Karelia and its ultra-limes taiga areas. The way in which the Finns administrated and depicted Petsamo and especially the Skolt Sami population during the inter-war period, can rightfully be denominated colonialist. (Kuortti and Löytty 2007, 107)¹

To this list we could also add Alaska, a Russian domain from 1733 to 1867. Finnish civil servants, merchants, priests, and institutions were part of the Russian colonial system from 1809 onwards (Rabow-Edling 2017). Alaskan artifacts in Finnish museum collections bear witness of this relationship even today. In the case of Petsamo, the recent research interest in Finnish colonialism connects to the surge of the Arctic Region

¹ All translations into English are by Peter Stadius.

as a new policy priority area. This applies both to historical research and present-day policymaking. The Norwegian-Russian initiative of conceptualizing and branding the Barents Region was taken in 1997. In 2015, this newly defined Arctic region had its first comprehensive history published (Elenius 2015). In Finland, the work of Maria Lähteenmäki has added to our historical knowledge about the Finnish Arctic. It is symptomatic that this new research often is connected to new policy interests. Lähteenmäki's most recent study, *Footprints in the Snow: The Long History of Arctic Finland*, was commissioned and published by the Prime Minister's Office (Lähteenmäki 2017). This work clearly filled a gap in Finnish historiography, but, at the same time, the book project exemplifies state agency in writing Finland's Arctic history, which has also been subject to recent criticism suggesting that it involves a justification of state action (Lehtola 2015, 26).

The Greater Finland Ideology and the Gaze on Petsamo

When the area of Petsamo was given to Finland in 1920, the general attitude was that this was historically justified, albeit not in itself enough to follow the Wilsonian principle of national and cultural-territorial unity. When Finland had become an administrative unit in 1809 with the creation of the Grand Duchy under Russian supremacy, Finland got its own Lapland, a region that had not previously been considered part of the spatial conception of Finland. In the eighteenth century, this spatial conception largely just meant the eastern part of the realm, but Lapland itself was considered a northernmost part of "Sweden," or at least not part of "Finland." But the increasing spontaneous migration of Finnish-speaking subjects to the Arctic Ocean shore from the 1860s onward, was followed by expansionist strategies on the part of the Finnish authorities. The most visible outcome of this was the partial financing by the Finnish autonomous government of a road project on the Russian side of the border toward the Arctic Ocean. This was later taken as part of a promise by Emperor Alexander II (reign 1855–81) to reward Finland with an access to the Arctic Ocean. This was also connected to minor territorial concession on the Karelian Isthmus in 1863 involving a Russian rifle factory. It was in this spirit that many leading Finnish politicians saw the acquisition of Petsamo as a proper result (Lähteenmäki 2017, 75). Most voices raised even saw the new acquisition as being rather small, and that Finland actually had a right to much larger territories in the north. One backdrop to the story is that of two campaigns to the Petsamo area during the years of the so-called Kindred Nations Wars, when government-supported paramilitary troops sought to establish a Finnish presence beyond the established borders in the east. The first expedition, led by Thorsten Renvall and Onni Laitinen, came in the spring of 1918 during the last weeks of the Finnish Civil War, but was thrown back after a clash with British military intervention troops. After the withdrawal of allied troops, a second campaign, under Major Kurt Martti Wallenius,

occupied Petsamo for one month early in 1920, only to be pushed back by a Bolshevik intervention in late March.

The not-entirely-convincing historical claims for Petsamo's exclusive Finnishness had to be argued for. In his 1918 pamphlet *Suomi Jäämerellä* (Finland at the Arctic Ocean), the politician—and future member of the Finnish Tartu Peace Treaty delegation—Väinö Voionmaa introduces the reader to the idea of past maltreatment of Finnish interests in the north. He states that, “Our entire people, with no exceptions among its many layers, are unanimous in its opinion, that now is the moment for Finland to get access to the Arctic Ocean, from which our country has, through adverse faith and against all sense of justice, been closed from” (Voionmaa 1918, 7). A historian and prominent Social Democrat politician, Voionmaa was a leading ideological promoter of the idea of a “Finnish Tribal Area”—*heimoaalue*—which in the north extended to areas in Sweden, Norway, and Russia, including the whole Kola Peninsula. He had been influenced by August Wilhelm Ervasti and Emil von Qvanten, who in the mid-1800s were among the first to define a Finnish territory larger than that stipulated by the Peace of 1809 (Lähteenmäki 2014, 34). Alongside a national tradition of claiming ownership to Petsamo, the development of geopolitics as an academic discipline had a visible impact. It is well documented that Voionmaa was inspired by the Swede Rudolf Kjellén, who had coined the notion of geopolitics, and who saw national expansion not as a brutal and aggressive, but rather as a natural and organic drive in each nation to preserve itself (Lähteenmäki 2014, 106). The idea to conceive of the state as an organic actor was based on the mainly German school of geopolitics, which parted from the “laws” developed by Friedrich Ratzel justifying territorial expansion. This German school did not make any clear distinction between overseas colonialism and territorial expansion in the neighboring region. Geographer Karl Haushofer developed these ideas further, including quite elaborate calculations of the costs and benefits of colonial possession (O’Loughlin and van der Wusten 1990, 2). Very similar ideas are presented in the Finnish texts on Petsamo, an obvious consequence of the close contacts Finnish scholars had to the German academic world at the time.

This discourse of a historically righteous claim of an Arctic corridor for Finland was then repeated through the following decades. Johan Evert Rosberg, professor of geography at the University of Helsinki, expressed this claim in 1919 before the Tartu conference when he stated that, “No Peace Congress can take Petsamo away from us. Our claims are justified” (Rosberg 1919, 5). In the first comprehensive Finnish-language guide to Petsamo, published in 1921, the authors Eero Lampio and Lauri Hannikainen devoted a chapter to explaining the systematic Finnish strategy to access the Arctic Ocean and to annex Petsamo. Geography, nation, and race are connected in a justification for a Finnish Petsamo. Paatsjoki, Näätäinjoki, and Uutuanjoki are listed as three Finnish rivers flowing into the Arctic Ocean, “constituting a strong natural bond between

Finland and the Arctic Ocean.” The entire settlement history is interpreted through the idea that the Finns, or “the Carelian race,” had inhabited the region by the twelfth century, eventually provoking counteractions by the neighbors, “mainly the Norwegians.” All later settlement policy and the establishment of towns was seen as part of an unfortunate process that “eventually moved the Finnish race from power, giving way to Norway and Russia” (Lampio and Hannikainen 1921, 64–65).

The guide thoroughly narrates all the events disfavoring the Finnish-claimed natural right to an Arctic Ocean coast up until independence. Among the defenders and promoters of the Finnish cause, Reverend A. W. Ervasti’s work from 1884, *Suomalaiset Jäämeren rannalla* (The Finns on the Arctic Ocean’s shore) is especially given canonical status in both articulating the Finnish claims and justifying Finnish supremacy. Ervasti was often cited as the first to suggest that the most favorable solution would be to annex the Russian shore—*Ryssänranta*—to the Grand Duchy (Ervasti 1884, 148). This would, according to Lampio and Hannikainen (1921), assure the rights of the local Finns and erase the urge to emigrate overseas (73). These ideas were then promoted by a considerable number of influential scholars, politicians, and others, setting a specific agenda in the public discourse in Finland during the 1920s and 1930s. One such example is Sulo-Weikko Pekkola, who wrote in 1930, concerning Petsamo and the Finnish-speaking irredenta population at large, how Finland had been, “closed out, from its own tribe” (Pekkola 1930, 7).

The idea of a Greater Finland, at the time a very influential conception of a nation bigger than the borders of the young republic, is essential for understanding the racialization and colonialist dimension of the narratives regarding Petsamo. There were also other, less boisterous and chauvinist attitudes toward this northernmost part of Finland, but it remains clear that an expansionist Greater Finland ideology was an essential part of a future-oriented national discourse. This discourse suggested a state of competition with the bordering states Norway, Soviet Russia, and Sweden. That was the main context for drawing up a strategy to make Petsamo Finnish and to make use of that area for the young nation’s modernization project.

The Colonialist Capacity

The acquisition of Petsamo both activated and spatially located many future-oriented questions of the time. One was that of the capacity of the Finnish nation, and the Finns, to be a successful colonizer and agent of supremacy rule in an area considered colonial. This question and concern of national capacity was closely connected to that of modernity and what could be called national eugenics, a broad epistemic discourse on the total capacity and aptness of a nation. Marius Turda (2010) has noted that eugenics was “a social and cultural philosophy of identity predicated upon modern concepts of purification and rejuvenation of both the human body and the larger national community” (1). If Finland were to

survive as a nation—even as many bigger powers doubted the survival of the newly established smaller nations in Europe—it had to show strength and aptness in all sectors that marked a successful modern nation, such as science, education, industry, military, population quality, and urbanization. With the emerging Olympic movement, sports became a metaphor for the physical capacity and competitiveness of every nation, and Finland did remarkably well there. However, the capacity for warfare, national defense, and colonialist expansion was a far more decisive arena.

Ernst Lampén (1921), author and tourism promoter, voiced this imperative for the Finnish nation to step up and take on the challenge to compete in the global colonial race, pointing to the fact that the Finns now had reached a big ocean and were no longer confined only to its Kalevalan inland-lake landscape but had to accept a new mental challenge of the “newest Finland.” This meant that Finland needed to acquire the “spirit of the Arctic Ocean [. . .] unknown and strange to us Finns” (238). Lampén saw this process in terms of a collective eugenic leap forward:

Maybe the spirit of the Arctic Ocean will preserve us from turning soft and will provide a long life for our nation. The ice will conserve the flesh from putrefaction, and maybe the Arctic Ocean will preserve the national spirit from decay as well. (Lampén 1921, 238–39)

Lampén is bewildered by this new Arctic Eldorado for the thrifty, strong, fearless, and capable Finns to conquer (Lampén 1921, 5–6). Many were those who, along with Lampén, continued to be attracted to this new horizon, seeing it as a “Nordic Klondyke” (Engman 2009b, 8; Ericsson 2006). Others, like Jaakko Ikola (1924), imagined Petsamo as the “Sampo sung of by the ancient rune singers, a real mill of riches” (213). Axel Björklöf, a sea captain and one of the chief executives of the Petsamo OY company, was often quoted in the press as saying that the Finns were the only ones capable of developing this region (Heikkilä 2017, 11). At the same time, there was a general concern about the nation’s capacity to establish a modern Finnish presence in the area. The press reported that many Finnish-speaking subjects actually had voiced a preference after 1920 to move to the Norwegian side of the border since it apparently provided for better conditions of life. This controversial issue developed into a concrete problem when the inhabitants in Paatsjoki village arranged a referendum which ended in a petition to be incorporated into Norway (Törnqvist 1998, 35). In Salmijärvi, a similar petition had been voiced (Heikkilä 2017, 11).

The economic prospects were many, ranging from large-scale ocean fishing to mining prospects. Väinö Voionmaa had already suggested in 1918 that the obvious sources of riches in future Finnish Petsamo would be ocean fishing and mining. He felt that it was unforgivable that the Finns had not invested more effort in following the examples

of Sweden and Norway concerning Arctic mining (Voionomaa 1918, 106–10). Concerning fishing, both state-driven and private initiatives to establish Finnish industries failed to materialize in the long run (Ekström Söderlund 2009, 131; Nordström 2009, 140). The state-financed venture Oy Petsamo Ab (Petsamo Limited) was established in 1921 for fishing and general provision of goods in Petsamo, but it never became profitable nor trusted by the locals. This was partially the result of misconduct by the above-mentioned Björklöf and his closest men, and the venture was closed down in 1929 (Taskila 1980, 11–12). The lack of sufficient knowledge, investments, and effective management meant that the Finns were not able to compete with the Norwegians.

The prospect of minerals and other capital-yielding endeavors were often articulated in a wishful but cautious fashion. Signs of abundant mineral ore had been observed in the late nineteenth century. However, it was not clear if the findings would be rich enough to permit profitable mining. Early efforts were rather concentrated on establishing Finnish small farms and thus colonizing Petsamo by settlement. Mining prospects were by many not seen as a base for a realist policy, and many, such as J. E. Rosberg (1919), opted for “rational and productive agriculture,” as the only viable option for developing Petsamo into a Finnish area (102). This both national-cultural and cautious approach of relying on the Finnish farmer was also promoted by both Östen Elfving and Väinö Tanner. Elfving, chair of the Board of Homesteading, was commissioned in 1923 by the Ministry of Agriculture to visit Petsamo and write a report on the operations of the Petsamo Limited, but also to propose general measures to develop economic life in Petsamo. Elfving (1924) found large parts of the lower Petsamo lands, such as Salmijärvi and Höyhenjärvi, suitable for a major settlement action. He refers to how the expedition had monitored and measured a seemingly empty space, “of kilometers-wide marshlands apt for cultivation” (83).

Väinö Tanner, state geologist in charge of the commission to undertake investigations on the true scope of the mineral ore in Petsamo between the years 1924 and 1931, represents the same national-modern approach.² In his 1927 report, *Voidaanko Petsamon aluetta käyttää maan hyödyksi: Keinoja ja tarkoituseriä?* (Can the area of Petsamo be used for the benefit of the country: Means and goals?), Tanner, in the capacity of state geologist, did not advocate large-scale mining, but he rather warned about the risks of such a venture. Only in 1935 was a nickel-mine project finally initiated with the Canadian INCO as concession holder, and the economically very promising mining venture started production in 1939. It never reached full capacity because of the war. By far, this was the largest industrial project in Petsamo during the Finnish era of 1920 to 1944. For Tanner, the question of intensified colonization by Finnish settlers, and thus the nationalization of Petsamo, seems to have been far

² The geologist and geographer Väinö Tanner (1881–1948) is not to be confused with the Social Democratic politician Väinö Tanner (1881–1966).

more important. Tanner felt that Petsamo mentally had the position of a colony in the Finnish mindset, even if legally it was as much a part of the country as any other region. He advocated that its resources should be estimated according to “colonial principles” (Tanner 1927, 6). These colonial principles were, in the mind of Tanner, more national than capitalist. Although a state geologist, Tanner mainly advocated settlement and the development of farming and forestry. His main concern seems to have been the establishment of Finnish peasant culture in the region.

This same concern was visible in Jalmar Castrén’s railroad report published in 1923. The report strongly advocated for policies that would give incentives for families, not just single men, to settle in Petsamo and Lapland (Castrén 1923, 14). The possibility of acquiring forest, pasture, and arable land with state subsidy was strongly advocated, and the promotion of permanent settler families was an obvious step in the direction of creating a strong Finnish presence. The prospect of profit seems to have been less imperative than the idea of making Petsamo Finnish. Tanner, for his part, did not see Petsamo as primarily a financial burden in need of the eternal support of the government. Instead he felt that if “somewhat enlightened and strong” Finnish farmers would settle, there would be hope that this political victory eventually would also be an economic success (Tanner 1927, 112). The importance of establishing a Finnish farming society was present in most reports from the early 1920s (Heikkilä 2017, 13).

Tanner had faith in Finnish agricultural know-how, and he saw the possibility of advancing a Finnish presence in multiple symbolic ways. He promoted the “northern Finnish breed of cows, which are replacing the others in Finnmark” (Tanner 1927, 85). He even promoted traditional tar burning, and suggested reforestation projects so that the Finnish farmer would settle in a landscape more proper for an authentic Finnish peasant culture:

I suppose that we can be of the same opinion that a genuine Finnish mode of agriculture does not find itself comfortable outside the pine forest region. The settlement culture of the Finns and their health and aesthetic wellbeing requires almost as a necessity to have pine forest nearby [. . .]. If we admit that the region will be best assimilated to the State [*valtakunta*] by the peasant culture of ours, we have to provide the comfort and, may we say, necessity of: the pine forest. (Tanner 1927, 8)

Tanner’s concern with making Petsamo the home for Finnish model citizens was also connected to the specific Finnish domestic situation after the Civil War of 1918. He was afraid that Petsamo would turn into a reckless Eldorado, hosting rootless proletarian elements, “between the two prominent communist agitation cradles, Kirkenes and Murmansk”

(Tanner 1927, 24). A responsible state-monitored settlement policy, promoting patriotic self-control among the settlers, was the first priority:

In Petsamo it is as important to cultivate the population material as it is to cultivate the land. The living conditions in this wilderness have to develop in a social and civilized way so that the new settlers can feel that they belong to this new environment. (Tanner 1927, 96)

For Tanner, the Finnish enlightened classes—*suomalainen sivistisyhteiskunta*—were to move their positions to the Arctic Ocean shore, and stay there firmly, preserving the ideals and knowledge inherited from earlier generations of nation-builders. Even if, as will be shown later, Tanner took a considerable interest in the Skolt culture, it was not considered to be nearly on the same level as Finnish culture, as defined by him. If “somewhat enlightened and strong” people among Finnish settlers would arrive here, there was hope that this “political victory” would also be an economic success (Tanner 1927, 112). Östen Elfving ended his report expressing the view that Petsamo could not be developed rapidly by the present inhabitants. Settlement from other parts of Finland was crucial, and the challenge was to make the local community understand that:

[. . .] its own interest demands development as much in spiritual as in economic life, and that they do not stand a chance of reaching economic welfare and of standing in the competition against the neighboring countries unless they do not themselves rise to better their situation. (Elfving 1924, 135)

By the end of the 1930s, 600 new settlement homes had been established by Finnish small farmers. This meant that the proportion of other ethnic elements, such as the Skolt Sami, Norwegians, Russians, and Komi, became subordinated to the Finnish national element from a local population perspective as well. As Lähtenmäki has shown, this policy was part of Finnish borderland regional politics (2001, 563–66). Improving farming conditions, communication, and general life conditions in these contested areas became pivotal. The aim was to strengthen that national spirit and cultural presence, and the thinking around the whole border region was visibly connected to the idea of a Greater Finland. Creating conditions for successful colonization through farming seems to have been the natural first step in the Finnish mindset. This perhaps limited visionary horizon seems to have been rooted in a realist national thinking that was implemented even if the conditions for successful farming were not very good in Petsamo.



“Make Finland Great! A Railroad to the Arctic Ocean!”

In the debate about how to develop, colonize, and make economic use of Petsamo, the idea of a railway to the Arctic Ocean shore was constantly mentioned. It was both a concrete and symbolic project for the Finnish capacity to bring modernity to the Arctic and to compete with its neighbors. The railroad was never built, but, as a project idea, it existed throughout the whole period of the Finnish presence in Petsamo. The various articulations of the need for and benefits of a railway, from state commission reports to letters to newspaper editors and even novels, show the common idea and debate about the incorporation of Petsamo and the Arctic Ocean into a new, modern, and wider concept of Finland. The completion of the Murmansk railroad, reaching to the Arctic Ocean on the Russian side in 1916, sparked this interest. Already in 1917, a first report on the conditions for an Arctic coastal traffic infrastructure had been commissioned by the Senate. Väinö Voionmaa, head of the transport department of the Senate, was the key initiator of this new direction (Lähteenmäki 2017, 84). In 1919, even before Petsamo was officially part of Finland, J. E. Rosberg continued this agenda in the preface of his book *Petsamon maa: Suomen alue Jäämeren rannalla* (The Petsamo land: Finland's area at the Arctic Ocean shore). Finland had to build a proper harbor immediately, and hastily finish the entire length of the road connecting Petsamo with the rest of Finland, “and then as soon as possible that [road] would be replaced by a railway” (Rosberg 1919, 5).

In February 1921, the Finnish government commissioned Jalmar Castrén, professor at the Polytechnical Institute in Helsinki, influential politician, and future head of the National Railroad Company, to investigate the prospect of building a railway to Petsamo. This was a reaction to two concrete proposals for a railroad, one presented to the parliament in 1918 and another to the Transport Commission in 1920 (Lähteenmäki 2017, 85). Castrén would lead an expedition to Petsamo the same summer, with the task of examining the terrain for possible railway construction. This was a consequence of an intensive debate on the necessity of the railroad voiced in the press ever since Petsamo became Finnish. As in the case of Tanner's estimations for Petsamo's utility for the Finnish nation, Jalmar Castrén's report also would prove a disappointment for the most active visions of how to make Petsamo a showcase for Finnish colonial capacity. The report rejected a Petsamo railway project as too expensive. This was the most significant outcome of the pragmatic and realistic attitude toward Petsamo (together with the incompetence to realize the scope of the nickel-ore prospect) in Finnish inter-war domestic politics, and Castrén is, along with Tanner, a prominent representative of this stand. Castrén was obviously in favor of the railroad project as an idea, but felt that it was economically unrealistic. Östen Elfving shared this ambiguity between economic calculation and nationalistic fervor:

The Petsamo-Ivalo railroad, as easy as it is right now to show it unprofitable economically, can, however, not be bypassed if there is still a will to bring Finland into full strength on the Arctic Ocean shores. (Elfving 1924, 119)

The question of a railway would reappear only in the late 1930s, but those plans were cut short by the war. As Katja-Leena Heikkilä has shown, the railway question was subject to editorials, columns, and letters to the editor during the early 1920s in both local Lapland newspapers and the nationwide press (Heikkilä 2017, 40–53). The acquisition of Petsamo in 1920 generated an immediate interest among leading politicians, both on a municipal and a national level, to start lobbying for major improvements to the transportation infrastructure in the northernmost parts of Finland. The railroad as the main infrastructure project for Petsamo was thus rapidly established, and many were those who spoke in favor of connecting the rest of Finland more closely to its northernmost region.

Among the many positive voices, Arthur Aspelin urged the Finnish state to seize the moment at all costs, publishing an article in the *Kaleva* newspaper of his home town Oulu. Aspelin, who would be elected to the Finnish parliament the following year, wanted to spur enthusiasm:

You, who are guiding the country, start your work! Send an enthusiastic speaker to every village, post giant posters on every wall, where a train is seen carrying the Finnish flag high, crossing the mountains to reach the rich shores of the Arctic Ocean, and where flaming letters proclaim: Make Finland great! A railroad to the Arctic Ocean! (Heikkilä 2017, 43)

Aspelin envisioned a campaign for selling shares in a railroad venture. As a member of the conservative and nationalist coalition party, he urged a capitalist approach to developing the northernmost territories of Finland. He represented the position of the politically influential groups that boasted both a fierce anti-communism and a nationalistic, competitive attitude toward the border neighbors of Norway and Sweden, while at the same time apparently idolizing the United States as the foremost model for modern development. There was an apparent vision for how the young and—in the Civil War, victorious—white, potent, and expansive Finland would enter the race for the Arctic. The whole ideology surrounding the acquisition of Petsamo connected to the idea of a competitive sense of developing Finland in an expansive fashion. As such, it was part of the international negotiations for position in the Arctic (Avango 2013). The targeted opponents and enemies were, however, not only external, but also internal. Communist agitators and non-Finnish ethnic elements, ranging from the Swedish-speaking upper class to Russian monks and Sami people, were understood to be in need of a national cultural correction (Stadius 2016, 162–63).

A Novel: A Heroic Struggle for an Arctic Railroad

The idea of a Petsamo rail connection had all the elements of showing national strength and technological supremacy over the harsh conditions of the Arctic. A fine example of this mode of thinking is the novel *Petsamon rata: Isänmaallinen unelma* (The Petsamo railroad: A patriotic dream), by Jalmari Kara, published in 1921. The heroic, patriotic rhetoric in Kara's novel was a civilian adaption of the military science-fiction genre, introduced in Finland in the aftermath of the Civil War. Jalmari Kara was an ardent advocate of the Greater Finland idea. Kara, who had fennicised his name from Forsström, wrote the novel under the pen name Kapteeni Teräs (Captain Steel), fitting for his activist agenda. After finishing his engineering studies in Helsinki, where Jalmar Castrén was one of his teachers, he enrolled as a *Jäger*, that is, one of the 200 young Finnish men who, during the First World War, clandestinely left Finland for Germany in order to be trained as soldiers in opposition to Russian authority.

The Petsamo railroad novel is a nationalist utopian narrative about how the Finns manage against all odds to build a railroad to Petsamo. The reader is introduced to a group of a half-dozen engineers with seemingly extraordinary qualities. It is hinted that many of them have been enrolled as *Jägers* and fought in the Kindred Wars (*heimosodat*) in various Finnish irredenta regions. Some of them have earned a fortune on patent incomes and now want to offer their services to their fatherland. In the opening scene, the consortium leader Antti Jäkälä, engineer, businessman, and millionaire, offers the minister of industry and trade an extraordinary deal. The newly established Osakeyhtiö Petsamo (Petsamo Ltd.) offers to build a railway to Petsamo in five years and then hand it over free of charge to the state. In addition, they promise to modernize agricultural production in Petsamo, making the vast peat marshlands suitable for cultivation. In order to achieve this, they ask for the right to explore a mining field for ten years, after which the mine would be handed over to the state with no compensation. The written offer includes a statement that this group acts purely out of patriotic idealism. This supreme patriotic idealism is similar to the extreme sacrifice for one's country in war, and the narrative evolves much as a battle operation would.

The obvious hint toward the real Petsamo OY venture is one of many barely concealed allusions to real political life in Finland connected to the Petsamo question. The novel presents an activist fantasy of how everything would evolve as a most successful Finnish colonization of Arctic Petsamo, with the help of knowledge, bravery, and a patriotic sense of sacrifice. In this constellation, the governmental institutions are depicted as slow, hesitating, and lacking the energy to start major projects. But the minister of transportation has a clear vision of where to find relief for the economic hardships the poor nation is suffering: "Its riches probably are hidden in the northern parts, in the woods, the hills and mountains, in the

marshlands, but they are not accessible and the Ministry of Transportation has no money” (Kara 1921, 19–20).

As in war science fiction, where guns are bigger and better than anybody has seen before, the railroad is also conceptualized as a major technological advancement. The projected railroad is a sensational electric monorail construction. Jäkälä’s companion, Pekka Johansson, educated in Chicago, was, together with Jäkälä, the engineering mastermind behind this patented solution. This monorail, not entirely utopian since monorails had been developed in smaller scale in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany, was not a regular and expected solution, especially not in Arctic conditions. But electrification was also a true sign of modernity, and the real-life electrification in 1915 of part of the highly strategic Swedish-Norwegian Malmbanan railroad between Luleå and Narvik actually is mentioned in the novel, where Jäkälä is said to have supervised some repair work on the electrified section between Kiruna and Riksgränsen (Kara 1921, 26).

The agricultural modernization project in the novel was based on a special gopher plow, developed by the ‘cowboy engineer’ Laakso, managing underground drainage of the wet marshlands. All technical innovations, from gyroscopic trains to hydropower plants are described in detail with measurements and capacity, adding to a gospel of technology. Technological prowess is a big factor in the projected victory over nature, communist political opponents, and mischievous neighboring nations, such as the Norwegians and the Swedes. The road to success is halted by interrupting forces, such as harsh winter weather and communist agitation amidst the workers, and the virtues and weaknesses in every person are tested. Fatherland and martial camaraderie is stronger than anything else and worth every sacrifice. The extraordinary virtues and sense of duty of the protagonists bring the whole project to a triumphant end. The railroad is finally handed over on time to the president of the republic in a pompous and patriotic ceremony. The mastery of technology and even world-leading innovations are paired with the main heroic character’s ease to dominate in every sense. Petsamo is the Finnish frontier, and the heroes in the novel echo an admiration for similar agency in the recent history of the United States.

In one scene, where Antti Jäkälä thanks those who, despite cold and starvation, managed to overcome an extreme snowstorm, he exclaims, “This is Finnish workmanship” (Kara 1921, 143). The self-image, or auto-stereotype, of Finnishness, be it engineers or workers, is actively constructed by Kara. Petsamo and its extreme conditions become the semi-alien space, characteristic of science fiction, for this construction. The revelation of national virtues and the rejection of defects, whether it be communism or bureaucratic softness and lack of vitality, are at the heart of this active construction of a new and modern, entrepreneurial, martial, masculine, and patriotic Finnish Man. This man is modern, and he is suited for any futuristic project as any other nationality on the globe.

These are the inner borders while the outer, specifically spatial, borders for defining the essence of Finnishness are to be found in a pathological Russophobia and a hostile tone toward both Sweden and Norway. Symptomatically, there is not a single reference to Sami people or culture in Petsamo, as the area is portrayed as a virtually empty frontier for Finnish vitality and modernity.

The Sami Question

The fairly abundant literature on how to develop Petsamo in a colonial fashion, obviously in one or another way touches upon the theme of the indigenous Skolt Sami population. This Sami group of Orthodox Christians was often seen as the most exotic and least developed among the different Sami groups in Lapland. The new border established in 1920 meant that their traditional seasonal movements were disturbed since their traditional living area now was spread over three different nations: Norway, Finland, and Russia. This constituted a considerable threat to their traditional ways of subsistence, based on fishing, hunting, and reindeer herding. The traditional *siidalsijdds* organization, on which their nomadic seasonal movement was based, fell into a crisis (Lehtola 2018, 56). The Skolts became a minority in their own home, as Finnish settlement was intensified. During the Finnish period from 1920 to 1944, efforts to protect this group were initiated to some degree, but they were overshadowed by the general ambitions to make Petsamo part of Finland and all the modernization measures that this implied. When Petsamo was lost in 1944, a process began to move most of the Skolt community to the Finnish side, and only in 1949 was a large part of the Skolt community in Petsamo installed in the Inari Lake region in the northeastern parts of present-day Finland (Lehtola 2018, 64).

The Skolts were sometimes referred to as “Russian Lapps” (Paulaharju 1921, 5). They had been christened by Russian Orthodox mission, a factor that made them stand out among the entire Sami population in the north. The attitude toward the Sami in general, and Skolt Sami in particular, in this source material, can be divided in three main discourses. First, there is the more or less total absence of the Sami in the description of Petsamo. This can be labeled according to what has been coined “the sociology of absence.” Second, there is the acknowledgement of the Sami presence combined with a certain expression of sympathy. However, this stand usually embraces the idea of the Sami being a population element doomed to perish under modern development and from stronger national racial elements taking over their territory. This image can be called cultural-eugenic. Third, there is a discourse with a degree of understanding for the Skolt Sami culture and the need to somehow preserve it at least in parts. This strand of thought is a Lappology discourse on the Skolt Sami of Petsamo, referring to the objectification connected to these actions, and still void of the idea of proper agency for the Sami themselves. Lappology

is to be distinguished from modern Sami studies (Lehtola 2017, 83). The materials here analyzed all represent a majority perspective.

The sociology of absences, as coined by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, refers to the different processes through which hegemonic criteria of rationality and efficiency produce non-existence and disqualification of certain groups, rendering them invisible, unintelligible, or irreversibly discarded (Sousa Santos 2016, 19). This approach is cultural and extends the notion of colonialism with regard to an institutional approach, seeing the cultural and political hierarchical asymmetries as structural. In those cases when Petsamo is described as an area where the Skolt Sami are absent, we find a future-oriented, scientific, and encyclopedic gaze. In the works presenting Petsamo and the Petsamo question, Voionmaa (1918), Puustinen (1922), and Lampio and Hannikainen (1921) display this approach. They all start by describing the land and the fact that this land is now part of Finland. The description's focus is on the potential riches, the use which this land might bring, and the challenges posed by the present state of affairs. Only after having presented flora and fauna, something brief is said about the local Sami population.

In Viljo Puustinen's (1922) work on Lapland and Petsamo, the reader has to wait to the last page of this sixty-six-page-long pamphlet, where the author, "as a side note briefly mention[s] his impressions of them." By "them," Puustinen refers to "The Lapps," whom he finds to be on a lower level of development and degenerated by an exaggerated sex drive and alcoholism. The only reason for "showing care for the Lapps is that Lapps do not live only in Finland, but also in northern Sweden, northern Norway, and northern Russia, and that our responsibility is actually to start defending the rights of all Lapps" (Puustinen 1922, 66). This somewhat paradoxical final twist raises questions. Why is Puustinen advocating protection while at the same time explicitly labeling the Sami as racially inferior (he is speaking about the Sami in general, not the Skolts in particular)? He does not elaborate this further, but apparently he saw an incentive for siding with the cause of the Sami population, in order to avoid their taking a Norwegian-friendly approach as a consequence of indifference or maltreatment from Finnish authorities (Lehtola 2012, 517).

The narrative of absence is usually part of a systematic and encyclopedic genre, where Petsamo is presented as numbers and facts. Territory, flora, and fauna are listed, and the Skolt Sami are situated within this order, and not as a vital agent of historical development. In Lampio and Hannikainen's (1921) Petsamo guide, the Skolts are mentioned briefly in connection to reindeer herding, but when presenting Petsamo's history, they are absent (64–77). This encyclopedic approach is also produced, as in Rosberg, in combination with what here is called a cultural-eugenic discourse. J. E. Rosberg's (1919) in-many-ways-pioneering book on Petsamo places the Skolt Sami in a brief section in the end, mostly referring to second-hand information from the Norwegian scholar A. B. Wessel. Besides

depicting their nomadic life-style, traditional negative stereotypes—familiar from travelogues of earlier centuries—are on display: “Their faces are usually ugly with broad noses and pouting mouths, and the voice is guttural, as if they would have destroyed it shouting” (Rosberg 1919, 98).

The mix between a narrative of absence and that of a cultural-eugenic dismissal of the Sami is also present in Ernst Lampén’s (1921) depiction. His primary approach is to list the main tourist attractions: the mountains, the fjords, and the ocean. However, Skolt Sami named by name are presented and cited in his travel depiction. The young porter Sammeli Morottaja is described as humming tunes from continental operettas, and the reader is told about his childhood as part of a Skolt Sami family on display in European zoological parks (Lampén 1921, 78). Lampén shows great sympathy toward this people, but no real engagement for their rights. This is also the stand of Väinö Voionmaa, who saw little hope for the Skolts to adapt to modern life. He saw that “European culture” had entered life at the Arctic Ocean shore, leaving “the Arctic indigenous people more and more marginalized” (Voionmaa 1918, 25). According to him, the Skolts were especially subject to future extinction since they seemed to represent the lowest cast also among all the Sami: “The most deplorable creature in the Arctic Ocean world seem to be the human. [. . .] [T]heir population has belonged to the lowest of nations” (Voionmaa 1918, 25). In Voionmaa, the Sami do not receive much space for mention, and it is telling that the cover of his book portrays a map of Finland and its border regions, where only national borders and major railroads are marked. The cultural-eugenic stand dominates the Petsamo texts here analyzed. Ilmari Turja, author, journalist, and well-known Finnish nationalist activist, made a trip to the Arctic Ocean region in 1928, with the exclusive aim to examine conditions for the Finnish-speaking groups. For him, “the Lapps manage unusually poorly in the hard challenges of today’s world. He is too slow, too stupid, and also too modest and friendly” (Turja 1928, 54). For Turja, the Skolts were on the level of children, “and from everything you get the impression that the Lapp nation will die out quite soon” (70). Examples of a similar nature abound, and these examples serve to show the general attitude toward the Skolt Sami in particular, and the Sami in general. One might add that the Skolt Samis were often referred to as the least-developed population within the Sami peoples. They awoke sympathies, or at least interest through their exoticness, but were clearly not seen as part of the Finnish national colonization project in the far north. The gradual extinction of Sami society was accepted since the Skolt culture had been dismissed as being on a lower level racially and culturally. Their Russian Orthodox religion and generally held opinion of being a “Russian mix” apparently contributed to this. From here on, there was a moral justification for implementing a complete Finnish-national program (Törnqvist 1998, 94).

As a weak but still traceable counter-balance to the colonial supremacist attitude is that which can be denominated a Lappology view on the

Petsamo Skolt Sami. This meant a humane interest in the Skolt culture and a willingness to, in some ways, defend this group and its right to its own culture and to its survival (Nyyssönen and Lehtola 2017, 50–51). Among the many travel depictions from Petsamo, the composer, musicologist, and folklore collector Armas Launis stands out as a defender of indigenous Sami culture. In his book *Kaipauksieni maa* (The land of my longing) from 1922, Launis rejects the plans to build a road to Petsamo and any other extraction of natural resources. For him, the local Sami culture and its essence is far more important. Launis also stands out for using the name “Saamemaa,” *Sami Land* (Launis 1922, 74). Before him, this concept had only been used by the ethnographic documentarist Samuli Paulaharju, who visited the region in 1914 and published a study on the Skolts in 1921. As did Launis, he valued the Skolt oral literary tradition highly and found its documentation important. However, at the same time, he was realistic about the fact that eventually the Skolts would die as a nation, and with it their “strange language” as well (Paulaharju 1921, 198). This Lappology discourse, present in Launis and Paulaharju, gives a positive value to the Sami culture, but does not conceive the idea of participatory agency for the Sami.

Curiously enough, state geologist Väinö Tanner was a central figure among those showing both interest and, apparently, some understanding for the Skolt Sami. Tanner apparently became fascinated with the Skolts while spending numerous summers in the area, and he ended up publishing a scientifically valid anthropological study on the seasonal nomadic life connected to the Siida institution. The Swedish-language study, *Antropogeografiska studier inom Petsamo-området*, published in 1929, contributed valuable information about the social order and the group’s relationship to nature, something that would remain invisible for most other Finnish observers. Tanner reasoned that there were two possible ways for the Sami to survive. The new settlers would develop farming in the lowlands, and some of the Sami would adapt to this style of life, while others would continue their centuries-old reindeer herding in the highlands under protection of established reserves. Tanner and especially the more radical Karl Nickul became pioneer defenders of the Sami culture against the harshest nationalist modernization opinions. Of these two, Tanner was more prone to combine his Sami interest with a firm belief in Finnish settlement modernity as a recommendable project, and thus appear as contradictory in his views (Nyyssönen 2017, 143). Nickul, a Civil War veteran who had become a pacifist, proposed in the 1930s that a protected zone for the Skolt Sami be established in the village of Suonikylä, a part that, around 1930, had not yet been affected by the increasing Finnish settlement brought about by the settlement law of 1925. The idea enjoyed some support, but when the matter was transferred into the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture in 1935, the initiative was sidestepped in favor of an expansive agricultural and settlement policy (Lehtola 2012). As Lähteenmäki (2001) has shown, this line of thought was attached to

Finnish borderland regional politics (563–66). These border and frontier areas were to receive special attention in the nation-building process. This meant the consolidation of a policy attitude favoring national interests as defined through a Finnishness based on a Lutheran agricultural peasant society.

Petsamo: A Case of Finnish Colonialism?

In the light of the texts analyzed in this article, a Finnish colonialist discourse can clearly be traced concerning Petsamo during the period of 1920 to 1940. This discourse is not exclusive, but it is still dominant. As a discourse, it is nestled into various forms of textual documents, in this case, mostly informative presentations regarding Petsamo and pamphlets suggesting future policies for the region. This theme connects to a wider discussion of the colonialist history of the Finnish nation. Some previous voices have been raised in this question, but the debate is as of now still open, at least concerning the Sami. A brief summary of this debate presents us with diverging ideas on the matter. The first radical take on the Finnish Sami history was that of historian Kyösti Julku, who, in the late 1960s, claimed that this indigenous group had been subject to genocide (Lehtola 2015, 24). This claim has not been visibly supported by later research, but as Veli-Pekka Lehtola has shown, the definition of a colonial situation was confirmed by several scholars, including the Swedish Latin America specialist Magnus Mörner, who in the 1970s made comparisons between indigenous people in that region and in Lapland (Mörner 1980). Lehtola has emerged as one of the most vocal researchers on proposing a colonialist interpretation of the history of the Sami in Finland. The critique against this stand has focused on the observation that Sami groups and individuals were not always just silent victims, but that they exercised agency, acted rationally from their own perspective, and also contributed to various forms of cultural hybridization. Jouko Vahtola and Matti Enbuske (Vahtola 1991; Lehtola 2015, 24) have criticized the post-colonial approach of Lehtola and others for using present-day criteria for past events. Enbuske has rejected the idea of peasant settlement having in any major way contributed to an invasion of Sami lands in northernmost Finland (Enbuske 2012). Also Maria Lähteenmäki has questioned this colonialist interpretation by showing that an archival survey of state authority records does not show any signs of a colonialist policy. She rejects “extremist interpretation of the militant Saami Studies of the 1990s,” alluding to the works of Korpijaakko and Helander and Kailo (Lähteenmäki 2006, 203; Lehtola 2015, 24). Korpijaakko claimed in her doctoral dissertation from 1989, that Finnish settlers had appropriated Sami land by force, hence suggesting the need for re-compensation policy on the part of the Finnish state (Korpijaakko 1989). Anthropologist Elina Helander and literary scholar Kaarina Kailo edited a book, giving voice to indigenous experiences. In the preface, the importance of an openness toward alternative epistemologies is voiced (Helander and Kailo 1999,

15). Claims for indigenous rights in various forms, by some labeled radical, has not ceased. A new generation acting in a new global context of the “fourth world” political discourse has entered the stage. One such example is the group of visual artists *Souphaterror*, who bring forward their manifestos for Sami rights, mixing elements of militant resistance on a global scale.

These claims, as well as the textual evidence from depictions of Petsamo in the 1920s and early 1930s, can also be considered from a cultural studies point of view. This means a broadening from the fact-finding archival research to a more holistic interpretation of the phenomenon of majority culture and the Sami minority culture. Seeking to uncover structural asymmetries regarding majority and minority, image production, and different forms of discursive othering are to be taken into consideration. Cultural historian Marja Tuominen has pointed out that just approaching history through the archives is not enough. In order to see the structural power relations, the ways of producing knowledge need to be analyzed, for example, with the assistance of methods used in sociology and cultural studies (Tuominen 2011). To approach the history of the relationship between Finnish national majority culture and Sami minority culture is in itself an act of taxonomy that risks the over-essentialization of complex events involving concrete actors, not just groups, state authorities, and discursive acts. However, the case present in the material here analyzed bears witness to a systematic colonialist discourse and asymmetry, which most likely still have implications for these societies today. Even if talk of genocide is exaggerated, the conceptualization of epistemicide—the deliberate or immanent dismissal of indigenous culture—is worth discussing.

The entanglement of economic and nationalist incentives marked the debate over Petsamo back in the 1920s. Today, state authorities have started to look toward the Arctic coast anew. In 2018, a report commissioned by the Ministry of Communications and conducted by the Finnish Transport Agency recommended the building of a railroad from northern Finland to Kirkenes in Norway (Liikennevirasto 2018). This provoked a strong reaction from the local Sami community and brought up questions about the relationship between Finnish state authorities and the Sami community. Here again, conflicting interests are connected to questions of governance and trade on the one hand, and indigenous rights and sustainability on the other. Two former prime ministers, Esko Aho and Paavo Lipponen, published an open letter to the editor in Finland’s biggest newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, in 2018, speaking in favor of the railway project. They pointed out the economic potential brought by global warming to the Arctic. Materializing the opportunities offered by this ecological paradox was, in their interpretation, to be put in the service of national interests (Aho and Lipponen 2018). The dream of a Finnish railway to the Arctic Ocean has thus been awakened anew, and some aspects of the debate are not much different from those a century back. Is the project worth the costs? How would it bring a welcomed economic

boost to the northernmost region and, additionally, the whole of Finland? But in some regards, the debate is different today. The Sami community has a much more pronounced agency, even if considerable asymmetries are still at work. The Nordic governments have, through the Nordic Council in 2017, set a goal for the Nordic states to become a model region for sustainable development (Generation 2030). This makes the debate different, and state authorities will most probably have to pay attention to the views of the Sami community in a way that was not possible a hundred years ago. While doing so, the discussion of Finland's part in past colonial structures will most likely become more intense, both concerning the interpretations of history and the justification of present-day policies.

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Between Religious Identity and National Identity? Pentecostal Finnish Roma in Lutheran Finland

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Abstract

Based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork, this article focuses on the present-day belonging of Finnish Roma to Pentecostalism. On the one hand, in what appears to be a ladder of social mobility, Pentecostalism provides Roma with the opportunity for enhanced participation in the nation-state, thus enhancing their relationship with the majority Finns. On the other hand, Lutheranism continues to be a symbol of Finnish belonging and a symbol of unity across the Nordic countries. Therefore, in the case of a historically marginalized group adopting a minority religious denomination, this article explores the complex relationship between community belonging, religious identity, and national engagement, and the ways in which these become entangled with one another. The aim is thus to introduce a contemporary perspective on how minorities themselves are actively engaged and reflect upon their role within their society, while also developing grassroots “strategies” of connecting with others (majority “Finns”), and with one another.

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Keywords: Finnish Roma, Pentecostalism, ethnography, religion, social engagement

Introduction

Bringing an anthropological perspective to this special issue's analysis of the construction of "Finnishness" and the shaping of "national ideas"/national identity, in this article I present a somewhat distinctive image of "minority strategies" in shaping belonging not only within the nation-state but within and with one's own community. I do so by exploring the contemporary experience of identity politics among a particular minority group in the country, the Finnish Kaale (or, as they are more widely known, the Finnish Roma²). More concretely, I explore the connection between ideas of community belonging, by emphasizing the at times contrasting and at times overlapping meanings this has to the idea of "Finnish identity." Finally, I will also look at the combining of Pentecostal belonging and Lutheran attachment among Finnish Kaale, and the ways in which a strong sense of Finnish identity becomes complementary (rather than opposed) to a strong sense of Kaale identity among Finland's national Roma minority, even in the context of belonging to a minority religious denomination.

Methodologically, the bulk of this article is based on ethnographic fieldwork that I have been conducting with Pentecostal Finnish Kaale since 2011. The process of fieldwork included extensive participant observation within both family life and community events (including participating in religious services, missionary practices, and broader community gatherings), as well as the collection of life stories and family histories. During this time I lived with both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal Kaale families in the South of Finland (primarily Helsinki and Eastern Savo), whose subjective expressions of belonging, identity, and religious transformation have contributed heavily to the subject matter of this article. In addition to the ethnographic material, I have conducted dozens of in-depth interviews with Pentecostal pastors, majority members of Pentecostal congregations, and non-Kaale missionaries. Finally, the historical sections are informed both by secondary sources and by additional archival material collected since 2016 as part of an ongoing European Research Project, "RomaInterbellum," which looks at the processes of Roma civic emancipation. This archival research included both private archives and national archives. All this combined material has highlighted the ways in which religious belonging is both influenced by and influences specific understandings of social change and community-cum-national identity among Finnish Kaale.

² Throughout this article, I will use the term Finnish Kaale (or, more simply, Kaale) to refer to the national Roma community in Finland. Though the term Finnish Roma is often used by policy-makers, historians, and politicians in the country, the people I lived and worked with used the term Kaale to refer to themselves. For this reason also, I retain the emic term as a means to reproduce people's own expression of their community belonging.

I should mention that many of my interlocutors became my close friends, who not only shared with me their life stories and experiences but also their homes. I am forever grateful for their generosity and openness, and I have become closely connected to their desire to make their views known and heard beyond the often perpetuated stereotypical representations of Roma in the country. As such, it should be of no surprise that all of my interlocutors were well-aware and engaged in all stages of my fieldwork, and I have shared many of the arguments shaping this paper with some of them. Needless to say, I am well aware that, like in the case of most academic research with historically marginalized minorities, the interpretation and analysis of the ethnographic material is entirely my own and, as a non-Pentecostal myself, this may at times diverge from the way in which they see faith manifesting in their lives. Despite this, the aim and focus of this article is to bring, to the best of my abilities, a perspective from “within” (no matter how mediated this may be), a perspective which complements and hopefully contradicts stereotypical representations of Roma as living on the “outside” of societies. In fact, as my purpose is to offer an ethnographic perspective concerning the manifestations of, and the search for, a sense of social and spiritual “security” among a minority group in present-day Finland, this article fits as the counterpoint to historical narratives of the “nation” which have often overlooked minority voices. It is through this that this article aims to shift the narrative from the outside-in and from the majority to the minority. In what follows, I will succinctly present the ethnographic context of my material, with a focus placed on the central configurations of community belonging among present-day Kaale in Finland.

The Ethnographic Context

The Finnish Kaale are officially recognized as a “traditional minority” within the country. As such, they are granted minority status and have access to specific minority rights (such as language), in addition to being guaranteed the same equal rights as majority Finns. All Kaale speak Finnish as their first language with some also speaking a Finnish dialect of Romani language. In terms of their internal social organization, Finnish Kaale continue to uphold specific norms of conduct which were described by my interlocutors as key elements of their Kaale belonging: a strict age and gender hierarchy (wherein the elders and the men of the community are the ones who receive the highest forms of respect); specific dress codes which distinguish Kaale from Kaaje (the name Kaale use to refer to all non-Kaale, Finns or otherwise); clear-cut metonymical understandings of bodily purity and pollution (the lower half of the body is considered unclean/polluted, while the upper half is considered clean/pure, which then translates in many other aspects of social life); and a central focus placed on maintaining the honor of the family.³

³ For example, among Kaale, one’s birth family is considered the central unit of solidarity and emotional connection, and maintaining the honor of one’s family name is a central duty

Yet, beyond these internal community norms, all Kaale I met professed and expressed a strong sense of Finnish identity, emphasizing the long-term presence of Kaale in the country, the embeddedness of their lives in majority Finnish society, and the historical connection between their community and the shaping of the Finnish nation (for a historical analysis of the social embeddedness of Roma in the country, see Pulma 2006; Tervonen 2010, 2012). Thus, while internal elements highlighting the shaping of their community as seemingly in distinction to majority Finns (i.e., through dress codes, purity norms, family allegiance), they continuously and emphatically underlined their sense of Finnish belonging. This is especially interesting in the context of the more recent “migrant” Eastern European Roma presence in the country. As such, while indeed emphasizing a connection to the latter, many Kaale I met throughout my fieldwork continued to express the importance of being and feeling “Finn” as a distinctive factor between them and the migrant communities (cf. Roman 2014).

In this context, it is interesting to look at the ways in which a minority community in Finland, Finnish Kaale, has become intrinsically connected to a minority religious movement in the country, Pentecostalism. Indeed, since the 1960s and 1970s, large numbers of Finnish Kaale have become members of Pentecostal congregations, and the majority of Kaale are, in some form, connected to Pentecostalism. While seemingly a novel experience, connected with the spread of Pentecostalism among Roma elsewhere in Europe (Canton Delgado 2010; Fosztó 2009; Gay y Blasco 2000; Marushiakova and Popov 1999; Ripka 2015; Rose Lange 2002; Williams 1991), Kaale’s close relation to Evangelical movements is not necessarily a new phenomenon. Rather, it can be traced back to the Finnish Reformation years of the twentieth century and, much later, also to the Pentecostal revival of the 1960s (Ruohomäki 2014; Schmidgall 2013). Very often, at its inception, this was the work of several individual non-Kaale (Kaaje) missionaries, who came to be central names in the religious revival of the Roma in Finland and contributed to the rise of Kaale Evangelical revivalism.

What is striking in this context is that, in the past decades, more and more Kaale have become directly engaged in processes of both social-religious outreach, becoming involved not only in forms of social work within their own community (i.e., among other Kaale) but also within the local environments they inhabit (i.e., conducting prison work, street evangelism, etc.). Furthermore, several Finnish Roma NGOs, the majority of which are religious or religiously affiliated organizations (though not necessarily having a Pentecostal label), hold a prominent voice in contouring modern-day policies concerning the Roma community in Finland.⁴ These contemporary manifestations of their religious belonging are central in

of all individuals. This, in the past, has been connected to the prevalence of blood feuding as a means of maintaining one’s own family honor (Grönfors 1977).

4 Such as *Romano Missio* and *Elämä ja Valo*.

understanding also the social mobilization of individual Kaale believers. As an experience, rather than as a strategy, Pentecostalism provided the people I met with both a pathway for further engagement with the non-Kaale individuals around them (i.e., “majority Finns”) and, at the same time, a pathway for further engagement with one another, in the shape of social work conducted among other Finnish Kaale and, more broadly, among Roma communities in other countries.

Pentecostalism among the Kaale

As mentioned above, especially since the 1960s and 1970s, a large number of Kaale have converted to Pentecostalism and other Evangelical movements in the country (including the Free Lutheran Church, a charismatic movement that grew out from the Lutheran state church of Finland). Likewise, similar to Roma/Gypsy Pentecostals elsewhere, the increase in the number of Kaale Pentecostals has led many to ponder the relationship between Pentecostal belonging, sedentarization, and social integration of this minority in the country (Mohamed-Salih 1985; Thurfjell 2013, 42). In other words, the social effect of Kaale Pentecostal belonging thus became a point of debate in terms of the changes that Pentecostal belonging may bring to the shape and modes of interaction among Kaale (Thurfjell 2013), their relationship with wider society, and their understanding of belonging within what is still a minority religious movement within the country.

For instance, the process of sedentarization of Kaale in the country—of gaining access to cheap, affordable housing, in living conditions similar to majority Finns—occurred with the passing of a housing law in the 1970s. The 1960s and 1970s were also the decades when Pentecostalism grew in the country, and a time when, according to my interlocutors, a large number of Kaale began converting to Pentecostalism. Though the popularity of revivalism had been growing since the early twentieth century, it was during the 1960s and the 1970s that the spread of Pentecostalism became most evident. Since then, the improvement in the living conditions of Kaale in the country has been remarked upon, with Finland often given as an example of good practice in terms of the inclusion of its Roma minority. Though it is unlikely that these changes are a direct consequence of conversions to Pentecostalism, Pentecostalism has become a central source of engagement not only in religious matters but also in social affairs (Friman-Korpela 2014; Thurfjell 2013). At the same time, unlike among Pentecostal Roma/Gypsies in other countries, the congregations that my Kaale friends attend are not separated from those of Pentecostal majority Finns: that is, their membership is made of not only of Kaale but also of majority Finns, minority Swedes, and immigrant groups alike. In this context, Pentecostalism is not only a broader marker of how the Kaale I met described their religious identity (i.e., “as believers”) but has also become a marker and a point of connection between Kaale and

non-Kaale in the spaces of their congregations, thus also contributing to processes of ethnic boundary crossing within this context.

As will become clear throughout this article, Kaale believers see their Pentecostal faith as a “vital part of the articulation of their personal and communal identity” (Mitchell 1997, 81), while also being a way in which they position themselves in the world in relation to other Kaale and to other believers (both Kaale and non-Kaale). Much like for the majority Pentecostal Finns, this is, on the one hand, a personal and emotional engagement with God and with their understanding of salvation. At the same time, the context in which these engagements occur is also a deeply social one: a context that reveals both continuities and shifts in understanding the setting for Kaale interactions (as in, within their own “community”) and the possibility for breaching and crossing boundaries that were often highlighted as distinguishing them (or detaching them) from so-called “majority” Finns. It is under this background that this article is devoted to this specific form of belonging among my Kaale interlocutors, an Evangelical belonging, inspired by their entering and, at times, exiting the Pentecostal movement in the country, and the ways in which this process of spiritual change shapes their understanding of engagement with their Kaale community and their surrounding society.

Kaale Pentecostalism, the Lutheran Way?

Unquestionably linked with the broader Pentecostal upsurge of the early twentieth century (starting with the Azusa Street Revivals in California, in the early 1900s), the birth and growth of Charismatic Christianity in Finland (and, later, Pentecostalism) is most clearly embedded within the historical trajectories of the spiritual and religious environment of the country. For this reason, the type of Finnish Pentecostalism that I am referring to here cannot be analyzed outside of its national history, nor simply as a branch of a global homogeneous Pentecostal movement. Contextually, it has its own expressions and local history, which shaped its present-day forms and manifestations.

On the one hand, as early as the nineteenth century, several Charismatic revivals in Finland, emphasizing the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, had been branching from already-established spiritual movements in the country. Examples of this are the “Awakened” movement within the Lutheran church, Finnish Pietism, and the Laestadian movement (Anderson 2004, 86). In that sense, a first reference to speaking in tongues and prophesying dates back to 1796, a century before the famous Azusa Street Revival (Schmidgall 2013, 77).

However, it was only later that encounters with Evangelists from England, Norway, Sweden, and other European countries took place (Schmidgall 2013, 77–78). Thus, in the early 1910s, incipient forms of present-day Pentecostalism emerged within the country, under the influence of Norwegian pastor T. B. Barratt (Anderson 2004, 86; Ketola 2007; Ruohomäki 2014; Schmidgall 2013). From then on, the number

of Pentecostal congregations in Finland grew: from only 2 in 1915 to approximately 224 in 1997 (Schmidgall 2013, 82). Though the history in between these moments was characterized by series of revivals, the steady and gradual increase in the number of Pentecostal adherents came into clear contrast to the gradual decrease in the membership of Finland's national church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, especially as witnessed among the younger generation (see Niemelä 2015).

More important for the purpose of this article is that many of these revivalist movements—at least to some extent—seemed to have transcended the ethnic, class, and social boundaries existent at the time within the Lutheran church. It was thus that in the early 1900s a small itinerant group, known as the “Gypsies,” became direct targets of Evangelism and Christian missionizing (cf. Pulma 2006; Tervonen 2010), though mostly as an incentive to transform them into “better Finns.” Furthermore, while not yet under the label Pentecostal, the revivalist period of the 1900s led to an increased evangelization among Kaale, through the work of key promoters of revivalist theology. Names such as Eeli Jokinen (then a member of the Finnish Evangelical Free Church), Oskari Jalkio (founder of the “Gypsy Mission”), Herta and Einar Virjo, Ernst Mattsson—though all majority Finns⁵—are well-known among Kaale believers in the country as central to the process of evangelization among the Kaale (see the individual histories of these non-Kaale evangelists in Mäkinen 2014).

It was also during this time that one of the oldest Roma organizations in the country was set up, in 1906 (by non-Kaale evangelist Oskari Jalkio, also part of the Free Church), under the name of the “Gypsy Mission” (*Mustalaislähetys*), nowadays known as *Romano Missio* (Grönfors 1977, 22; Thurffjell 2013, 39). While initially a spiritual-revival movement, targeting the Roma in the country, this organization gradually moved into the realms of social work, and, between the 1940s and the 1980s, it was closely tied to state incentives for making Roma into “better” Finnish citizens (Grönfors 1977, 25; Pulma 2006; Thurffjell 2013).⁶ Now, after several restructurings over the years, and with primarily Kaale leadership, much of its focus is on social, rather than evangelizing work.

Apart from the “Gypsy Mission,” another Roma-focused missionary organization, under the name of the Free Romani Mission of Finland (*Suomen Vapaa Romanilähetys*), was formed in 1964, having a clearer

5 The first Kaale to become a Pentecostal pastor (in a mixed congregational setting) is remembered to be Viljo Mäntyniemi (Mäkinen 2014; Thurffjell 2013, 40). Since him, many other Kaale have become pastors of Pentecostal congregations. Henry Hedman was also the first Finnish Kaale to become the chairman of *Romano Missio*.

6 This also meant a rather dark time in the history of the “Gypsy Mission” itself, particularly in the 1950s, when the government, through its assimilation policies and via the newly founded Advisory Board on Gypsy Affairs (*Mustalaisasiain Neuvottelukunta*), used the collaboration of the Gypsy Mission and its social work dimension (including the setting up of orphanages for Roma children) to take thousands of children away from their families and place them into children's homes (Grönfors 1977, 29; Thurffjell 2013, 22). Unsurprisingly thus, to this day, many Kaale remain somewhat suspicious of any collaborations between Roma organizations and the government.

Pentecostal background. At its inception, as its name also suggested, this organization set itself apart from the Gypsy Mission (and perhaps also the darker history of working in connection with the state),⁷ and its perspective was quite ecumenical in approach, seeking primarily the collaboration of different churches to evangelize among the Roma (Thurfjell 2013, 42). Nevertheless, this organization was also more closely tied to the global Pentecostal Romani movement initiated by Clement Le Cossec, which had a major influence in the Roma Pentecostal revival in France, Spain, Portugal, Britain, and other European countries (cf. Acton 1979; Canton Delgado 2003; Strand 2014; Thurfjell and Marsh 2013; Williams 1991).⁸ Gradually thus, the Free Romani Mission of Finland would change its name to that of *Elämä ja Valo*, connecting it via a straight translation to the *Life and Light* movement so popular elsewhere in Europe (Thurfjell 2013, 42). Furthermore, *Elämä ja Valo* is currently the most active organization in setting up missionary projects both for Kaale in Finland and for Roma elsewhere in Europe (for more, see Roman 2015, 2018, 2019).

Going in-depth into the particular history of each of these organizations is beyond the scope of this article; however, highlighting the distinct story of their growth is relevant to the present-day experience of faith and religiosity among my Kaale interlocutors. Many of them were, in fact (and in different ways), affiliated with either of the two organizations or the projects they managed. Furthermore, both organizations continue to be influential not only in the ways in which large Kaale spiritual gatherings are organized across the country (*Elämä ja Valo* plays an important part in this) but also in shaping large-scale projects of not only religious but also social dimension (*Romano Missio*, in particular). Both of their stories are also embedded within the relationship between Kaale and the state in Finland, as well as to the missionary ethos of Kaale Pentecostalism in the country.

Furthermore, though some Finnish Kaale still continue to be official members of the national Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, most belong to and practice their faith in independent Pentecostal congregations across the country.⁹ Therefore, I believe, Lutheranism and continued membership in the Lutheran church is primarily a symbol (and an expression) of their national Finnish identity, rather than the practice of

⁷ Another organization that would come as an “alternative” to the “Gypsy Mission,” political rather than religious, was the radical minority group Finnish Gypsy Association (*Suomen Mustalaisyhdistys ry*), formed in 1967, whose role was to act as a pressure group, formed primarily of engaged political Kaale activists (Grönfors 1977, 29). A more thorough analysis of its history can be found in Sarita Friman Korpela’s PhD thesis (Friman-Korpela 2014).

⁸ Its founders, Herta and Einar Virio, had been influenced by a visit Clement Le Cossec had made to Finland, at a larger Pentecostal festival organized in Pieksämäki (Thurfjell 2013, 41).

⁹ I would like to thank one of my anonymous reviewers for pointing out the fact that membership in both the Lutheran church and Pentecostal congregations is common also among non-Kaale Pentecostals. This indeed highlights once more that Kaale religious belonging is not and cannot be understood solely through ethnic lenses but within the broader context it manifests itself.

Lutheran faith itself. For example, despite some of them maintaining this official attachment, my interlocutors rarely attended Lutheran services. Furthermore, though they still remain a minority group in the Finnish Pentecostal congregations they attend (most of them primarily frequented by non-Kaale Finns), Kaale are an active, visible, and engaged category of believers. They participate in the services, sing songs of praise, and, more often than not, engage in religious missionary work among Roma and non-Roma alike, in Finland and abroad (Roman 2015, 2018).

Thus, a specific manifestation of Pentecostal Kaale sociality needs to be understood in the manners in which Finnish Pentecostalism has shaped the lives of Kaale believers, but also in the ways their Kaale belonging continuously re-shapes their understanding of Pentecostal faith. Therefore, my focus in what follows will be to explore the subjective ways in which belonging to this movement promotes a sense of both moral and social duty among believer Kaale. I will also explore the ways in which the embodiment of a Pentecostal faith becomes both an individual pursuit (personal salvation) and a collective process of creating new social bonds (or breaking others), in the broader process of Roma evangelization. In this sense, I argue, grounded in the historical trajectory of Pentecostalism among Roma in the country, the type of faith that Kaale embody not only transcends the dichotomy between individuality and dividuality (cf. La Fontaine 1985; Robbins 2007; Werbner 2011), Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal, but also re-positions believers in a triadic relationship with the divine, their fellow, non-Kaale believers, and with their understanding of Kaale belonging.

Belief, Faith, and the Experience of Self-Transformation

In one of my first discussions with a Kaale Pentecostal pastor, sharing his own story of the transformative power of faith, he explained to me what he considered to be the most central distinction between belief in God and living in faith among Kaale, and a striking element in highlighting the relationship of Kaale to their religious life.

You have to see that all Finnish Roma have always had a very big fear of God. Because, living as precariously as they did, traveling around, with no housing and no roof over their heads, depending on the mercy of others and of God, throughout our history, you needed to believe in something more powerful than yourself, in something bigger than yourself. You could not go through life without the belief in something greater than that. You needed hope. And hope could only be found in God, in something much greater than yourself.¹⁰

10 The interviews and discussions with my interlocutors were conducted in Finnish and, in very rare cases (primarily in my interviews with pastors), English. All translations into English are by the author.

I would hear such statements recurrently in my discussions with Kaale religious leaders, with Kaale believers, and with Pentecostal Kaale activists trying to highlight the deep-running spirituality that many had noted amongst their community, a spirituality shaped by history, by connection to one another, and by connection to an invisible world whose presence they always sensed and respected. Tuula,¹¹ another Kaale Pentecostal believer and a vocal activist, had highlighted this type of spirituality in linking it to her own personal salvation. As she began telling her own experience of salvation, she emphasized that which connected her own spirituality to that of Kaale, and the spiritual outlook of Kaale with the spiritual life of Roma people more broadly.

I made myself the decision to be saved when I was fifteen years old. But the spirituality was always there. It came into my being from my parents, because each and every Roma person and parent says, whenever they are greeting each other: “I leave you in God’s protection.” And from what I’ve seen, this is common for all the world’s Roma groups. Which also means it’s very deep rooted because it runs deep into our beliefs.

And, as she continued her analysis of this type of faith, she also emphasized the social consequences that belief in God and the turn to faith may have in the lives of those who chose to come into faith.

So if you want to see a change in the worst criminal, Roma criminal, for example, nothing else changes them as strongly as going inside of their belief and putting your fingers on the belief in God. This belief that wherever you go, you do know that God looks on you. The invisible world as concretely exists as the visible world. And this is something that many people do not understand actually, the majority especially.

Here, the argument that Kaale have always had a close connection to the spiritual world is an argument for the centrality of God, rather than a particular religious denomination, in shaping the lives and experiences of individuals. Following it, the recent Evangelical revivalism among Roma communities across the world (cf. Canton Delgado 2003, 2010; Fosztó 2006, 2009; Gay y Blasco 1999, 2000, 2012; Ries 2011; Rose Lange 2002; Thurfjell 2009; Williams 1991) would be, in this sense, a re-discovery of something that was somehow always there. And it was through this action that the transformation of one’s life was possible; it was through this revelatory relationship that one could understand the deep changes that many believers often pointed out in their tales of salvation.

Nevertheless, in Finland, unlike in the country’s main religion (i.e., Lutheranism), Pentecostalism’s central theological premise is the

¹¹ All names used are pseudonyms, in order to protect my interlocutors’ anonymity.

possibility of personal salvation, of being born-again in the Spirit, in being filled by the presence of God (Lindhardt 2010). Being born-again means, in this context, the abandonment of an old life and the adoption of a life lived in the Spirit. Among these, alcohol, gambling, dances, worldly music, horse-trading, and blood feuds were always pointed out as some of the most important elements that believer Kaale had to renounce in order to live a life according to Christian moral standards (see also Thurffjell 2013, 124–25, 135–36).

At the same time, rather than the theological predicates of a specific religious denomination or another, it was the feeling of acceptance and freedom within the Pentecostal congregational community that appeared to matter most for my believer Kaale friends, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for their choice of Pentecostal congregations. I've met, in fact, many believers who belonged either to Pentecostal congregations or to the Free Church of Finland while still maintaining official membership in the Lutheran church. Moreover, few of them were interested in the label of "Pentecostal" as such though all who were Pentecostal emphasized their status as being "in faith" (*uskossa*). Being part of this Evangelical movement proved that one was "in faith" but one may very well be in the Spirit even if one belonged to a different Charismatic denomination (such as the Free Church of Finland). It was hence a complex, multi-faceted, and diverse way of understanding the very meaning of religious/spiritual belonging.

Furthermore, there seemed to be a somewhat tensional relationship that many of my Kaale interlocutors had with the national, Lutheran church. On the one hand, they recurrently highlighted the importance of the Lutheran church in Finland and the importance of belonging to the church in establishing oneself as a full member of the Finnish nation. Yet, historically, Roma in the Nordic countries were oftentimes seen as a "problem" to be dealt with, and with the separation of Finland from Sweden, there was even a commission in the main Lutheran church that had set up the "Roma problem" division. Their approach was, at times, to take children away from the Roma families and re-educate them as "proper" Finns (see Kopsa-Schön 1996; Mohamed-Salih 1985; Pulma 2006; Tervonen 2010).

Being Lutheran was nevertheless acknowledged as being a very important part of the Finnish nation-state (cf. Stenius 1997) and a means of proving one's Finnish identity more broadly (Thorkildsen 1997). It is perhaps also because of this that several of my Kaale informants had maintained their Lutheran belonging while also fully attaching themselves to the Pentecostal or Free Church movement. This was, for instance, how Tanja, a twenty-eight-year-old woman from Lahti, saw her relationship to her Pentecostal faith:

The truth is, it is not really about the place, it is about the connection you make there with others. Sure, there are times when

I go there [. . .]. I just sit and listen to a sermon and then I leave. But it does matter [. . .]. I also like that I can meet other believers and that they are not all Kaale. It is good to talk and to worship with Kaaje [non-Kaale]. Our common faith allows us to do so. Because it is a journey we are all going on, together: as Christians, as believers, not as Roma or as Finns. You feel that strongly in our [Pentecostals] congregations. [. . .] But it is also true that I could never find this sort of feeling in the Lutheran church. Though we still go, of course, when needed. I had my confirmation at fifteen, just like any other [Finnish] person. It's important to do that. It has to do with us being Finns, also. But really, I see myself as a believer, a Pentecostal as you'd say. There is no conflict here, you know? You can really be all these things . . . many things at once.

Similarly, Janita, a thirty-two-year-old Kaale woman, had gone through her own series of personal revivalisms, belonging to different denominations and searching for her own personal religious identity. For her, more than anything, her religious identity came in the shape of a search for meaning. When I asked Janita what made her join the Pentecostal church rather than any other, she highlighted her own quest for finding her balance in the world:

Janita: I questioned. I had my doubts. I even studied the Jehovah's Witness group [. . .]. I tried to find my answers there, but I found my answers here. I think since I was fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, I started to question everything and got really interested in religion and such. I questioned in a way the total existence and everything. I studied this Jehovah's Witnesses stuff and then the Muslim religion. I even had a Koran and everything. Which I tried to read, but it was too difficult for me.

RBR: And why did you choose this congregation in the end?

Janita: The answers really. After looking for so long, I remembered this church, because of my relatives had attended it. So I tried this Pentecostal congregation as well, and it just gave me the answers I needed. It's hard to explain, it just is the right place for me. And there were very many things that made me think that was the place for me: the feeling, the knowledge, the way the people who were believers acted toward one another, toward me, toward God. To me it is the only place where I found the answers that fit with my heart.

While highlighting the importance of choice, it was also in Pentecostal congregations that Janita acknowledged the prior presence of her relatives, which means she had connections to that church before her decision to be

baptized in it. Thus, her choice of the congregation, though undoubtedly her own, may have been, at least partially, influenced by her mediated link to Pentecostalism through the medium of her family and kin.

At the same time, Janita, Tanja, and others like them, made a strong distinction between simply having a belief in God, simply belonging to one church or another, and the often-tumultuous process of becoming a believer. Thus, while many may believe in the existence of God, it was only through the process of being born-again in the Spirit that transformations of the person were thought to be made complete and visible to the world around them. And, again, this understanding of the Holy Spirit is central to the theological teachings of the Pentecostal church.

Janita: Finnish people [i.e., non-Pentecostal Finns] don't really belong anywhere if you ask me. Spiritually, I mean . . . even if they say they are Lutheran. They might go to church at Christmas and when they get married and at confirmation ceremonies, but that is it, really. But it's different with being in faith. I myself am still a member of our main church, our Lutheran church how we call it. Because it's also about being and doing things like everyone else. But I am also saved. I choose to belong to this [Pentecostal] congregation in my heart because this is where I found the truth. And I pay a tithe in my congregation just like people pay taxes to the church, because I know it is the right thing to do.

The importance of being born-again (in Finland characterizing both the Pentecostal church and the Free Church of Finland) and of personal choice are perhaps two of the defining elements of charismatic and Pentecostal movements more widely (thus not just for Roma Pentecostals), highlighting people's abandonment of a past life and the adoption of a new one (cf. Maxwell 2002; Meyer 1998; Robbins 2004; Van de Kamp 2012). It is thus not spirituality as such that has become central in how Finnish Kaale relate to their religious belonging, to their identity as born-again Christians, but a type of spirituality that is translated in actions, in engagement in the world, and in an active attempt to convince others of the changes that God can bring in the lives of those who accept Him.

In this sense, it was also not just belief (*usko*) alone (as in, believing in God, *uskoa Jumalaan*) but being in faith (*uskossa*) that defined, shaped, and re-shaped the lives of the Pentecostal Kaale I met. It was a faith that, as Brian Howell has pointed out, was linked to commitment (Howell 2007), through commonly shared practices (such as church attendance, organizing prayer groups, reading the Bible on a regular basis). And, as Griffith's work among American Evangelical women reveals, change in religious life brings with it "the expectation that others will be able to see the changes wrought in this new creature and will want to experience the same kind of love and joy" (Griffith 1997, 104). It is through this transformation of the self, therefore, that the proof of leading a faithful life is

made visible for others, and it is through this that one can hope to transform others. It was through this particular trait that the Kaale individuals I met explained their understanding of seemingly multiple attachments.

Believers and Non-Believers

As shown thus far, for born-again Kaale, the transformation of the self is central in the process of becoming a believer. On the one hand, much like for Evangelicals elsewhere, Christian submission was closely linked to self-control (Griffith 1997, 202), to the ways in which people trained and disciplined themselves into becoming proper Christians. On the other hand, Pentecostalism puts an emphasis on charisma, the ecstatic and momentous overcoming by the Holy Spirit, which, when the believer fully surrenders to God, is deemed as liberating believers from the grasp of tradition and of their human condition (for similar experiences elsewhere, see Harding 1987; Meyer 1998; Robbins 2004). For born-again Kaale, self-control and liberation (from drugs, alcoholism, etc.) thus come together and shape the very experience of their new lives as believers.

Additionally, working with Evangelical women in America, Griffith (1997) has highlighted how this search for self-transformation is simultaneously “marking those who reject or question these scripts as rebellious, sinful, and miserable” (201). Therefore, the process of entering faith requires redrawing boundaries of attachment and belonging. For Pentecostal Kaale, such distinctions bring about the issue of family attachment, honor of the kin, and gendered experiences of faith: evangelizing one’s own hence implies crossing some of the mandates of gender and culture and the abandoning of other elements, while the rejection of faith by some Kaale may imply the erecting of new mandates (i.e., between believers and non-believers).

In fact, though many Kaale had entered into some form of relationship with Pentecostal religiosity, and had, even for a time, been changed by this relationship, there were still others who had remained outside it and whose lives were configured in a different moral order than the individuals introduced thus far. For them, the religious belonging of Pentecostal Kaale was not only a means of attaching themselves to a religious community but also a means of drawing boundaries within and amongst Kaale: between those who are saved and those who are not, between those who fit and those who don’t. Thus, beyond the cultural demands of how to be a proper Kaale (dress norms, gender/age hierarchies, moral codes), religious belonging brings about new means of configuring social relationships, norms, and expectations.

This is, for example, how Terno, a non-believer Kaale, also tried to find a reason for the attraction and the growth of Pentecostalism among his believer kin:

Truthfully, Kaale can be as they are in these churches because they feel more accepted. And maybe that is the attraction. So I

can understand why they like it. They can be religious but they can still maintain their own identity, as Kaale, you know? They don't have to change totally to manage in their surroundings, because nobody really demands that of them. God loves them as they are.

Pausing for a few moments, he continued:

But, really, in another way this religion always dictates how they should behave, just as Kaale culture does. I think even more than that because it is a moral thing. The ones, like me, who are not in faith are always a source of their evangelism, they want to save us. But they stop being interested in us if they see they cannot convert us [. . .]. Unless they are your close family. Then they never seize it until you give in. I am not easily convinced though.

The possibility of change was then closely tied to the possibility of cultural continuity rather than, as arguments from works among Pentecostals in non-Western contexts have emphasized (Cole 2010; Gill 1990; Van de Kamp 2012; Meyer 1999; Robbins 2004; Scott 1994), a complete rupture with one's perceived notions of traditions. Indeed, for Kaale, the spiritual change of one's life had become, much like among non-Kaale believers, a moral decision, wherein elements of the past were re-shaped in their assuming a new born-again identity. Similar to Afro-Brazilian Pentecostalism then, there is a tendency for born-again Kaale to see the "old ways" in a negative light, a need to break free from the past (Van de Kamp 2012, 441). This, however, does not always translate uniformly in a need to break free from social relations.

In some ways, belonging to an exclusive religious community may indeed foster new ways of understanding, fostering both a sense of openness and of closure, of connection and disconnection between believers and non-believers: similar to Evangelicals elsewhere, believers may at times "feel conflict between their religious lives and their family lives" (Griffith 1997, 128). Therefore, different types of boundaries and processes of boundary-drawings are re-shaped in the experience of religious transformation. As those perceived lost become a source of evangelization, the targets of believer's mission work, those who prefer to remain outside of Pentecostalism, have their own views on the new status of believers. Nevertheless, ties with family and kin, even in moments of disagreement about the new born-again identity of some of its members, are nevertheless kept, and at times enhanced, through the process of evangelization. While those who are targets of people's incentive for missionizing are not always happy about such experiences, these tensions do not usually end up in ruptures (cf. Lindhardt 2010).

Concluding Discussion

The born-again congregation (Pentecostal, Free Church, or otherwise) was often portrayed by the Kaale believers I met as an important space for not only sharing faith but as a setting where relationships are formed, shaped, and maintained, as a place to form smaller groups for worship (such as prayer groups, often made up of only Kaale members), and as a place where faith can grow or, even, at times, fade and dissipate in individualized ways. Therefore, similar to Pentecostals in Tanzania (Lindhardt 2010), rather than being detached from their devotion to kin and family, personal faith is always conflated within the social and spiritual relations that make up individual lives, some of which are difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle. The meaning of a common Christian “brotherhood/sisterhood,” comprising of both Kaale and non-Kaale believers, is molded to fit within the Kaale discourse of belonging and community while relations with kin must nevertheless be maintained and emphasized rather than severed or ruptured (see Meyer 1998).

It is, thus, that understanding Pentecostalism among Kaale is important, for scholars and believers alike, not for what is distinctively Roma about it, but what is strikingly not so, moving beyond a “Gypsy”-centered narrative that often characterizes members (or studies) of this community. I am not implying here that being a Kaale (or a Gypsy, or a Roma) does not matter for the people concerned or for the individuals introduced here but that the concept of Pentecostal belonging (or the experience of being born again in the Spirit) provides a new framework of understanding both the connections and the borders that religious movements create and re-create among their believers. This framework includes the ways in which people subjectively position themselves within and in relation to a diversity of other groups (including “majority” Finns, born-again believers worldwide, non-believers, and Roma communities in other countries).

For Kaale, being born again means a re-shifting of one’s life, as it emphasizes the almost universal experiences of hope, faith, and doubt among Western Evangelicals today, and the modern perspective placed on reflexivity, intimacy, and self-awareness in a northern European context; it brings forth the internationalization of a common narrative of salvation, at times transcending ethnic, community, or cultural barriers (belonging to mixed congregations, comprised of Kaale and non-Kaale believers), at times enhancing the barriers (emphasizing the distinction between believers and non-believers), and at times creating new ones altogether. Providing what for Kaale Pentecostals living in Sweden Thurfjell has called recognizable narratives with individualized messages (Thurfjell 2013, 91), Pentecostalism among Kaale can, therefore, be understood as defining both individual belonging and, at the same time, a common medium for an enhanced sense of social embeddedness. Through all this, in the background of a long history of marginalization, the analysis of religious belonging among Kaale (in this case, Pentecostalism), with its argument of “taking one’s life into one’s own hands,” becomes an

important pathway to understand the contemporary means by which minorities may choose to express their own voices, and thus develop their own “strategies” of engagement not only with one another but with the majority society they inhabit and are intrinsically connected with.

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Book Reviews

Demant Hatt, Emilie. [1922] 2019. *By the Fire: Sami Folktales and Legends*. Translated by Barbara Sjöholm. Original title: *Ved ilden: Eventyr og historier fra Lapland*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 208 pages, illustrations. \$22.95. ISBN 9781517904579.

In this English rendition of Emilie Demant Hatt's *By the Fire: Sami Folktales and Legends*, translator Barbara Sjöholm provides a rich and timely resource for the worldwide advancement of Sami and indigenous studies. Supplemented by paratext and commentary, this English-language edition contains over seventy stories originally told by Sami women and men who shared these tales with the Danish artist and ethnographer Emilie Demant Hatt between 1907 and 1916 during her travels and stays with Sami families living in Swedish Sápmi.

During her first visit to Sápmi in northern Sweden as a tourist in 1904, Demant Hatt began a friendship with Johan Turi, a Sami artist, writer, and hunter, and their mutual inspiration led to a number of groundbreaking publications. After further study of the Northern Sami language, Demant Hatt helped Turi author the first secular Sami-language narrative, *Muitalus sámiid birra*, or *An Account of the Sámi* (Turi [1910] 2011). Demant Hatt continued traveling and visiting among Sami communities for several years, adopting an immersive ethnographic approach to researching Sami culture, folklore, and practices. She recorded her extensive first-hand observations in field journals and sketchbooks, and published a number of works and narratives based on her travels. In 1922, she published *Ved ilden: Eventyr og historier fra Lapland*, a Danish rendition of about sixty-five of the Sami folktales she had recorded while enjoying the warmth and hospitality of Sami families who hosted her in their circular *lávvu* tents and *goahhti* turf huts, which feature open fire hearths at their centers. As Demant Hatt states in her original introduction, "This small book is called 'by the fire' because everything here was told around the campfire" (1). Sometimes straightforward and humorous, at other times mysterious, these stories span a wide range of genres and themes: supernatural encounters, fairytales, animal fables, farcical trickster narratives, didactic parables, encounters with menacing enemies such as cannibalistic ogre-like *Stallo* beings, escape narratives, tragic accounts of oppression, and heroic tales of resistance.

The text's translator, Barbara Sjöholm, herself has tracked a literary career as a travel writer and novelist on a trail paralleling the course Demant Hatt charted. In the same way as Demant Hatt's initial curiosity led her to explore the lands of Sápmi and later write about her experiences, Sjöholm developed her scholarly interest in the Sami peoples and their homeland through traveling in Sápmi. She recounts her three winters in Sápmi in her 2007 memoir, *The Palace of the Snow Queen: Winter Travels in Lapland*, in which she discusses her interactions with

artists, writers, and Sami activists fighting to conserve reindeer migration grounds in a time of increasing tourism. Furthermore, Sjöholm has made significant contributions to global Sami studies by publishing an English translation of Demant Hatt's memoir *With the Lapps in the High Mountains* (2013) and a biography *Black Fox: A Life of Emilie Demant Hatt, Artist and Ethnographer* (2017).

The structure of Sjöholm's edition is especially enlightening for researchers and students of Sami studies and world literature. Not only does the translator render the seventy-two stories into smoothly flowing English prose, but Sjöholm's editorial work paints a fascinating picture of the context surrounding Demant Hatt's compilation of this text. The original 1922 Danish version of *Ved ilden* included a detailed Introduction (covering pages 1–32 in Sjöholm's edition), followed by the folktales rendered in Danish and organized thematically (translated into English on pages 33–86), and a detailed section of Field Notes and Commentary (rendered on pages 87–106). Demant Hatt also included a glossary for Sami, Swedish, and Norwegian terms that she included in the Danish text for added flavor, but Sjöholm translates most these terms into the flow of the English text, sometimes giving both the original term and the English translation together, and also integrating some of these glosses into the Field Notes and Commentary section. Overall, these translated paratextual materials provide valuable insights into the performative conditions as well as Demant Hatt's observations and interpretations based on her experience living with Sami people.

The tales are loosely categorized into six sections: Moose, Lucky Reindeer, Reindeer Luck, and Wizardry; Sickness Spirits; Murdered Children; Animals; Folktales; and Russian Chudes and Other Enemies. In this collection, Sjöholm decided to include a previously unpublished folk narrative Demant Hatt had received from one of her main female storytellers, and some of the longer tales are divided into episodes (xii, 99). As elucidated by Sjöholm, this edition also features the twenty-four black-and-white linocuts Demant Hatt created, employing the strong contrasting lines of German and Nordic Expressionism, to illustrate certain stories and to depict her recollections of Sami material culture (150–55). Sjöholm frames the original text and paratexts with her own translator's note at the beginning (xi–xv) and an impressively researched fifty-five-page afterword (107–61), which analyzes the context and uniqueness of Demant Hatt's work and illuminates the lives of the individual Sami women and men who served as sources.

Especially for its emphasis on female voices and acts of resistance, Sjöholm's scholarly edition of *By the Fire* is a valuable complement to other recent English translations of early twentieth-century publications regarding the folklore and culture of Sami peoples, such as Thomas DuBois' 2011 translation of Turi's *An Account of the Sámi* and Tim Frandy's 2019 translation of *Inari Sámi Folklore: Stories from Aanaar* (Koskimies and Itkonen [1918] 2019). In her afterword, Sjöholm argues

for the unique nature of Demant Hatt's sampling of folktales because of her focus on the experiences of women and children (107–108, 123–27). An especially fascinating aspect of this section is Sjöholm's inclusion of biographical sketches and early twentieth-century photographs of many of the Sami women and men who sourced these stories. Sjöholm examined Demant Hatt's extensive field notes and was able to identify and correlate the names of most of the storytellers, which Demant Hatt had omitted in her original publication (xii, 120–21). For fifty of the stories in this edition, Sjöholm includes the names of the storytellers and their geographical locations, and for the remaining twenty-two stories, she lists just the locations. Sjöholm found that the majority of the named storytellers were women (eight women as opposed to five men), and it is nearly certain that the majority of the stories included here were sourced by women as well (47.2 percent of the stories having an identified female author, 22.2 percent having an identified male author, and 30.6 percent anonymously sourced).

Based on her research, Sjöholm concludes that “[...] Demant Hatt's relationships with her Sami teachers, her interest in women's lives, her anger at the persecutors of the Sami, and her sympathy for Sami rights may have also influenced how she listened to and recorded the stories. In some ways she differed from the Nordic male folklorists of her time” (113). For example, Sjöholm contrasts Demant Hatt with other early twentieth-century collectors such as Just Knud Qvigstad, who collected folklore mainly from Sami men for his Norwegian text, *Lappiske eventyr og sagn* (1927–1929). Sjöholm also points to narrative themes that voice the interests of women and children: “While many of the narratives that the women storytellers shared with Demant Hatt are either widespread in Sápmi or gender neutral, others feature girls and women as heroines, include more women characters, or offer a slight twist in the plot that brings out a female perspective” (123–24). For example, a recurring theme involves women and girls facing adult male attackers and outfoxing or even slaying their assailants, essentially teaching female listeners how to defend themselves using a combination of environmental advantages, sharp wits, and concealed blades (126–27).

A number of stories demonstrate the threats that bandits, Swedish farmers, and government policies posed to Sami security. Although some of the stories do not end well for their Sami characters, Sjöholm identifies a strong undercurrent of resistance in many tales. Whether the Sami characters are up against supernatural, mythical, or political menaces, Sjöholm argues that “These tales of resistance through quick and clever action are just as important in demonstrating why the Sami not only have survived but have maintained their identity and culture for centuries” (156). Demant Hatt's collection even includes the legendary basis for Nils Gaup's (1987) Sami film *Pathfinder*, in which an adolescent boy outwits a band of marauding Chudes by leading them off a cliff (141). The message:

defeating an enemy comes through keeping a sound mind and turning the stark geography of Sápmi to one's advantage.

One enemy that is difficult to contextualize is the child-eating "Dog-Turk" (*Bænadurkki* in North Sami dialect), a dog-headed anthropoid that is originally an anti-Ottoman and anti-Islamic trope. Citing the research of Bengt af Klintberg (1972), Sjöholm explains that the dog-headed Turk figure originated in a Swedish folk myth about a supposed debt that Charles XII had to pay by sending the flesh of Swedish orphans to Turkey. Additional sources to consult are Karlsson (2006) and Gjörlöf and Gustafsson (2012), who track the racist and Islamophobic usages of the Swedish term *Hundturken* (based on the German term *der Türkenhund*) in nineteenth-century discourses. It is unfortunate that this kind of trope had been absorbed into Sami folklore. Not to excuse xenophobia, but this kind of attitude is not wholly surprising. Demant Hatt reports that since anything foreign could be perceived as a threat, some Sami individuals expressed fear that even a fellow Sami from another region might be a cannibal: "People [from distant regions] and circumstances assume proportions that are too large, both good and evil. Different, unknown branches of the Sami are mutually frightened of each other. The Sami are in general quite strikingly frightened of other people [...]" (106). Thus it may be safe to say that the Sami version of the Dog-Turk is more of a mythical oppressor figure, and its usage is not necessarily motivated by the same kind of orientalist or imperialist prejudice as in the folklore of other European peoples.

This edition overall serves as a valuable window into Sami indigenous knowledge and the forms in which it was passed down during the early twentieth century. Although the sociocultural context and perspective of the folklore collector can be seen as a hindrance to the adequate representation of indigenous folk materials, one advantage of this edition, as discussed above, is that it provides much-needed representation of female indigenous voices as well as the voice of Demant Hatt as a female anthropologist in the early twentieth century. Another strength is Demant Hatt's acknowledgement of the limitations in her research and her transparency about her collection methods, coupled with Barbara Sjöholm's scholarly contextualization based on hundreds of pages of Demant Hatt's field notes. However, since the original tales were mediated to her in a mixture of languages including Southern Sami, Pite Sami, Northern Sami, and Swedish, it may seem problematic that Demant Hatt's field notes record these stories primarily in her native tongue of Danish. Nonetheless, given Demant Hatt's knowledge of Sami languages, her record of attention to both detail and context, and her overall ethos of building relationships with her informants, we can assume that the content of these tales is adequately faithful to their original versions (120). Furthermore, Demant Hatt's direct style and emphatic wording, which appear to be seamlessly replicated in Sjöholm's translation, invite linguistic analysis in comparison to a broader corpus of Sami-sourced folktales and narratives (e.g., Turi

[1910] 2011, Turi and Turi 1918–1919, Koskimies and Itkonen [1918] 2019). In this edition, both Demant Hatt and Sjöholm have provided adequate resources for folklorists and other researchers to derive a holistic assessment of the mediation of these Sami narratives.

Last, I would like to offer a few suggestions for imagining the original oral context of these tales. Although she provided illustrative linocuts of Sami *lávvu* tents and other artifacts throughout the text, Demant Hatt acknowledges that reading these tales is entirely different from hearing them powerfully recited around a campfire in the “snugness and cozy comfort” of a Sami family’s dwelling, comparing the difference to the way wet stones, once “so lovely” and vibrant on a beach, may appear “dry and colorless” when taken home (3). Nonetheless, in an age of digital media, today’s readers of folklore have the added benefit of seeing films such as *Pathfinder* (1987) as well as online videos (e.g., Dirksen 2015) for visualizations of the hearths within Sami *lávvu* tents and *goabti* turf huts. Another worthwhile option is going on a hike or camping trip and building a fire around which to perform these tales. As part of my research on Sami culture, a couple of years ago I constructed a Sami-inspired *lávvu* out of fallen hemlock trees and plastic tarps in the Pennsylvanian Appalachians, spending a winter’s night by the fire inside, with temperatures dropping to around -18° C outside. Familiarity with these kinds of wilderness performance contexts can help reduce the gap between reading a translated folktale and hearing it originally told by the fire. In the words of Demant Hatt beautifully translated by Sjöholm, “All that we have heard and seen around this campfire in the wilderness reflects the glow of the flames, a gleam that may cause the object we collected to appear touched with gold, because it was alive in its own surroundings” (3).

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Koskimies, August V., and Toivo I. Itkonen. [2019]. *Inari Sámi Folklore: Stories from Aanaar*. Revised by Lea Laitinen. Edited and translated by Tim Frandy. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 304 pages, 8 b/w photos, 2 maps. \$22.95. ISBN 9780299319045 (pbk); \$79.95. ISBN 9780299319007 (cloth); \$99.95. ISBN 9780299319038 (e-book).

Twentieth-century Sami Studies in Finland is greatly in debt to the Itkonen family. Some of the best-known members of this family are the rector of Aanaar (in Finnish Inari) Lauri Arvid Itkonen, the creator of the first Aanaar Sami (also known as Inari Sami) orthography, and his sons ethnologist-linguist Toivo Immanuel Itkonen and Professor Erkki Itkonen. Lauri Itkonen's grandsons Professors Terho and Esa Itkonen are also well-known Finnish linguists. Both Toivo and Erkki Itkonen were active researchers of the Aanaar Sami language and published important text collections in this endangered minority language spoken, at present, by 300–400 people in northernmost Finnish Lapland. Folklorist Dr. Tim Frandy has now published one of these text collections, A. V. Koskimies's and T. I. Itkonen's *Inarinlappalaista kansantietoutta* (Inari Sami Folk Knowledge, first edition 1917, second edition 1979), as an English translation with the title *Inari Sámi Folklore: Stories from Aanaar*.

This impressively multifaceted collection consists of a wide selection of Aanaar Sami folklore: *livde* (the indigenous term for the Aanaar Sami music genre often called joik) and other songs, tales, stories, legends, proverbs, figures of speech, riddles, omens and signs, and micro-historical narratives. Frandy's translation mainly follows the arrangement of the second edition of the book by Koskimies and Itkonen, but he has also

included in his translation the North and Skolt Sami materials that were published in 1917, but left out in 1979. This small North and Skolt Sami appendix includes tales and *luohiti* (the indigenous term for North Sami joik). Moreover, the appendices of the book include letters written to Koskimies by his Aanaar Sami informant Mikko Aikio, and the original introductory texts of both editions. The 1917 introduction includes also Koskimies's description of his journey to Aanaar.

Koskimies, Itkonen, and Their Book

As I assume that both Koskimies and Itkonen are unknown figures for many readers of this journal, I will give a short description of their life and career. August Valdemar Koskimies (before 1906 his surname was Forsman, 1856–1929) was a researcher of Finnish language and literature. He made his career as a teacher and as a trainer of teachers. Soon after his graduation, in 1886, at the age of 30, the president of the Finno-Ugrian Society, Professor Otto Donner, persuaded Koskimies to travel to Aanaar to study and collect the Aanaar Sami language.

Koskimies ended up spending two and a half months in a hut belonging to the parsonage by the lake Stuorrâ Piälppáájävri, about four miles northeast of the current village of Aanaar, collecting materials from more than a dozen different Aanaar Sami male and a couple of female informants (the exact number is not known). Because only the priest and the sexton were living permanently close to the church, all the other informants traveled to Piälppáájävri to meet Koskimies or met him when carrying out some tasks related to various positions of trust in the congregation or in the municipality. Thirty-one years later his collection was published with some supplementary texts collected by T. I. Itkonen. Itkonen transcribed Koskimies's collection into phonetic text according to his understanding of the language and added translations into Finnish. This collection is the only contribution to the field of Sami Studies that Koskimies ever made.

T. I. Itkonen (1891–1968), on the other hand, spent most of his childhood and younger years in Aanaar, where he also learned the local Sami languages. Later he became a linguist and an ethnographer specializing in the Sami peoples. As a student and graduate student, his main interest lay in the Eastern Sami languages, especially in the Skolt and Kildin Sami languages. Later his interest was divided between linguistics and ethnology as he started to work in The Finnish Archaeological Commission, the predecessor of the Finnish Heritage Agency. His most extensive published works are a thorough ethnographic description *Suomen Lappalaiset vuoteen 1945 I–II* (The Sami of Finland until 1945 I–II, 1948, 1218 pages), and *Koltan- ja kuolanlapin sanakirja* (The dictionary of Skolt and Kola Sami languages, 1958, 1236 pages).

The book by Koskimies and Itkonen was originally published in 1917 by the Finno-Ugrian Society. This version of the book can be downloaded as a PDF at the internet archive of the National Library of Finland (<https://fennougrica.kansalliskirjasto.fi/handle/10024/89871>). In

this edition, the Aanaar Sami text was written in phonetic transcription, following the Finno-Ugrian phonetic notation system, and translated into Finnish. This can easily be interpreted as a sign that the book was meant for outsider linguists, ethnographers, and folklorists. The latter two were called “kansantietouden tutkijat” in early twentieth-century Finland. Thus, the word *kansantietous* in the original name of the book is not “a somewhat circumlocutious way of saying ‘story,’” as Frandy (xvii) maintains, but refers to the materials studied by the folklorist-ethnographers of the period. The name also describes the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century interdisciplinary publishing ideology that combined all kinds of texts and knowledge.

Professor Lea Laitinen revised the second edition of the book in 1979. She worked during that period as an assistant in Professor Erkki Itkonen’s extensive Aanaar Sami dictionary project, and Itkonen’s influence is clearly noticeable in this second edition. Erkki Itkonen, the youngest brother of T. I. Itkonen, was a widely recognized expert in the Finno-Ugrian languages, especially the Sami languages, but he had also studied folkloristics. His articles analyzing Sami folklore are still among the best texts written about the topic. In the 1979 edition, the texts were reorganized according to the non-native folklore genre ideology, and the material that was not strictly Aanaar Sami was left out. The phonetic transcription was replaced by an early scientific version of the Aanaar Sami orthography, which makes it readable even for present-day speakers of the language. Laitinen also wrote that she wished that the book would be useful and bring joy for the Aanaar Sami readers as well. The change in the paradigm is clearly present in her statement.

Toward Aanaar Sami Folkloristics

Frandy’s translation is useful for many readers. I, for example, could use it as a textbook in a literature studies or folkloristics course for foreign students, including Sami students from Sweden, Norway, or Russia. Frandy has also added some information that either was not in the original book or has made it easier to use and find. For instance, he has collected the names of the informants and listed all the texts that these individuals have contributed to the book, making it easier to discern the repertoire of each storyteller. Frandy has also given the stories Aarne–Thompson–Uther (ATU index) and Christiansen’s Migratory Legends (ML index) folktale classification codes when possible. This simple-looking addition actually has a significant impact on Aanaar Sami Folklore Studies, and is, as far as I know, the first time that a larger amount of Aanaar Sami folklore has been categorized according to the ATU or ML index.

Frandy has made a great effort in trying to trace the identity of the storytellers that contributed to this book. As he points out, this has not been an easy task since the most popular names were very common generation after generation and sources are very fragmentary. Because of this, the result is not completely satisfying, but with a little more meticulousness,

time, and effort it would have been better. For instance, claiming that Aanaar Sami persons with the family name Kittu are children of a settler with a family name Riesto does not make sense (xxxxix–l). The Aanaar Sami have had inherited family names since at least the seventeenth century, and so did most of the Finnish living in Lapland during the nineteenth century. Besides, some of the information provided by Frandy is not in line with the information in the source mentioned, for example the Aanaar parish register. It is pity that Frandy obviously did not have access to the published genealogies of the largest Aanaar Sami families.

Another extra bonus for readers of the book comes in the form of the descriptive texts that begin each chapter and some sections as well. In these short descriptions, Frandy explains the nature of the following texts and provides some folkloristic, cultural, and sometimes historical context for them. They are useful for persons who are not familiar with Sami folklore. However, some of the interpretations and descriptions were based on a North Sami tradition or history that is not shared with the Aanaar Sami. For instance, most of the texts describing the indigenous religious practices and relations to Christianity are based on descriptions of North Sami practices that are often inaccurately generalized to include all the Sami peoples. In addition, some descriptions of genres and supernatural beings reveal a limited understanding of Aanaar Sami and, in general, Eastern Sami folklore. Some references revealing the sources of this information would have made source critical observations easier for people who are not familiar with the Sami cultures.

The translation is mainly correct and the English is surprisingly fluent despite the great grammatical differences between the source and the target language. This shows that Frandy has really invested in the translation of the stories, and I salute him for it. There are some occasional incorrect translations, mainly when the Finnish translator has used rare words or words that are mainly used in northern Finnish dialects. Wrong translations are given, for instance, for the Finnish word *visu* ‘stingy’, *juola* ‘bog bilberry’, and for the dialect word *tarpoa* ‘splash the water with a broad stick in order to scare the fish into a seine’, but in standard language ‘tramp; wade’. In addition, because the translation seems to be mainly based on the Finnish text, not all Aanaar Sami cultural concepts are translated as accurately as they might have been. However, there are no flaws that would affect the understanding of the storyline but, for instance, some humoristic nuances might have been missed.

Terminology: North Sámi vs. Aanaar Säämi

It is standard research practice in Indigenous Studies to use in translations and other texts the indigenous terminology when referring to culturally significant concepts, as for instance in folkloristics, to some supernatural beings and genres. Frandy does not follow this practice but instead has decided to use the North Sami concepts that often have different contents. Even the ethnonym that Frandy uses to refer to Aanaar Sami is in North

Sami, that is, *Sámi* not *Säämi* as it should be. The difference in spelling might seem small, but the significance it carries is huge. North Sami and Aanaar Sami are distinguished peoples, with distinguished histories, traditions, languages, and ways of living. There is also a difference in social status: throughout centuries, the more affluent North Sami neighbors have looked down on the poor Aanaar Sami.

The North Sami, the largest of the nine living Sami languages and cultures, have been the stereotypical Sami group for the majority peoples. The idea of Sami being a nomadic reindeer herding people using colorful clothes and living in tents that resemble teepees is based on the western North Sami traditional way of living. Even the focus of academic studies, both insiders' and outsiders', has been directed to the North Sami, including folklore and literature studies, linguistics, and musicology. Frandy's choice of terminology tells me that the old power relations between Sami peoples are still present and mediated to outsider researchers. My recommendation would be to use the indigenous terminologies or, if a comprehensive term is needed, using the more neutral word Sami, or Saami, that Sami linguists prefer.

Just a Little More . . .

It is obvious that Frandy has put a lot of time and effort into translating the stories, even though small flaws inevitably remain. For instance, in the cover picture, there is a Native American or First Nation's teepee, not an Aanaar Sami dwelling; the Sami place names and terms would have needed proofreading; and the words directly loaned from the 1979 edition could have been modernized into present-day orthography. Despite these minor imperfections, Frandy has done a great favor for all interested in the Aanaar Sami language and culture by translating this book.

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Saffle, Sue, editor. [2015] 2020. *To the Bomb and Back: Finnish War Children Tell Their World War II Stories*. New York: Berghahn. 326 pages, 28 illustrations, index. \$135.00. ISBN 9781782386582 (hbk, published in 2015); \$34.95. ISBN 9781789205169 (pbk, published in 2020); eISBN 9781782386599 (e-book).

The aim of this book is to break the silence around the destiny of Finland's war children (*sotalapset*). In his foreword, Kai Rosnell, the secretary of the War Children's Association in Sweden, points out how the moving of eighty thousand Finnish children to Sweden and Denmark during the war has been "hidden in silence" (xii). This, however, is perhaps not the most accurate expression. "Hidden" leads to a false impression of a conscious decision not to talk about the subject. Yet, in the historiography of war,

civilians and those not involved in actual combat have typically had to wait for decades before their war-time experiences have gradually become targets of research. Actually, their stories were not hidden but considered secondary and not as relevant as the history of the military operations. Hence, the first multi-volume works on Finland's participation in the Second World War were published in the 1950s, followed by more volumes during the next couple of decades (see, e.g., Halsti 1955–57, 3 vols; *Jatkosodan historia* 1988–94, 6 vols; *Suomen sota* 1951–65, 10 vols; *Talvisodan historia* 1977–78, 3 vols). None of these books, however, dealt with issues of civilians and the home front; their focus was on warfare, military operations, soldiers, and generals. This is a typical phenomenon in the historiography of war everywhere, and Finland is no exception here. It was only around the 1980s when, with the rise of so-called new war history, civilians of all ages started to be heard about how they had experienced, coped with, and survived the war (Kinnunen and Kivimäki 2006, 18; Millett 1977; Knutsen 1987).

According to Saffle, this book was necessary because “extremely” little (Saffle 2015, 2) had been published on War Children either in Finnish or Swedish. The operation and its potential consequences were discussed intensively in Finnish newspapers at the time. During and soon after the war, accounts and committee reports were published in Finland by the organizer of the operation, the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Swedish authorities published on the Swedish contribution, too. The first texts written from a child's perspective came out already in the 1940s (Ahlqvist and Björkman 1940; Bruun et al. 1943; Nyström 1945; Nyström and Laukka 1946; Kontinen 1947). However, these accounts were composed by adults, as the children themselves were still too young to interpret their experiences. The time for an autobiographical reflection came later.

During the next two decades, a few books and articles on war children were published every now and then (Jalo 1950; Gardberg 1959; Schildt and Runeberg 1960). Finally, since the 1970s and especially the 1980s the new war history has turned the focus onto the civilians, the war generation, youth and children, and the socio-cultural questions of the war (Hietanen 1992). This turn was followed by intensive academic research. Since 1990, many population groups that had experienced the war in childhood became active and started to organize associations.¹ These associations were active in collecting and publishing the reminiscences of their members.

To the Bomb and Back tells stories of a specific group of children in the past. The thirty-nine stories have been compiled through the correspondence and discussions between the editor and her informants. In these discussions, the former war children were asked to reminisce about

¹ For instance, in Finland the Association of Finnish War Orphans, the Association for Children Displaced by War (Evakkolapset ry), and The Association for Children of German Soldiers (Saksalaisten sotilaiden lapset ry); for a list of fiction, non-fiction, and scientific publications regarding Finnish war children see <http://www.sotalapset.tietokirjallisuus.html>.

their childhood experiences some sixty years earlier. In that sense, the book represents a well-known type of childhood history research where adults commemorate their childhood experiences. Obviously, this is the most common method because we seldom have access to the sources of the child at the time.

In these cases, some methodological questions about gathering the information for the book and the process of reminiscing come to mind. For instance, did the informants write their stories without any specific instructions or were they presented with a questionnaire or a list of topics and themes that they were expected to address? Based on the stories, it seems that the latter approach was used. It would have been beneficial for the reader to know more about the methodology for collecting the stories. The role of the editor in the process of composing the stories should also have been made explicit.

When studying a remembered childhood, it is crucial to reflect on the origin of memories. In the stories, the informants often state that “I don’t remember anything” when they refer for instance to the train journey from Finland to Sweden. Still, in the next sentence they may describe the long trip to Sweden in detail. Also, some other episodes and events, which the informants remember as their own first-hand memories, might have been acquired from outside sources. As some of the informants themselves mention, it is sometimes only episodic memories of a very young child that they can recall. They have realized that their story is compiled of many pieces of information, in addition to their own memories. Among these pieces are stories they have heard. “I have been told” refers to a lack of one’s own memories. Still, this does not mean that these testimonies are incorrect or not “true.” It would have been appropriate to discuss the process of an individual memory being transmitted and becoming cultural memory and to reflect on how this transformation is to be seen in this case (Bourke 2001, 216–20; Kivimäki 2012).

In the introduction, Saffle gives the basic information about Finland during the Second World War, which helps to understand the war-time circumstances of Finnish society. Unfortunately, this essential chapter contains inaccuracies that would have been easy to avoid by resorting to proper sources. The state of children’s health in Finland, for instance, was not as poor as the writer suggests. It is true that infant mortality peaked in 1940 in some parts of the country because of the evacuations of the Winter War; however, with the rising standard of living and improving hygiene and education, the pre-war infant mortality rate had declined in the more developed parts of the country to about five percent. According to Statistics Finland, the infant mortality rate was 6.8, not 10 percent. To say that children died of hunger is also not correct. Without doubt, children were more than often hungry because of the constant shortage of food in the country, but people did not actually experience starvation during the war years. Despite the many strains imposed on children in wartime, most Finnish children and youngsters lived quite safely in

wartime normality if compared to many other European countries (Salmi 1944; Laurent 2012; Junila 2012). A representative selection of studies on Finnish history can be found also in English; these sources would have been useful (see Kinnunen and Kivimäki 2012 and references therein).

The children whose stories are told are called “war children.” Unlike in the Finnish historiographical vocabulary, where this concept refers to those Finnish children who were sent to Sweden and Denmark during the war, the writer expands the expression to include all children who have lived through the war. Saffle justifies this by stating how all children “often endured great emotional trauma and hardships” (2). However, in Finland—as in many European countries—all sectors of society and all groups of people were subjected to militarization, and all resources, human and economic, were allocated to the war effort. Hardship was a common experience. Therefore, it might have been preferable to stick to the conventional use of the expression, especially as the phrase *war child* in Norway has another very precise meaning referring to a child whose father was a German soldier (see, e.g., Ericsson and Simonsen 2005; Simonsen 2006).

In Europe, some 60 million civilians were forced to move during and after the war. In Finland, the evacuations of civilians to safer areas were carried out several times before, during, and after the hostilities. War children are the third biggest group of people evacuated, although sending children to Sweden is usually not called evacuation in Finnish.²

The stories of thirty-nine children are powerful testimonies, first to the devastating impact the war has on societies and, second, to the children’s capacity to adapt and to cope. As the apt title of the book indicates, children did not only continue to play regardless of the damages and hardships of war; they incorporated war as a part of their games. They organized running races around a bomb crater, and after seeing military funerals children started to organize funerals themselves, where someone represented the dead body, someone was the priest, and the rest pretended to be mourners. On the other hand, these examples illustrate the militarization of childhood.

It also becomes obvious in many ways that the presence of a safe adult is of crucial importance for a child. If parents succeeded at least to appear calm and sensible when hearing bad news, it helped the children not to get too anxious. But to see a mother grieving or witnessing a young wife screaming, completely lost in her unfathomable sorrow, made the brutality of war hard to escape.

On the other hand, for children and youth, the years of war could also be a relatively positive period in life. It could, for instance, be experienced as a great adventure. For schoolchildren, extra leisure time, because of the

² Finnish civilian population evacuated between 1939 and 1945 consists of the following groups: Karelian evacuees (407,000 people), Pechenga, Salla, and Kuusamo evacuees (11,000), Hanko evacuees (5,000), evacuees of the Lapland War (104,000), and Porkkala evacuees (8,000) (Junila 2012).

regular closing of schools or reductions in lectures, was not necessarily conceived as a drawback—on the contrary.

In the stories, the informants describe fears that were realistic: fear of air raids or of losing a parent. But children had also unrealistic fears for things they were told to be aware of: Russian leaflets (might be contagious) and strange people (potential spies, deserters). Children also felt guilty because they could not keep their promises to look after a little sister or brother when arriving in Sweden. Instead of helping the children to relieve stress and anxiety, adults may have caused this stress and anxiety, which was usually the case when they decided to send the child to Sweden.

The original plan of the Finnish authorities was to transfer to Sweden only those children who came from evacuated families or whose fathers were disabled or had fallen. However, the number of children's transportations increased rapidly because of the shortage in food supply. The children did not always suffer directly from the war, and the battles did not form a direct threat to their lives. It was the circumstances caused by war that often made it hard to overcome the daily life, especially in big families. Shopping and standing in line for food required hours, and this was difficult for a mother who had many children waiting at home. Children were also sent because of difficult social conditions. In sum, the most common reason for sending a child was the difficulty caused by the total mobilization (Salminen 2007).

But the reading of the stories makes it often obvious that most of the families were not actually evacuated. They were either advised to move, or they moved on their own accord to safer places, to their friends' or relatives' homes, often from cities to the countryside: "All were leaving for the countryside to be somewhere safer" (107). The reasons for why the informant in question was sent vary, and they seem still to be somewhat unclear for them. In their stories they speculate: maybe because we were poor, perhaps because mother could not take care of us, because mother got this idea, because of the public discussion or the example of the family next door or family of relatives—or simply: "I don't know why I was chosen to be sent" (96). Because the children were often four or five years old when leaving for Sweden, it is understandable that the informants do not have a full recollection of events or memories. At that age, leaving home and parents was traumatic for the child—such a painful experience that it has been completely lost from memory.

At the same time, the older children have a more precise picture of the circumstances and alternatives. The hardships of life, food shortages, threat of bombings, general scarcity of goods, and practical problems of families are often mentioned. One of the most interesting stories comes from an informant who remembered that she went on her own initiative to the office where the names of children to be sent were taken. However, it is false to claim that "all children under twelve years old were put on a train to Haaparanta just across the Swedish border, to be saved from the constant bombardments" (176). When this false information is not

commented on by the editor, it raises the question of the genre of the book: is this a non-fiction book or a history book at all?

The informants as a group are not a very representative sample of Finnish war children, of whom over 40 percent came from different groups of working families (Salminen 2007, 401). This is often the case when doing research in history: we have to work on what is left from the past. Even though this is not an academic or scientific study, the validity and reliability of the sources should be discussed at least to some extent.

Post-war Finnish society did not lack people with traumatic experiences: men from the front, women who had lost their husbands, mothers grieving for their sons, people who had lost their homes and home regions, others who had lost their hope and their faith in the future. The way to deal with these problems was—as one informant in the book indicates—to forget and to get down to work.

People who tell us their stories in Sue Saffle's book have managed to overcome their difficult experiences and often even turned the situation around. These former war children do not consider their childhood as a downright success story, but they do consider it as at least a story of successful coping. They sum up their experiences by stating how "I was one of the fortunate ones" (68) or "I feel that all experiences have been blessings for me" (105). This kind of interpretation of one's past is an excellent example of how we build the story of our own life and our own identity by choosing the memories we want to remember.

The sharing of these stories must have been a significant and empowering experience. These stories resonate with other war children. In addition, this book contributes to the filling in of some of the gaps in Finnish history available in English.

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Södergran, Edith. [2017]. *Love, Solitude, and the Face of Death: Selected Poems by Edith Södergran*. Translated by Stina Katchadourian. McKinleyville, CA: Fithian Press. 106 pages, illustrations, \$14.00. ISBN 9781564745934.

Two qualities will strike many readers when they first encounter the poetry of Edith Södergran (1892–1923) by way of Stina Katchadourian's fine translations: Södergran's resilience as she suffered through war, revolution, poverty, famine, illness, and consciousness of her own premature death from the tuberculosis that had also killed her father; and the supremacy of her vocation as a poet. Responsible for introducing free verse into Swedish-language poetry, she asserted herself in her work as priestess, queen, prophet, and visionary, pronouncements which, combined with her abandonment of traditional verse technique, often met with the derision of the (mostly) male literary establishment. Yet despite numerous upheavals and her relative isolation from the international centers of modernism in Paris and London, her work, like that of the roughly contemporaneous painters Hilma af Klint in Sweden (who began painting abstractly at around the same time that Södergran began to write poetry) and Helene Schjerfbeck in Finland, is necessary to understanding the fuller story of modernism.

Love, Solitude, and the Face of Death updates and expands upon Katchadourian's earlier book of Södergran translations, published in 1992. In addition to the introduction, which gives a brief overview of Södergran's biography, publication history, and critical reception, the collection provides poems from the four books published in the poet's lifetime and one book published after her death, as well as a selection of

photographs taken by Södergran herself. Two-thirds of the translations come from Södergran's first book, *Dikter* (*Poems*, 1916), and final collection, *Landet som icke är* (*The Land That Is Not*, 1925). The posthumous work hints at the poet Södergran might have grown into had she lived longer, when the early work would simply have become signs pointing the way to her maturity rather than almost the entirety of her achievement.

In one of the earliest positive reviews that Södergran received, Erik Grotenfelt (1916, 4, under the pseudonym "E. G-It") wrote that in *Dikter* Södergran's readers would detect "a genuine poetic temperament" (13).³ This notion of poetic temperament lingers from the nineteenth century, and Södergran's poems can register more as tableaux of poetic attitudes rather than as poetry. Likewise, some of the furniture of symbolism—red roses, white shoulders, twilight, dream, and so on—dates the work. However, Södergran also uses the symbolist's elemental landscape of stone and tree and sea to eloquently articulate certain threshold moments and feelings that would otherwise remain unavailable, as in the poem "Evening," from *Dikter*:

I don't want to hear the sad tale
the forest is telling.
Whispers can still be heard among the firs,
and sounds of sighing in the leaves,
shadows are still gliding between the somber trunks.
Come out on the road. No one will meet us there.
Along the silent hedgerows the rosy evening dreams.
The road runs slowly and the road climbs cautiously
and takes a long look back at the setting sun. (39)

The least compelling poems are limited by their tendency to pronounce: "I have weighed tameness in my eagle's talons" (85). But the rich simplicity of image found in poems like "The Bride," from *Landet som icke är*, quoted below, as well as the knowledge that almost all the poems were written in the shadow of pain, is reminiscent of Keats (who also witnessed a parent die of the disease that would kill him, as Södergran did). Södergran's strongest work combines clarity with mystery, communicating

³ The original Swedish phrase is "ett äkta skaldetemperament" (E. G-It 1916, 4), here translated into English by Katchadourian in her introduction to *Love, Solitude, and the Face of Death: Selected Poems*, by Edith Södergran.

her sense of intimate estrangement with the world, an intimacy and an estrangement in which the reader is also invited to participate:

The Bride

My circle is narrow and the ring of my thoughts
goes around my finger.

There rests something warm at the base of all
strangeness around me,
like the vague scent in the water lily's cup.

Thousands of apples hang in my father's garden,
round and completed in themselves—
my uncertain life turned out this way too,
shaped, rounded, bulging and smooth and—simple.

Narrow is my circle and the ring of my thoughts
goes around my finger. (94)

When the traditional verse structures of rhyme and meter are abandoned, as they were by Södergran, other elements, such as image, sonic texture, and syntax, become more important. The two poems quoted above both use repetition at the end, emphasizing not only closure, but, most importantly, feeling. For similar reasons, the penultimate line of “The Bride” makes use of a syntactic reversal, which changes slightly the opening lines to begin with a stressed syllable, creating an echo that’s stronger than the original. The syntax reads a bit archaically in English, but is nevertheless effective. (In “Mending Wall,” Frost does something similar with the opening line: “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall.”) The second em-dash in “The Bride” seems to complete the thought that it encloses. Surprisingly, however, it serves as a kind of bridge to the poet’s discovery of the word that, in fact, will resolve the thought—“simple.” There’s surprise in that moment, but also finality and acceptance, all of which are enacted as experience for readers, too.

As a poet, what I long for when reading someone like Södergran in translation is a more nuanced understanding of exactly how she remains a vital presence in the native poetic tradition and what of that vitality

had to be sacrificed to bring the poems over into English. How is she “heard” by her Swedish-speaking audience? While reading Södergran I was reminded of the Russian poet, Marina Tsvetaeva, whose greatness is notoriously resistant to translation into English. But sometimes a less than literal translation succeeds, as with Ilya Kaminsky and Jean Valentine’s “reading” of Marina Tsvetaeva, *Dark Elderberry Branch*, which found ways to accommodate the individuality of Tsvetaeva’s technique when the words themselves either don’t say enough or, perhaps on occasion, as with Södergran, say too much. Where in Södergran, for example, might rhetoric be married to or subverted by sound? Assonance and consonance, as well as syntax, can express passion in ways more felt by the reader than can be understood by the denotative value of the words alone.

In a 1923 interview with Marius de Zayas, Picasso said there was no past or future for him in art: “If a work of art cannot live always in the present it must not be considered at all” (Picasso 1923, 319). The greatest poetry inspires more poetry and no translation offers the last word. However, Stina Katchadourian’s elegant translations should inspire others to keep this important lyric voice alive in the present.

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