



Department of History and Civilization

**‘Gypsies’, Travellers’ and ‘peasants’
A study on ethnic boundary drawing in Finland
and Sweden, c.1860-1925**

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Abstract

The study concerns two minority groups, the Finnish Roma and the Swedish Travellers, and their changing relationship with the ‘peasants’ – ie. the mainstream sedentary population – in a period of economic modernization and nation-state building.

Leaning on a wide array of qualitative material, the research forms an analysis of inter-ethnic relations, with a particular focus on micro-level interaction, conflicts and boundary drawing. As a socio-historical research, it aims to broaden a topic which has conventionally been approached from political and cultural perspectives.

Contrasting with an ‘isolation thesis’ implicit in much of the previous literature, the study found that the Roma and Traveller populations were in the research period tied into constant interaction with the sedentary rural population.

Yet, close everyday interaction and established networks co-existed with extremely strong ethnic differentiation, upheld from both sides of the divide. This was clear in relation to those transgressing the ethnic boundary, be it through inter-ethnic matrimony, being raised as a foster children, ‘settling down’, etc.

Despite constant re-adaptations, the Swedish Travellers and particularly Finnish Roma seem to have lost much of previous occupational diversity during the research period. Upheavals and social stratification in the rural society wiped out old niches and the established local positions connected to this.

A process of marginalization was reinforced by local vagrancy- and social control. These followed a circular logic, which continuously pushed out those already seen as illegitimate and unwanted. Local authorities acted as powerful boundary enforcers, dramatically reducing the options of those labelled as ‘Gypsies’ or ‘Tartars’.

The rise of nationalist framework problematized the position of the Roma and the Travellers further. The emergence of ‘print capitalism’ was accompanied by the public stigmatization of the latter as deviants and degenerates. In the local level, the ‘Gypsy’ and ‘Tattare’ ‘questions’ were entwined with power struggles and class tensions, with freeholding peasants particularly eager to exclude Roma and Travellers, both on national and local level.

While the empirical focus of the thesis is on the Finnish case, comparison with Sweden points to the intertwining of social separation and cultural differentiation. In both cases, the interlocking of social-, ethnic- and ‘racial’ differentiation, together with status of illegitimacy, produced what could be called ‘enforced ethnicity’.

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1. Introduction

My thesis deals with two historically itinerant minority groups, the Roma ('Gypsies') in Finland and the so-called Travellers (also called *resande* or *resandefolket* and earlier *tattare*) in Sweden, and how these groups' relationship with the mainstream peasant society changed in a period of nation-building and economic modernization. The 'peasants' are in the title for a reason: this is not a study on minorities understood as isolated cultural islands, but on a complex web of ties and interactions which inextricably bound the Roma and the Travellers to the peasant society. In this relationship, the various strata of the 'mainstream' society, from day-labourers, farmhands and tenant-farmers to landowners, journalists, bailiffs, parish priests and provincial governors were not just passive onlookers, but actively involved in shaping the Roma and Travellers' sphere of action as their customers, hosts, employers, kinsmen, complainants, friends and enemies.

The study is thus focused on inter-ethnic relations and the maintenance, problematization and transgression of ethnic boundaries. Research on interaction, liminal spaces and 'boundaries' has been a mainstream preoccupation in much of ethnic studies for several decades. In the field of so-called 'Romani studies', however, a serious focus on interaction is relatively new. It harks back to a counter-reaction, particularly since the 1990s, against a long-standing research tradition which – despite much solid research – has overall tended to present the 'Gypsies' and other itinerant groups as anomalous and exotic outsiders with static, self-contained culture and little connections to the wider society (except as victims of racism and state persecutions).¹

Until recent decades, Nordic 'gypsology' has been more or less clearly connected to this tradition, and tended to reproduce its questions and perspectives. The roots of the highly diffuse literature on Roma and Travellers can be traced back to folklorist and linguistic studies, the foundational text of which was written by Kristfrid Ganander, Chaplain of a North-Western Finnish parish, in 1779, actually preceding the

¹ Cf. Lucassen 1993; Lucassen, Willems & Cottaar 1998. The legacy of older linguistic, philological, ethnographic and historical research on the Roma and Travellers, epitomized by the *Gypsy Lore Society* (f.1888), remains contested. Matras (2004), for example, has claimed that 'de-constructionists' critics such as Okely (1983) or Willems (1997) have constructed a straw man out of what they call the 'Indianists' or 'Gypsologists'. Matras defends the scientific integrity of early philologists such as Johann Reitzinger, who was the first to present linguistic evidence to suggest an Indian origin of the Romani language. While such counter-reactions appear valid in many respects, none of this disqualifies the core of the historiographical critiques presented particularly by Lucassen and Willems.

breakthrough of the wider European Romani philology by some years.² Later, from mid 19th century-onwards, many of the most influential inputs to Nordic research have, as in the European research field, been connected to the authorities' attempts to measure and to solve the 'Gypsy' or 'tattare' 'problems', and were particularly in the first part of 20th century marked by the impact of criminological and racial perspectives.³

Much of conventional historiography has involved an automatic assumption of a fundamental antagonism between the Roma/travellers and the sedentary majorities. In the Finnish case, while several authors have made references to a certain economic role that the Roma had in local communities,⁴ a long interpretative tradition has emphasized social isolation and criminality of the Roma, matched by majority population's unanimous hostility and state suppression.⁵ Raino Vehmas,⁶ for example, presents the relations between the Roma and non-Roma self-evidently as a kind of a 'history of violence':

Experiences, knowledge and rumours of the Gypsies' rampage ignited the populations' deep hatred towards the tribe. Sometimes a peasant could drive Gypsies away from his house, sometimes a rough trick was used to make them leave, sometimes the confrontation ended in bloodshed. On town markets, great fights broke out between the Gypsies and other population. Similarly, the peasants helped the authorities in 'Gypsy hunts', provoked by a more serious crime or by the nuisance becoming intolerable.⁷

In Sweden, some authors have made references to interaction and a 'symbiotic' relationship between the Travellers and the sedentary population in earlier peasant society.⁸ Until recently, however, this relationship has not received serious attention, and has been overshadowed by accounts in which the Travellers have been presented as a stigmatized underclass prone to banditry and violence, 'practicing their vagabond occupation from base areas to nearby parishes often as outright terrorism'.⁹ Birgitta

² Initiated particularly by studies of Johann Rüdiger (1782) Heinrich Grellmann (1783) and Jacob Bryant (1785). Cf. Frazer 1992; Matras 2004; Willems 1997.

³ E.g. Bergstrand 1942; Etzler 1944; Flekstad 1949; Johnson 1912; Sundt 1850; Thesleff 1904; Viita 1967. Cf. Montesino 2001.

⁴ E.g. Alanen 1970; Grönfors 1999; Kopsa-Schön 1996; Pulma 2006.

⁵ E.g. Thesleff 1903; Nygård 1998 & 2001; Vehmas 1961.

⁶ Vehmas's sociology thesis (1961) can be seen a crossing point between the traditional Romani studies and a more 'modern', sociologically oriented research. In this it shares with the MA thesis of Ilkka Alanen (1970), which forms a distinctively Marxist approach to the history of the Finnish Roma.

⁷ Vehmas 1961, 152.

⁸ E.g. Lindholm 1995, 93; Löfgren 1970.

⁹ Etzler 1944, 163-165.

Svensson's (1993) description of the activities of a band of 'Tattare' in 18th century is telling in this regard:

The tattare-party claim at the [criminal] investigation [...] that they have occupations such as soldiers and glassware collectors [glassförare]. Their everyday life, however, seems to have been built around the travelling itself – demanding food and accommodation at peasant's houses by threatening them with revenge – rather than around of any kind of work.¹⁰

Implicitly, an interpretation is extended beyond the court case in question (dealing with alleged arsony): that if the 'tattare' were moving from house to house, the logic of the encounters with the peasants was that of violence and threats rather than anything involving social interaction or economic reciprocity.

The a-priori assumption of Roma and Travellers' economic and social isolation has thus had the effect of situating these groups and their mobile livelihood strategies firmly outside the structures of the Finnish and Swedish societies. To a large extent, the same is true of the diffuse literature which has turned the 'culprits into victims',¹¹ focussing on histories of racial oppression, forced assimilation, special childrens' homes, sterilizations, lobotomy and small-scale ethnic cleansings.¹²

Beyond few well-researched political histories, above all by Panu Pulma and Norma Montesino,¹³ interesting ethnological research, e.g. by Gunborg Lindholm¹⁴ as well as the above-mentioned study by Birgitta Svensson, there has been little in the way of socio-historical research on the interaction between the Roma and Travellers and the majority populations in Finland and Sweden. An indirect result has been that the contemporary complaints of authorities, clergy, landowners etc. are still often taken as

¹⁰ Svensson 1993, 95.

¹¹ Expression from Lucassen, Willems & Cottaar 1998, 3.

¹² This is not in any way to belittle the value of contributions such as those of Bo Hazell (2002), Christian Catomeris (2004) or Riikka Tanner and Tuula Lind (2009) (incidentally, Hazell, Catomeris and Tanner all journalists by their profession). These have been pathbreaking in exposing the systematic, often state-sponsored yet little-known discrimination experienced by Roma and Travellers, both as individuals and as groups. Still, from a socio-historical perspective, an exclusive focus on a 'victim' perspective does not help to understand the connections which have in any case bound the Travellers and the Roma to their respective societies, and facilitated their livelihood from generation to generation.

¹³ Montesino 2002; Pulma 2006; also: Waris-Westerberg 1984; Virolainen 1994; Huttunen 2008.

¹⁴ Gunborg Lindholm's highly interesting 'Vägaras folk' (1995) uses extensive interviews, participatory observation and ego-document material to reach the Travellers' own voice and to build a 'total' picture of the Travellers' sphere of life. The relations with the peasants are at times richly described, although not in the centre focus of the research.

sufficient proofs of more general social conflict existing between sedentary ‘host’ population and the itinerant Roma/travellers.¹⁵

This problem is not only confined to Nordic historiography. Dutch researchers Leo Lucassen and Wim Willems (2003) have claimed that focussing

on the antagonistic nature of the relationship between Gypsies and non-Gypsies [...] has produced a historiography in which Gypsies are portrayed as victims of racism or as criminals who more or less caused the repression themselves by their antisocial behaviour. As a result we know a lot about the Gypsy hunts in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Western Europe, the genocide in the twentieth century, or the enslavement of Gypsies in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia until the 1860’s, but surprisingly little about their day-to-day interaction with the rest of the society.¹⁶

There seems to be a number of problems and unanswered questions in the often-made assumptions of unchanging hostility and isolation that are taken to characterize the Roma and Traveller’s relationship with the peasants. In the context of Finland and Sweden, one of the most obvious seems to be the question of economic survival. Even more sharply than for most so-called peripatetic groups, a functioning relationship with at least some of the peasants has arguably been a matter of life or death for itinerant Roma and *resande*. In cold and poor countries, usually without houses or land, they were directly dependent on the goodwill – or at least co-operation – of sedentary landholders, who were necessary providers of food and housing. For the Roma and Travellers to survive at all, especially through recurrent economic crisis in pre-industrial Nordic societies such as the great famine years of 1866-68¹⁷, there has had to be logic of interaction overlooked by much of the previous historiography. The only alternative hypothesis would be to assume that the Roma and Travellers have supported themselves through large-scale banditry. This kind of banditry would however have left its marks in large number of sources, which have not been presented by any authors. Further, as Anton Blok argues, even banditry requires a ‘base’, that is, functioning social networks, protection and support of sections of ‘respectable’ society to be sustainable as a long-term survival strategy¹⁸.

¹⁵ E.g. Huttunen 2008; Pukero 2009; Svensson 1993.

¹⁶ Lucassen & Willems 2003, 283.

¹⁷ The great famine of 1866-68 was the last one to take place in Western Europe during peacetime, and killed people both in Finland and Northern Sweden. In the former, hunger and diseases led to the death of about 150 000 people or c.8% of the population. Häkkinen 1990.

¹⁸ Blok 2001, 18.

Even if a hypothesis of a generalized group stigma attached to the people labelled as *tattare*, *zigenare* or *mustalainen* would be accepted, it remains to be explained and contextualized. What has the social logic behind such stigma been, and have there been changes in this? If there was a *general level* hostility, how was this reflected on the local level, in concrete interaction between individual Roma/travellers and peasants in particular localities? Further, what kind of impact did the Finnish and Swedish nationalist movements and nation-state building have on how ‘others’ such as the Roma and Travellers were perceived and encountered? What I am aiming to is to replace a kind of a ‘cat vs. dog’ –view of inherently different and somehow ‘naturally’ antagonistic groups with a more nuanced view that gives also room for historical change.

‘Ethnicity’ is understood in my work as a complex historical phenomenon, something to be explained rather than to explain with. In particular, I seek to relate ethnic differentiation to nationalism and the nation-state, connecting to the ongoing debates on ethnicity and nationalism. In these debates, a number of ‘modernist’ researchers have argued that nationalism and nation-state building should be understood as homogenizing processes which, rather than emerge from pre-existing ethnic cores, actually ‘reinvent’ and significantly reinforce differentiation between what becomes to be seen as ‘minorities’ and the ‘national’ culture.¹⁹ Contrasting with what have been called the ‘perennialist’ and ‘ethno-symbolist’ views (in which ethnicity as a phenomenon is usually seen as more or less a-historical²⁰), the modernist position presents clearly demarcated, self-conscious ethnic groupings as the *end-products* rather than as the *precondition* of nation-building processes. Taking off from this debate, I analyse the position of the Roma and Travellers in Finnish and Swedish societies with a particular focus on the effects of late 19th – early 20th century nationalism and nation-state build-up.

Besides the nationalism-debate and the rapidly expanding field of ‘Romani studies’ in Europe, the thesis connects to socio-historical research on survival strategies, informal economy, mobility and social control. I consider a broad contextualization necessary to understand the object of research – particularly, I would argue that the history of Roma and Travellers in the Nordic region is unintelligible without setting it in the framework of vagrancy policing and local-level social control – but also because

¹⁹ E.g. Bayly 2004, 219-227; Jacquin-Berdal 2002, 76; Mann 2005, 18-20, 36-54; Verdery 1996.

²⁰ E.g. Hutchinson & Smith 1996, 3.

the research on the Roma has often been practically cut off from wider issues in European historiography.

In terms of comparison, the thesis does not aim to be symmetric or systematic. The empirical focus is on the Finnish case, and the comparison to Sweden serves primarily as means to build a wider and more analytic interpretative framework. Still, the comparison between the Finnish Roma's and the travellers' relationship with the peasants seems to open up the question of ethnic boundary-drawing and –crossing in Nordic societies in a new and useful way. The travellers and the Roma have important structural similarities and historical linkages, as do Finnish and Swedish societies more generally, and in many ways the comparison can be seen as inter-regional rather than international in its scope. Yet there is also a crucial difference between the groups in terms of social/ethnic composition and perception. While the Roma have conventionally been considered as an absolutely separate and 'foreign' element in Finnish society, the Swedish travellers have usually been presented as a 'mixed' or 'native' group that emerged partly from the ranks of the Swedish population (not unlike the *Burakumin* or *Ezo* in Japan).

Taking off from this difference, which I will elaborate below, the comparison serves to break off from what Wim Willems has called the 'splendid isolation' of the so-called Gypsy Studies²¹, and from the tendency to particularise the groups involved as something completely unique and anomalous to the 'normal' order of society. The fact that the travellers' origins are to a degree tied to the structures of the Swedish society helps to relate also the history of the Finnish Roma to its wider context, and to move from cultural to societal account of ethnic relations in the Nordic estate societies. To make this point more clearly and to highlight the research *problématique* more generally, I will now give a brief introduction into the history – and historiography – of the Roma and Travellers in the Nordic region.

²¹ Willems 1997.

1.1 Parallel histories: the Roma and the Travellers in the North

According to conventional historiography, clearly distinguishable groups of ‘Gypsies’ arrived to Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland from other parts of Europe from early 16th century onwards. While they originally stood out from endogenous itinerant groups, in Scandinavia they eventually intermarried and blended with the latter during the 17th and 18th centuries, forming an itinerant pariah class that was known with myriad of names, the most prominent of which were ‘*tattare*’ in Sweden, ‘*natmaend*’ or ‘*kjæltringerna*’ in Denmark and ‘*omstreifer*’, ‘*tater*’ or ‘*fantefolket*’ in Norway. In Finland, however, this blending did not take place, supposedly as there were no endogenous travelling groups prior to the arrival of the Roma. Ever since their first appearance in Finnish sources in 1559, they have then assumably retained their original distinctiveness from the rest of the population.²²

In regards to the Scandinavian Travellers, the ‘blending’ theory was challenged, particularly after the Second World War, by a number of sociologically oriented researchers. In what could be called the ‘labelling’ theory, the roots of the Scandinavian Traveller populations were seen to be in the social labelling and over-generational exclusion of heterogeneous, itinerant and international outcast elements (including impoverished peasants, mobile professionals, discharged soldiers and sailors, released prisoners etc.) rather than in genetic blending of Roma and endogenous travellers. According to this view, the presence of foreign Roma elements has not been sufficient nor even necessary condition for a process of ‘tattarization’, the forming of a culturally distinct class of outcasts.²³ Moreover, Heymowski (1969) has pointed out that from the earliest 16th century sources onwards, there is frequently much ambiguity in terms of who the so-called ‘Gypsies’ actually are. Heymowski points for example to a passage in archbishop Laurentius Petri’s letter, written in 1560 to reproach pastor of Sigtuna for having christened a *tattare* child, in which the former accuses the *tattare* of presenting false exotic identity:

²² Etzler 1944; Frazer 1992; Lindwall 2005; Pulma 2006; Thesleff 1904.

²³ Flekstad 1949; Heymowski 1969; Tillhagen 1956; Vehmas 1961.

They claim that they are from Egypt, which is nothing but a lie, as they never saw Egypt, but a great part of them are Scots, Danes, Norwegians and even Swedes who have joined them so that they might live such a damned licentious life.²⁴

Heymowski argues that there is no reason to assume – as Etzler does – that ‘the vagrants mentioned by the Archbishop were in reality Gypsies who had visited Scotland, Denmark or Norway before they arrived in Sweden’.²⁵

I will come back to this debate below. If for the moment the question of the social/ethnic origins is put aside, it can be said that the long-term history of the people known in earlier times as ‘tattare’ or ‘Zigenare’ in Sweden, ‘mustalainen’ or ‘Zigenare’ in Finland is in many ways parallel and interconnected. This is of course not least because of the fact that Finland was part of the Swedish kingdom from middle ages until 1808, and even long after the splitting of the kingdom, the two societies shared many integral features. However, there were also deeper connections, including direct family ties. Members of a number of Traveller/Roma lineages can be found throughout the Nordic region; for example, the family names Berg, Flink(t), Friman(n), Frisk, Klarin, Lind, Lindberg, Lindgren, Palm, Schwart, Roos/Ros/Roes and Valentin/Faltin recur among the Traveller/Roma families in Finland, Sweden and Norway. In the 18th century, Swedish bands of Gypsies often included members born in Finland (as well as in other nearby regions).²⁶ Separation of Finland and Sweden from 1808 onwards apparently severed much of the connections across the Gulf of Bothnia, but still throughout the research period, individual persons can be found both in Finland and Sweden who had been born on the other side of the of the Bothic Gulf.²⁷

Both the Finnish Roma and the Swedish travellers have been mostly – but not exclusively – itinerant, largely outside agricultural production and often only partly within the reach of central and local authorities. While small-scale landowning has not been completely uncommon, both groups have usually been broken down into small family-based bands, which have combined a wide variety of low-capital economic activities to geographic mobility to make their living. Both have also been involved in

²⁴ English translation by Heymowski (1969, 82). The original Swedish quotation is cited by Etzler (1944, 58): “*The giffua före, at the äro aff Klena Egypten, huilket icke annat är än lögn, ty the sågo aldrigh Egypten, utan störste partena aff them ähro skottar, jwtar, baggar och än suenska, som sigh till them giffvit haffua, på thet the slicht förbannat sielffzwold haffua måga*”.

²⁵ Heymowski 1969, 82.

²⁶ Etzler 1944, 82, Heymowski 1969, 91, Pulma 2006, 28.

²⁷ E.g. KA, Senaatin talousosaston arkisto, KD 561/51 1863, Kemiträsk.

what Anton Blok has called infamous occupations,²⁸ that is, making their living through services and activities that are socially stigmatizing, even as they have usually been highly sought after, such as horse-trading, peddling, skinning, mending kettles, collecting rags and glassware, gelding (castrating animals), and so on. Similarly stigmatized and practiced by the Roma and travellers were the occupations of whipper and executioner.²⁹

A centrally important common feature in the Roma and Travellers' history prior to the 19th century has been their long involvement in the Swedish army. This will be dealt in more detail in chapter 2.1. Before 1808, the military involvement appears to have reinforced the connections between the *Zigenare* or *Tattare* on both sides of the Gulf of Bothnia.

Despite some possibilities of social mobility and 'passing' into the mainstream society, as shown by genealogical research reaching back to the 17th and 18th centuries,³⁰ it can be said that both the Roma and the Travellers have historically been on the outer margins of the Nordic estate societies. From late 16th century onwards, they were labelled and treated as vagrants, idlers and criminals by the authorities and the elites. This intertwining of the Roma and Travellers' history with the history of vagrancy control will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Later, in various phases of Finnish and Swedish modernization and nation-building projects, both groups served as negative counterpoints, publicly stigmatized as unwanted deviants and racial degenerates. I will deal with this rise of the so-called *Zigenarfrågan* and *Tattareplågan* between 1860 and 1923 in chapter 3.³¹

All in all, there are both direct linkages and historical parallels between the Swedish travellers and the Finnish Roma. Similarities are visible in political and social position, occupational and kinship patterns, economic strategies, gendered division of labour, and many cultural practices, most notably the use of Romani-based or at least -

²⁸ Blok 2001.

²⁹ Etzler 1944, Heymowski 1969, Häkkinen & Tervonen 2004, Lindwall 2005, Pulma 2006.

³⁰ E.g. Heymowski 1969; Jularbo 1990; Lindgren & Lindwall 1992; Lindwall 1984; 1995; 2003; 2005.

³¹ After the Second World War, the 'Gypsy question' reappeared both in Finland and in Sweden. In Finland, the resettlement of Roma displaced from Soviet-invaded eastern provinces was a complete failure, and visible slums with make-shift housing and high unemployment emerged on the outskirts of big cities. In Sweden, the Kalderash Roma who had migrated to the country at the turn of 19th and 20th centuries were reclassified as 'Swedish Gypsies' in 1950s and became the objects of inclusion programmes by the authorities. Consequently both in Sweden and in Finland, new committees were set up and national surveys were carried out in 1953-56. Yet, as many times before and after, most proposals failed to pass into laws in the absence of resources and strong political incentives. Montesino 2002; Pulma 2006; research is currently also undertaken by Ida Ohlsson Al-Fakir, dealing with the attempts of the Swedish experts on 'social medicine' to integrate the 'Swedish Gypsies' during the 1950s and 60s.

influenced language.³² Further, as Finland inherited much of its legislation from Sweden, both groups have also been subjected to more or less similar forms of social control for much of the 19th century – the Nordic version of a ‘well-ordered society’³³ – even though Sweden was somewhat earlier to liberalize its vagrancy policies.

Yet there is a fundamental difference, already mentioned, in both the internal and external perception of the nature of the Roma and Travellers as ethnic groups. To begin with the Swedish Travellers, it is clear that they have been a highly ambivalent group in terms of origins and composition, not only for researchers and authorities, but also for the people who identify themselves as *resande*. For the latter, the issue of origins has often proved divisive, and arguments over it led to breaking up and splitting of several traveller associations in recent decades.³⁴ As for the authorities, their confusion has been visible, for example, in general surveys conducted in Sweden during the first part of 20th century, in which the “tattare” were variously equated with later arrived Kalderash Roma, or with wider criminal underclass, or treated as a separate group but without a clear criteria of who belonged to it. Consequently, the figures given in surveys could vary drastically; for example, in 1930 census there were only 471 ‘Gypsies and tattare’ found in parish registers, whereas in 1944 the Swedish Social Board compiled a list of 7668 *tattare* or persons ‘*equated with tattare*’, plus 500 family members.³⁵ Similarly, today the estimates of the number of travellers vary between 15000 and 25000 – while some go as high as 40000.³⁶

Both the proponents of ‘blending’ and ‘labelling’ theories acknowledge that the Traveller population originates at least partly from Swedish majority population. While the previous also put a strong emphasis on the foreign Roma elements in the travellers’ genealogical origin, the latter present the Travellers as fundamentally a social outcast group that emerged from heterogeneous elements as a result of over-generational exclusion and labelling from the peasants’ side, and internal networking and family alliances from the Travellers’ side. Tillhagen (1956) has been among those taking this interpretation furthest, giving the following account of the emergence of the ‘tattare’:

³² Cf. Barth 1955; Lindholm 1995; Tervonen 2003. As their position became politicized, the similarities between the groups were also explicitly acknowledged by authorities in both countries. See for example SOU1923:2, 325.

³³ Cf. Lucassen & Willems 2003 (the term refers to the preoccupation with controlling mobility and landless people in European state systems, contrasting in this regards with pre-industrial Ottoman empire or India, for example).

³⁴ Hazell 2002, 45-46

³⁵ Heymowski 1969, 19-21.

³⁶ Hazell 2002, 7; <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resandefolket> (2008).

The legal norms and social ties in old village community were tight. Those who broke these ties and norms were pitilessly punished against, and in the worst cases excluded from the community. What was especially characteristic of the old estate society was the occurrence of pariah occupations, such as the occupations of executioner, gelder, horse-dealer and pedlar. Also criminals were outside the society, and for a person carrying the stigma of punishment, often the only way to make a living was to take on an infamous occupation and to bear the social shame that went with it.

The poverty of 'good old times' also swelled these ranks with wanderers and beggars who bankruptcy and want had forced on the road. No respectable woman would marry such pariah man, and neither did those within the society accept a woman from this group as a spouse. The only possibility was to marry within the group; the families which thus came to existence constituted a clearly distinguished group on the bottom of the social hierarchy. In time, the members of this group made a virtue out of necessity and created internal norms forbidding ties outside the *tattare* group.³⁷

In Tillhagen's account, overgenerational exclusion from rural communities and involvement in low status occupations were two sides of the same coin, and central components in the formation of traveller ethnicity.

An influential, yet frequently misinterpreted formulation of the 'labelling theory' has been given by Adam Heymowski in his doctoral thesis published in 1969. Conducting extensive genealogical research reaching back to the 17th century, Heymowski showed that tracing the pedigrees of people who were considered as 'typical *tattare*' by contemporary 'experts' (civil servants, police, social workers, parish priests etc.) brought out a considerable number of ordinary Swedish peasant ancestors (6 out of the 30 cases). As framed by Heymowski's contemporaries, then, the category *tattare* turned out to be a construction or a negative label rather than a real in-group in anthropological sense. However, Heymowski's sample also consisted a 'core' group of people who identified themselves as '*resande*' – or Travellers – whose pedigrees were characterised by itinerant occupations and a distinctive kinship pattern with a high rate of intermarriage. Many of these *resande* could be traced back to common ancestors, who Heymowski described as a heterogeneous international class of itinerants. All in all, Heymowski considered the traveller group as a 'social outcast' rather than 'ethnic isolate'.³⁸

³⁷ Tillhagen 1956, 296.

³⁸ Heymowski 1969. Later genealogical research by Bo Lindwall (2005) has put relatively more emphasis on the ethnic Gypsy element in the *resande* group, but has not challenged the basic foundations of Heymowski's thesis. There has been a critical reaction against socio-economic and constructionist views of the travellers as a kind of a 'non-cultural subculture' (the latter view was taken furthest by Tillhagen

I will come back to the debate on the nature of the *resande* as a group in Chapters 7 and 8. For the moment, it can be said that attempts to fit the *resandeltattare* into any simplistic interpretative framework, be it ‘heirs of the Gypsies’ or ‘outcasts and drop-outs’ have systematically ran into problems. The remaining ambivalence can be detected, for example, in the exchange of opinions between several researchers, ranging from 1970s to 1990s, on such seemingly simple question as to whether the group actually still exists or not.³⁹ Nowadays, there is little doubt that the *resandefolket* have certainly not disappeared as a group, nor the term ‘tattare’ as a negative label. Still, it is revealing that, for example, the English-and Swedish-language entries on the Travellers in Wikipedia still give (2009) radically different accounts of their origins and nature – the Swedish version portraying the Resande as mixed ‘outcast’ category, the English one as ‘heirs of Gypsies’.⁴⁰

In sharp contrast to this, there has been a virtually unbroken consensus in Finland between researchers, authorities and Roma themselves in viewing the Finnish Kaale Roma as an ‘unmixed’, clearly bounded ethnic group *par excellence*, with foreign origins absolutely separate from the rest of the Finnish population. This foreignness has furthermore been connected to an idea of singular, distinct moment of arrival. This has usually been traced back to first documented references to what appear to be Gypsies in South-Western Finland, dated to 1559 and 1584.⁴¹ Assumedly, the Roma have maintained their ethnic character and distance from the majority population ever since. As the question of group membership has been treated as self-evident, problems of counting the Roma have been seen as purely technical both by researchers and by authorities. The number of Roma identified in three general surveys rose from c.700 in 1863-65 to 1551 (1895) and to 3569 in 1954; each time, the real figure was estimated to be roughly one-fourth higher as a consequence of incomplete registration of the Roma.

(1956) and Swedish ethnologists Orvar Löfgren (1970)). Researchers such as Bo Hazell (2002) have pointed to the strength of the travellers’ culture as an argument against a view seen as overtly social constructionist. While valid in many respects, in regards to Heymowski, much of the critique seems to have overlooked the subtlety of his position. Far from simplistic ‘mental’ constructionism, Heymowski clearly made a distinction between ‘tattare’ as a label and ‘resande’ as a ‘real’, closely networked and intermarried group. Also the critique against Heymowski’s use of ‘expert’ authorities in selecting his ‘proband’ individuals seems partly misdirected, as Heymowski’s point was exactly to show the bias in the *external* view of who the ‘tattare’ are.

³⁹ E.g. Lindholm 1995, 28-31; Löfgren 1970.

⁴⁰ According to the Swedish version ‘The Travellers originate from different groups which in older times stood outside the mainstream Swedish society’ (<http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resandefolket>); whereas the English version states that ‘Modern-day Travellers are the descendants of the first Roma that arrived in Scandinavia during the 16th century’ (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwegian_and_Swedish_Travellers.)

⁴¹ E.g. Thesleff 1904, 14.

In the discourse of the Nordic Roma researchers, Finland has been seen as a case roughly analogous in its relation to the Scandinavian ‘tattare’ as to that of the supposedly ‘pure’ Welsh Gypsies in comparison to the ‘mixed’ Travellers of England. In both cases, it has been assumed that a particularly ‘unmixed’ or ‘original’ group has been able to retain ‘traditional’ Gypsy culture in a kind of a great outdoors museum formed by woody, backwards and weakly controlled periphery. Assumably, until the structural changes after the Second World War, the Finnish Roma have been strictly isolated from the rest of the population, and have intentionally sought to uphold a ‘traditional’ way of living through restricting contacts with non-Roma solely into those economically necessary. Also the peripatetic livelihood strategy has been interpreted as subservient to the Roma’s self-willed isolation. ‘Authentic’ Gypsy culture has thus been equated with staticness, and this staticness seen as conditional on social isolation. Nygård, for example, has connected the idea of the Finnish ‘original Gypsiness’, to racial ‘purity’:

The Finnish Gypsies have managed to keep their race exceptionally unmixed. They have represented the most original and typical Gypsiness, which has meant very strong conservativeness, that is, rejection of new influences. The Gypsies have lived amongst the Finns, keeping to their own customs, laws and language, disregarding the habits of the majority population.⁴²

While other researchers have avoided the explicit racial language used by Nygård, the underlying assumptions of what I call here the ‘isolation thesis’ still remain largely unchallenged in the Finnish literature. In the light of the case of the Swedish Travellers, there would seem to be room to problematize it in some respects. New philological research, for example, challenges the assumption of one distinct moment and direction of arrival, pointing instead to a mixed origin, with gradual immigration from several different directions.⁴³ From a genealogical perspective, it could furthermore be asked whether the label ‘Zigenare’ or ‘mustalainen’ could have been attached to members of the Finnish population through marriages and over-generational alliances between Roma- and non-Roma families. Especially, one could hypothesize genealogical connections with foreign soldiers and people engaged in the so-called infamous occupations (e.g. skimmers, executioners, gelders), as well as with the wide class of landless population, which shared in many ways the socio-economic situation

⁴² Nygård 2001, 16.

⁴³ Ongoing research by Kimmo Granqvist.

of the itinerant Roma. On the other hand, it can be hypothesized that economically successful and sedentary Roma could ‘ascend’ in the social scale, especially through intermarriage, and lose their ethnic label over the course of successive generations.

While cross-connections such as these will be looked at in limited degree in Chapter 5 in particular, this is not the main task of the current research. Instead of focussing on a question of ‘origins’ from a genealogical perspective, I will seek to build a critical counterpoint to what I call the ‘isolation thesis’ through undertaking a temporally limited socio-historical inquiry on inter-ethnic relationships in their complexity. Here, the case of the Swedish Travellers serves as a way to deepen the study in terms of analyzing the complex interplay between social- and ethnic distinctions and boundaries.

The expression ‘inter-ethnic relations’ can of course be understood in many different ways and on many different levels. What I am primarily interested in this research (at least whenever the sources allow this) is the micro-level of actors and everyday practices. In particular, I am interested in the material basis of inter-ethnic interaction, as it is visible in networks, exchange, conflicts and relations of matrimony. Yet, looking also at mental and political conceptualizations is unavoidable in seeking to understand the relations and boundaries between ‘minorities’ and ‘majorities’. This adds another layer to the research, manifest particularly in analysis of press- and political debates as well as the actions and discourses of various local-, regional- and central-level authorities (chapters 2 and 3).

1.2 Theoretical approaches

Ethnicity as a historical phenomenon

At least from 1970s onwards, ethnicity has become an immensely popular notion in social sciences. At the same time, it has inherited many problems inherent in earlier discourses on ‘culture’ and ‘race’. Both tended to become kinds of super-concepts which could be stretched to explain almost all differences in human behaviour, economic performance, social position, etc. Like them, ethnicity becomes highly problematic if it is understood as an independent variable ‘out there’, an essence

existing in objectively definable groups (whether these are seen as being based on language, religion, phenotype, origin, habitus, ‘collective consciousness’, ‘national spirit’ etc). As Max Weber has noted, the concept of ethnic group resembles that of ‘nation’ in that it ‘dissolves if we define our terms exactly’.⁴⁴

In respect to ethnicity, then, two central premises structure my research:

- 1) *Constructionism / interactionism*: Ethnic groups are defined through their relationship to others; rather than being based on ‘objective’ core of natural or cultural differences, they are constantly constructed in social, economic and political interaction.
- 2) *‘Historicism’/‘modernism’*: not only ethnic groups and their boundaries, but also the phenomenon of ethnicity itself is subject to historical change, and has been transformed by nation-building and modernization. This process could be described as the ‘politicization of identities’.

The first premise corresponds with my interest on boundaries and interaction. Since Fredrik Barth’s classic introduction to *‘Ethnic groups and boundaries’*,⁴⁵ innumerable studies have showed that while barriers separating people into ‘cultures’, ‘ethnicities’ or ‘races’ are usually imagined as something more or less fixed and absolute, in reality they are always more or less fluid and complex, concealing behind them both historical change and the absence of any objectively definable core. This perception has shifted interest from cultural ‘traits’ (understood earlier as shared and permanent within particular groups) into how ethnic boundaries are created and maintained, *despite* factual cultural heterogeneity, change and contestation within groups, and despite the fuzziness of their outward barriers. A central point in this stance is that ethnic groups are defined through their relationship to others, and emerge as a result of, not despite contact with each other.

In line with Barth’s original approach, the ‘ethnic boundaries’ are not understood in my thesis as solely- or even primarily ‘mental’ or cognitive constructions. Instead, the focus of the research is on the complex overlapping and interplay between socio-economic and cultural differentiation. My starting hypothesis is that on the long run, ethnic boundaries are only sustained as significant in everyday action if they

⁴⁴ Weber 1978, 389-395.

⁴⁵ Barth 1969.

connect at least to some 'real' material boundaries and inequalities. In this respect, the theoretical basis of the thesis connects to what has been called a fundamental law of sociology and anthropology: that social separation produces cultural differentiation.⁴⁶

The second of the above-mentioned premises builds on the first one, but is more controversial as an academic argument. Besides anthropological theory, it connects the thesis to the historical ethnicity/nationalism-debate and arguments of so-called 'modernists' vs. 'ethno-symbolists' and 'perennialists' (the latter of whom emphasize the relatively unchanging nature of ethnicity as a phenomenon). Both in the contexts of the Western world and its former colonies, the 'modernists' have connected historicity of ethnicity to modern forms of political power, in which identities become a matter of central importance. In the case of African history, for example, it has been widely accepted by anthropologists and historians that the colonial techniques of divide and rule transformed, strengthened, and in many cases actually created ethnic boundaries, superimposed on a society previously characterised by 'mobility, overlapping networks, multiple group membership, and the flexible, context-dependent drawing of boundaries'.⁴⁷ These boundaries became only later to be seen as expressions of timeless African 'tribalism'.⁴⁸ Similarly, a repeated conclusion in conflict areas as varied as ex-Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Horn of Africa and Sudan has been that conflicts allegedly caused by 'traditional' ethnic antagonism can actually be to a large extent accounted by 20th century identity politics within the modern state.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Glaser, Daniel 1971, *Social Deviance*. Chicago: Markham, cited in Short, Jr. 2003, 83. Admittably, to a certain extent, the emphasis on material relations is in this work also a matter of making a virtue out of necessity. As I point out in chapter 1.3, there are practically no 'emic' sources available which would give a direct access to how the Roma and Travellers themselves interpreted the ethnic threshold between themselves and the surrounding 'peasant' population during the research period. What is thus more reliably researchable is the level of socio-economic interaction, networks, conflicts etc.

⁴⁷ Lentz 1997, 31.

⁴⁸ E.g. Lentz 1997; Ranger 1983; Vail 1989. While the emphasis on one-way colonial 'invention' and manipulation of tribal boundaries has given way to interpretations that emphasise complex interplay between numerous actors, including sections of the native societies, the suggestion of the strong connection between colonial power and African ethnic identity formation has remained largely accepted by Africanists, historians and anthropologists since the 1970s.

⁴⁹ For Yugoslavia, see Oberschall 2000; for Sri Lanka, Kloos 1997; for Rwanda, Prunier 1995; for Horn of Africa, Jacquin-Berdal 2002; and for Sudan (Darfur), Nielsen 2006. In the last case, Erik Solevad Nielsen has actually studied some of the same ethnic groups inspiring Fredrik Barth's situationalist theory in 1960s. Whereas the basis of Barth's theory was that ethnic boundaries in Darfur were economically and ecologically defined and that one could "become" another ethnicity by changing their occupation, Nielsen argues that modern nation-state and violent conflict have in the last thirty years 'remapped the ethnic boundary system in Darfur to the extent that Barth's original theory may never be applicable to the region again'.

While these and other examples⁵⁰ suggest the modernity and state-bound nature of ethnicity as a politically significant category, arguments have been made of the relative modernity of ‘fixed’ ethnic identities more generally. Drawing both on Barth and the critique subsequently wielded on him, Katherine Verdery holds that the tendency to draw socially consequential boundaries on the basis of perceived cultural differences has not been a historical constant, but has been profoundly reinforced by modern nation-state formation and the accompanied ideologies of nationalism. According to Verdery, nationalism can be seen as a form of cultural homogenisation which creates as significant pre-existing differences that had previously not been organised as such. By institutionalising the fixedness of its citizen’s identity through modern surname- and passport systems and by connecting these identities to a notion of shared national culture or a ‘commonality’, nation-state building at the same time renders visible all those who *do not* hold that something in common, giving unprecedented socio-political significance to the fact of difference.⁵¹

As will be argued particularly in chapter 3, it would appear that in the Finnish and Swedish cases nationalism really did accentuate ethnic differentiation on the level of politics and public discourse. However, it is a much more difficult question whether a similar claim can be made on the level of micro-level ethnic relations. Moreover, as will be seen, both the cases of the Finnish Roma and the Swedish Travellers also qualify a straightforward ‘modernist’ thesis in many respects.

Mobility, infamous occupations and peripatetic groups

Despite the sedentary image of pre-industrial Nordic and other European societies (imagined as consisting of ‘households’), they have included a huge variety of individuals and groups for whom seasonal or permanent mobility has been a crucial economic strategy, including diverse pedlars, artisans of all sorts, artists and entertainers, seasonal labourers, healers, beggars, mercenaries, pilgrims etc. Historically, majority of the Roma and other itinerant people (non-Romani-speakers such as the Central- and West-European *Jenische*, Irish *Tinkers*, English *Travellers*,

⁵⁰ E.g. Bauman 1989, Mann 2005.

⁵¹ A clear and profound explication of this argument has been made by Katherine Verdery, drawing on the ‘situationalist’ theory of Fredrik Barth and the subsequent historical critique levelled at it. Verdery 1996, 44-50.

Swedish *resande*, etc.) have been on the more permanent end of this continuum of mobility, often moving all through the year with their families.⁵²

Both in the cases of Finnish Roma and Swedish travellers, ethnicity as a phenomenon arguably blends into this mobile livelihood strategy. As the ethnonym *resande* (literally, ‘travelling’) already suggests in the Swedish case, this feature has been central in producing and maintaining distinction vis-à-vis the peasant population, whose self-definition has been tied to land ownership and agricultural work. As noted above, mobility and ethnicity have in the case of Roma and Travellers further been connected to the so-called ‘infamous occupations’. In many peasant societies, these low-status activities were mostly mobile by nature⁵³ and often either taken up by foreigners or ethnic minorities outside agricultural production – or, their practitioners became ‘ethnicized’ in an overgenerational process of social exclusion, as in the case of the ‘Ezo’ in Japan.⁵⁴

Even in societies economically and mentally centred on sedentary agricultural production, mobility cannot be taken simply as a sign of marginality. French historian Laurence Fontaine and researchers of Dutch Migratory history centre have criticised historians’ tendency to see ambulatory professions, seasonal labour and migration automatically as a sign of social decline. Of course, moving for work and especially begging *have* often been the last resorts of those out of other options. However, mobile professions have also had vital economic role in pre-industrial societies, and geographic mobility could be an efficient way to access the resources of large areas. Many of the Early Modern pedlars studied by Fontaine, for example, were able to create wealth and use it to move upwards in the social scale.⁵⁵ Being itinerant has not necessarily meant being cut off from the sedentary society and family ties either. As Fontaine notes, mobility as a permanent economic strategy does typically not take the form of linear, one-directional movements (from ‘a to b’), nor that of random wandering, but is characterised by local and cyclical nature of movement as well as continuous relations to places of origin. Further, individual transactions with customers living along long-

⁵² E.g. Fontaine 1996; Häkkinen 1999, 2005; Lucassen 1993, 1998c.

⁵³ Although this was by no means always the case – even sedentary occupations directly connected to agricultural production, such as the work of millers, could carry a social stigma.

⁵⁴ Blok 2001.

⁵⁵ Fontaine 1996; Lucassen, Willems & Cottaar 1997, 3-5.

established routes could be part of a long-term exchange and understandable only as parts of this continuous relation.⁵⁶

While geographical mobility has been important and frequent source of economic flexibility for all European populations, it has been argued that groups such as the Roma and the Travellers nevertheless form a special case in the wide spectrum of occupational mobility. Lucassen, for example, makes a distinction between migratory and travelling groups. While the first includes all people whose occupations make it necessary to travel, he reserves the term ‘travelling groups’ for those practicing ambulatory professions while travelling in family groups – including most Roma and Travellers.⁵⁷ The notions of *peripatetic groups* or ‘service nomads’ offer another way to conceptualize this difference. The concepts emerged in social anthropology during the 1970s; they refer to primarily non-food producing, more or less endogamous mobile communities, which gain their living through trading commodities and services to sedentary or nomadic customers. According to a definition by Rao, land-ownership, hunting and gathering occur, but the primary way to make living is mobile trade. The basic economic logic of the peripatetic adaptation strategy is that while single town or village may not be able to support a full-time metalsmith, gelder or a musician, a network of sedentary communities can support such specialized activities. While the peasant survival strategy rests fundamentally on maximal food production and minimal mobility, peripatetic minorities thus go to the opposite direction: minimal food production and maximal mobility.⁵⁸

The concept of peripatetic groups has its problems in regards to the Roma and Travellers. It is often understood as depicting clear-cut ethnic minority groups, with a neat overlap between ethnic membership and a mobile livelihood strategy. Yet, many of the Roma and Traveller groups have historically been much less mobile and economically ‘ethnic’ than what is persistently imagined.⁵⁹ Still, the concept is useful in setting the Roma and Travellers in a global and analytical rather than particularizing and culture-derived framework. As Rao and Barth point out, there are hundreds of peripatetic groups all around the world. Frequently, they share structural similarities in their relationship with the sedentary population. They are usually divided in small itinerant bands, and form minorities everywhere. As the peripatetic economic strategy is

⁵⁶ Fontaine 1996, 121, 205.

⁵⁷ Lucassen 1993.

⁵⁸ Rao 1987, 3.

⁵⁹ For this critique, cf. Asséo 2004, 71.

ultimately based on utilizing the surplus production of agricultural population, the relationship between these groups is essential for the functioning of the strategy.⁶⁰

Here, however, is a key dilemma: according to Fredrik Barth, the attitude of the majority populations towards the peripatetic groups is regularly hostile almost everywhere (even though the strength and nature of this hostility vary).⁶¹ If we for the moment take Barth's assumption at face value, what kind of consequences the group stigma attached to the peripatetic groups has from the point of view of functionality of their economic strategy?

Research on South-Indian peripatetics studied by Robert M. Hayden, for example, seems to suggest similarities to the logic of interaction between early modern pedlars and peasants in Europe. The pedlars, according to Fontaine, were 'caught in a system of social relationships which both supported and controlled them'.⁶² Sedentary population's negative attitude towards mobile outsiders *in general* does not mean that they would not make regular exceptions to this stand in respect to *individuals* whom they know and interact with. Continuous exchange with regular customers along well-established routes can thus to a degree 'compensate' for the generalised resentment towards the peripatetics. Still, in cases such as the one studied by Hayden, the structural a-symmetry of the relation between the peripatetics and the sedentary population gave rise to a latent tension between the groups which could only be relieved locally, never resolved altogether.⁶³ This is a situation, which, in its fundamental features, we will also meet in many the subsequent chapters concerning the Nordic Roma and Travellers.

1.3 Sources

A mystic haze covers all of their life conditions. Fragments of birth- and death records can be found in the church archives all over the country, but they are less often found in confirmation class- and wedding records.⁶⁴

In both the Swedish and Finnish contexts, the basic challenge for my research is to reach tiny minorities whose members were usually on the fringes of the 'ordered' society, interacting with the sedentary majority almost exclusively on the sphere of

⁶⁰ Barth 1987, Rao 1987.

⁶¹ Barth 1987, IX, Rao 1987, 8-11.

⁶² Fontaine 1996, 121.

⁶³ Barth 1987, IX, Hayden 1987.

⁶⁴ *Östra Finland* no 67, 12 Jun 1876.

informal economy. As the above excerpt from an article published in *Östra Finland* in 1876 points out, unknown but certainly significant number of Roma and Travellers were outside official registration, some of them throughout their lives, giving rise to only fragmentary data in census and parish records. As with 'vagrants' and itinerant landless people in general, there was often also intentionality behind the incomplete registration: for the authorities, leaving the Roma/Travellers out of parish- and census records, even when the latter were clearly locals, served as a way to avoid poor-relief- and other responsibilities.⁶⁵ When registered, occupational titles or information on economic activities were regularly lacking, particularly for the Finnish Roma, for whom the official documents usually simply give the label 'Gypsy' (*Zigenare*) or 'vagrant' (*lösa, lösdrifvare*). As they rarely had taxable property, also other 'robust' social history sources such as probate inventories, tax records and notary contracts are mostly unavailable.

Moreover, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to reach any kind of independent Roma or Traveller voice in historical documents before the 20th century. Both left few traces of self-willed activity, and only one or two known cases of what could be called ego-documents⁶⁶. Also, unlike groups such as the Jews, the Roma did not build formal, ethnically or religiously based organizations which would have produced written sources before the 20th century.

Still, suspicions and curiosity felt towards the Roma and Travellers, as well as their regular confrontations with authorities charged with policing crimes, vagrancy and border-crossing means that numerous external source materials *do* exist. By their very nature, many of these give a very negative picture of the Roma and Travellers: most of them only appear when there is a crime, a confrontation, extreme poverty or hardening of public attitudes, making it hard to reach 'normal' and non-conflictual everyday relations. They have overwhelmingly been 'written by the enemies',⁶⁷ representing hostile viewpoints of authorities and top segments of the peasantry, each of whom had

⁶⁵ Cf. Orman 1980.

⁶⁶ The first known 'ego-document' in Scandinavia is the self-biography by Martin J Mathiasen Skou, published in 1893. Skou, a South-Norwegian Traveller born in 1849, was educated into a school teacher with the help of a local priest. Lindholm has used Skou's memoirs extensively in her research (1995). In the Finnish case, the first ego-document I have found is a short autobiographical text by K.Fr. Lindström (b.1855), published in the Gypsy Missions's magazine *Kiertolainen* in 1913 (Autumn number, no 7, 8, 9). Lindström, after graduating from an agricultural school, also became a teacher, and later a missionary worker for the Gypsy Mission. Unfortunately from the current researchs' perspective, Lindström's account strongly focusses on the development of his personal religious feelings (Lindström was perhaps encouraged to go into this direction by the primarily religious overall tone of the *Kiertolainen*).

⁶⁷ Cf. Lucassen, Willems & Cottaar, 3.

their own interests to maintain a 'well ordered society' in the sense of tied-down labour force and restricted mobility of population. The Swedish genealogist Bo Lindwall, after having meticulously followed the lives of thousands of Traveller individuals as they appear in historical sources, concludes:

As the archive material almost always gives the authorities' point of view [...], the Travellers [resande] appear mostly in the role of lawbreakers, even if the crime only consisted of passing over a border of the province without a passport. One feels like a historian trying to impartially depict a war, in which only one of the sides left archives, newspapers, letters, propaganda material, etc. The picture becomes unavoidable one-sided.⁶⁸

Of course, court records, newspaper articles and police reports are not always black and white, and at least if read between the lines, can imply another side to the story.

There are also some interesting written reminiscence material both in the Swedish and the Finnish context, which, although still giving mostly the majority population's point of view, help to widen the perspective. I have also made a limited use of oral history interviews of the Finnish Roma, even though strictly speaking they do not stretch back in time to the research period.

The basic difficulty, then, is less a lack of sources than their heterogeneity, both in content and in chronology. What exists in relation to the Roma and Travellers' social history is a patchwork of very different source materials, biased and fragmented each in their own way, and not easily complementing each other. Instead of methodological clarity, I have thus had to adopt a patchwork approach, in which combination of several 'thin' and biased sources, contextual reasoning and looking at what is *not* said are necessary elements of the analysis.

The main types of source materials used in this research are listed in Table 1 (for a full list with complete original language names of the material, please see the list of sources at the end of the thesis).

⁶⁸ Lindwall 2005, 18.

Table 1: Main source materials by type, archive and period covered.

| Type | Material | Archive / source* | Period covered |
|---|--|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Finland | | | |
| Press material | | | |
| | Digital press archive: newspapers | (Digital) | --1910 |
| | “ : periodicals | (Digital) | 1910-1925 |
| | Thesleff collection: newspaper clippings | KB | 1835-1899 |
| | Microfilmed numbers of <i>Kiertolainen</i> | KK | 1907-1925 |
| Gypsy survey materials | | | |
| | 1863-65 survey data | KA | 1863-65 |
| | 1895 survey data | TK | 1895 |
| Reminiscence- and oral history material | | | |
| | ‘Itinerant Gypsies’ reminiscence material | KM | Full coverage |
| | Rom-SF oral history material | SKS | c.1910-1940 |
| | RN oral history material | SKS | c.1870-1925 |
| Penal court records | | | |
| | Wiipuri and Waasa Provincial courts: subju- cated cases from local circuit courts | MMA, VMA | 1866-1901 |
| | Local circuit court records | MMA, JMA | 1867-1895 |
| Auxiliary sources | | | |
| | Lists of vagrancy arrests | MMA, JMA | 1881-1908 |
| | Minutes of municipal meetings | MMA, various | 1868-1899 |
| | Lists of deportees to Siberia | (Digital) | -1917 |
| | ‘Black books’ | MMA | 1869-1909 |
| | Census and parish records | Various | Full coverage |
| | Plays and other literary material | Various | |
| | Reinholm & Thesleff collections | KM, KB | |
| 2. Sweden | | | |
| Reminiscence material | | | |
| | EU78 Written reminiscence material | NM | Full coverage |
| 1922 police investigation | | | |
| | 1922 special police investigation on the ‘tattare’ and ‘Zigenare’ | RA | 1922 |
| Genealogical material | | | |
| | | Various | Full coverage |
| Municipal meetings | | | |
| | | (Digital) | Full coverage |
| Press material | | | |
| | Digitaliserade svenska dagstidningar | KB | Full coverage |
| | Etzler and Heymowski collections | NM, KB | |

* JMA: Joensuun maakunta-arkisto [Joensuu Provincial Archive]; KA: Kansallisarkisto [National Archives of Finland]; KM: Kansallismuseo [National Museum of Finland]; MMA: Mikkelin maakunta-arkisto [Mikkeli Provincial Archive]; SKS: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura [Finnish Literature Society]; TK: Tilastokeskus [Statistics Finland]; VMA: Vaasan maakunta-arkisto [Vaasa Provincial Archive]; KB: Kungliga Biblioteket [National Library of Sweden]; NM: Nordiska museet; RA: Riksarkivet [National Archives and the regional state archives of Sweden]

Below, I will go briefly through the main categories of sources, their problems and possibilities.

-‘Gypsy’ and ‘tattare’ surveys

As in many other European countries⁶⁹, there were attempts in Finland to ‘measure’ the extent of the ‘Gypsy question’ through extensive surveys in the late 19th century. Two such surveys were commissioned by the senate of the grand duchy of Finland and carried out in 1863-1865 and in 1895. The surveys obliged parish priests (in the first instance) and bailiffs (in the second) to send back information on all the people in their jurisdiction considered as *Zigenare* or *Mustalainen*. ‘Non-Gypsy’ spouses and children from mixed marriages were sometimes but not always included. The local reports of 1863-65 survey are held at the National Archive of Finland, and of 1895 at the Statistical archives of the Statistics Finland; I have collected and analyzed the complete data. The amount of information given on individuals and families varies radically, both between- and within the two surveys.⁷⁰ In most parishes / districts, the information given is spotty, often with very scarce information on most individuals and families – even the names of the local Roma are not always known. On the other extreme, the parish priests in particular have written long descriptions of the life of particular Roma individuals and families. The variation of detail can be assumed to have a social dimension: the economically worst-off itinerant section of the Roma were probably not reached by the surveys as they were the ones most often missing from tax- and parish registration, whereas the most well-off Roma can be supposed to be at times missing because they were economically and socially integrated to a degree that made them less visible as ‘Gypsies’.

In the case of the Swedish Travellers, general surveys were not carried out until the 20th century. Only in 1922, a long-standing committee preparing an overhaul of poor-relief system, ordered systematic surveys to be carried out. I have analyzed the raw data of a special police investigation on the Gypsies and Travellers subsequently conducted by the local police in 1922, held at the Royal Archives of Sweden. The investigation produced a wide material, covering all the police districts in Sweden, and

⁶⁹ Cf. Johnson 1998. Eliza Johnson has used Gypsy census material collected in Hungary in 1893 to study processes of ‘counting and categorizing’.

⁷⁰ In 1863, a circular sent to the parish priests asked these to compile information including name, age, family background, as well as any other information concerning the ‘inner and outer’ lives of the Gypsies. In 1895, a detailed formular was sent to the bailiffs, requesting, besides basic personal data, information on occupation, religion, marital status, vaccination, reputation, parish- and tax registration, alleged crimes and convictions, etc.

with special reports on largest cities. Particularly some of these special reports also go backwards in time, into the 19th century; in these cases, it seems that the authorities were aimed to provide examples of ‘pathologically’ criminal families, with an implicit eugenic perspective. However, for ‘normal’ reports from the police districts, the emphasis of the investigation is on general level description on the visits, economic activities and impact of ‘tattare’ and ‘zigenare’ on local life, rather than on giving detailed information on individual Travellers and their families.

As is obvious, the Finnish and Swedish material are not directly comparable, already because of the several decades’ divergence in time. Despite this and other problems, which will be dealt with later, the surveys seem invaluable as sources on ethnic labelling, interfaces between the Roma and the local authorities, and as rough indicator of patterns of social change.

-Press material

Press material, gathered particularly from digital databases, form a central part of my material both in the Finnish and the Swedish case. In the Finnish case, I have collected and analysed c.950 newspaper articles dealing with the Roma in one way or the other, published between 1830 and 1925. The core of these consists of newspaper articles (available for the period until 1910) and periodicals (1910-44) compiled from the Finnish National Library’s digital Historical Newspaper Library with keyword searches.⁷¹ In addition, I have went in detail through *Kiertolainen*, the journal of the ‘Gypsy Mission’ (Mustalaislähetys), published from 1907 onwards. The sample includes also majority of the 439 reproductions of Finnish newspaper articles (published between 1835-1899) compiled by Arthur Thesleff, held in the Royal Library of Sweden.

The sample of articles relating to the Swedish Travellers is much smaller, which is primarily due to the fact that only a tiny fraction of Swedish newspapers is available in digital archive (at least in 2010), making a wider press search for articles concerning the Travellers extremely laborious. My sample of newspaper writing on the Swedish Travellers consists of 72 articles published between 1837 and 1922, compiled primarily from the Royal Library’s digital press archive (‘Digitaliserade svenska dagstidningar’⁷²). In addition, the sample includes newsclips from the collections of

⁷¹ <http://digi.lib.helsinki.fi/sanomalehti/secure/main.html?language=en>

⁷² <http://magasin.kb.se:8080/searchinterface/>

Adam Heymowski (held in Royal Library) and Arthur Etzler (Swedish National Heritage Board).

In regards to the newspaper material, my starting point has been to treat it as more than ‘just’ discursive representations. While chapter 3 in particular pays attention to discursive changes in writing about the Roma and Travellers, I have thus also approached the newspaper articles from a ‘factual’ perspective, particularly with the help of Atlas/ti qualitative analysis software, in order to support the analysis of the micro-level realities and particularly the family histories presented in Chapter 5.

-Reminiscence and oral history material

The most direct way to access boundary-drawing processes would of course be to use ‘emic’ sources from both sides of the ethnic threshold, including accounts from both Roma, Travellers and ‘peasants’. Unfortunately, as far as historical reminiscence materials is concerned, only the latter are once again represented. In the Finnish case, a key source material are formed by the written reminiscences collected by the Finnish National Board of Antiquities in 1971. The material consists of the written accounts of 828 non-Roma respondents, which cover most municipalities of the country. I have made a detailed content analysis of 98 of the reminiscence accounts, choosing the cases so that they cover different parts of the country, while giving a wide picture in terms of the social background, gender and age of the respondents.

In the Swedish case, there are several comparable materials. For this research, I have made use of the written reminiscence material compiled by ethnologists of the Nordiska Museet from 1942 onwards. The material consists of several thousand sheets, in which narrators born mostly in late 19th century refer to their memories of the Travellers, writing their accounts on the basis of a semi-structured questionnaire. I have collected and analyzed a sample of 30 such accounts.

As for the other side of the ethnic divide, this is unfortunately poorly represented in this research. In the Swedish case, I have had to rely on secondary sources, particularly the interview material appearing in Lindholms highly interesting study. As for the Finnish case, there are two very interesting oral history materials which give a straight access to the Roma’s own voice. Unfortunately, I have been forced to use both of these only to a limited degree. The first of these is formed by the 107 interviews made and recorded by the *Rom-SF* project in 1998, in which also the interviewers were Roma. I have earlier used this material extensively for my MA thesis. Its problem for

the current work is that the time-span of the interviews does not reach back to my research period –overwhelming majority of the oldest material deals with the period beginning from 1930s onwards. Still, while acknowledging this problem, I have made limited use of this material, particularly in chapter 4.

Another highly interesting material is formed by a series of interviews of Roma conducted between 1967 and 1971 by a group of folklorists and musicologists at the Finnish Literature Society. Some of this extensive material reach back to my research period, and I have made some use of it; however, I am forced to admit that I only discovered the material in late stage of the current work, and will return to this material more extensively in future work.

NB: in the footnote references to the reminiscence and oral history materials, the gender and date of birth is given, where possible, in the form of [F1896] for example, in which F stands for female, 1896 to the year of birth.⁷³

-Penal court records

One of the few direct ways to study micro-level relations - especially conflicts -between the Roma and the peasants in the 19th century is through records of penal court proceedings. However, it is obvious that because of its nature this is also a highly problematic material. The Roma and Travellers have for been centuries been labelled as ‘deviants’ and lawbreakers, and seen almost automatically through the prism of assumed criminality; and at the outset, penal court records inevitably present those involved as suspects and culprits. Thus it is important to make it very clear that my purpose is *not* to make a criminological study or to imply any particular connection between the Roma and criminality. Rather, since members of Roma communities, like any other people, are occasionally found in court records, my aim is to study these between the lines as qualitative sources, and to probe as far as possible into the dynamics, practices, friction points and ‘moral economy’ of local ethnic relations. Used in this way as anthropological sources, court records have been an insightful material in innumerable studies, helping to uncover otherwise invisible power-relations, cultural norms and social practices in peasant communities.⁷⁴

⁷³ As my model in this, I have used the study of Sakari Saaritsa (2008).

⁷⁴ For early modern period, court records have been crucial source for numerous micro-historians; for an excellent study situated within the same time-frame as mine, see for example Regina Schulte’s study on arson, infanticide and poaching in Upper Bavaria (Schulte 1994).

Chapter 6 presents a case study which I have made in the Finnish case based primarily on court records. Penal court records (*tuomiokirjat*) are available throughout the research period in most areas in Finland and include detailed descriptions of disputes in local and appeal courts. I have located cases featuring Roma from these based either on explicit ethnic labelling (*mustalainen*, *mustolainen*, *zigenare*) or, less often, surname.

It is clear that a sample based on crimes serious enough to be formally prosecuted and involving people explicitly labelled as *Ziguenare* or *Mustalainen* can give only indirect light on non-conflictual relations and tends to exclude actors who were either well integrated to local communities or whose status as a Gypsy was less than obvious to the authorities. Moreover, even as a source on friction points, the trial records have a bias towards more serious cases which have ended in the penal courts and in which the local authorities have forced formal procedure rather than encouraged off-the-records settling. In looking at the sources of conflict in the relationship between the Roma and the Finnish majority population, the trial records thus offer a biased, even dramatized picture. Keeping this in mind, chapter 6 is an attempt to analyse the Roma-peasant-relationship as they appear in the court records. As the main area of the case-study, I have chosen Karelia, and particularly the parish of Sortavala, which in the 19th century had the highest absolute and relative numbers of Roma in Finland.⁷⁵

-minutes of municipal meetings

In the Finnish case, without systematic charting (which would have meant consulting each municipality's archive individually) I have found 18 cases from newspaper articles and research literature in which the municipal community proposed statutes aiming at the restriction of the Roma's movements and their accommodation. In the Swedish case, the Svenska Lokalhistorisk Databas (SLD) has allowed a much more systematic research on the local-level attitudes and reactions towards the Travellers (and, above all, local attempts to stop their mobility and immigration). In the Swedish case, then, digitalized minutes of municipal meetings form one of the most important source materials.

⁷⁵ However, in this particular case there has been an unhappy coincidence that effectively prevents me from bringing much temporal change into the local-level analysis. During WWII, Russian bomber planes destroyed much of the Karelian archival material, enabling only short time-span for the Sortavala case-study (1883-1895).

-other sources

Because of the thinness and bias of many of the listed main source materials, it has seemed necessary to form a more rounded overall picture through complementing them with a number of other materials. These include genealogical material, lists of vagrancy arrests, lists of deportees to Siberia, 'Black books', ie. lists of crimes held by parish priests, plays and various literary material, as well as articles and ethnographical material included in the Reinholm-, Heymowski- and Thesleff collections, etc. I will elaborate on the details and use of these materials as I go along. I am aware that the research material which I have pieced together is too large for an in-depth analysis of all of the sources. Instead, I utilize the various sources in somewhat eclectic manner in order to carry out as well-grounded and -conceptualized socio-historical description as possible.

1.4 Note on terminology and research ethics

It is not an easy task to come up with logical, transparent and consistent terminology when dealing with ethnic groups in general. This is particularly so if the starting point is a critique of ‘groupism’, i.e., the deconstruction of the idea of ‘ethnic groups’ as internally homogeneous, clearly bounded ‘blocks’ of collective actors. The situation is particularly difficult in relation to the so-called ‘Gypsies’, which, as Henriette Asséo notes, is a heteronym situated within an exceptionally fluid semantic field⁷⁶. Furthermore, questions of terminology cannot be divorced from epistemological and ethical questions. Logical inconsistency and indirect use of power easily slide into accounts juxtaposing ‘the Gypsies’ with ‘the society’.⁷⁷ In this section I will try to shortly explicate some of the terminology I use and the problématique surrounding it.

Table 2 presents some of the main ethnonyms used by the studied minorities and majorities to denote themselves and each other:

Table 2. Main ethnonyms in relation to the ‘Roma’, ‘Travellers’ minorities and ‘majorities’ in Finland and Sweden during the research period

| | Minority on self | Majority on minority | Minority on majority | Majority on self |
|----------------|--|---|---|--|
| Finland | <i>Folki</i> <i>Kaale</i> (pl. -o) <i>Romani</i> | ← <i>Mustalainen</i> ← <i>Zigenare</i> | <i>Valkolainen</i> → <i>Kaaje</i> → <i>Talonpoika</i> → | (<i>Suomalainen</i>) (<i>valkolainen</i>) |
| Sweden | <i>Resande(folket)</i> <i>Rom(m)ano</i> <i>Vandringsfolket</i> <i>Nattmän</i> (Occupational:) <i>tavring, dingleare,</i> <i>mengare</i> <i>Etc.</i> | ← <i>Tattare</i> ← <i>Skojare</i> ← <i>kräm(m)are</i> ← <i>rackare</i> ← <i>k(j)ältringarna</i> ← (<i>Zigenare</i>) <i>Etc.</i> | <i>Buro</i> → <i>Bonde</i> → | (<i>Svenska</i>) |

However, this and any other static scheme oversimplifies matters and gives a false sense of consistency in ethnic labelling. Besides excluding a number of less used or clearly insulting ethnonyms, the scheme does not convey the ambivalence, shifting meanings and contradictory uses of each term in different times and places. For

⁷⁶ Asséo 2004, 84.

⁷⁷ Cf. Asséo 2004, 80.

example, the term ‘mustalainen’ has been used on both sides of the ethnic divides with various meanings, while term ‘tattare’, as noted above, has operated as a loose label that could be used to signify poor, itinerant and criminal people in general as much as ‘real’ travellers (who preferred to call themselves *resande*).

In this research, I refer to the contingent group of people categorized in the Finnish sources as ‘Zigenare’ or ‘mustalainen’ mainly with the word ‘Roma’. This term has become internationally more or less synonymous with ‘Gypsy’ and its various cognames, and has inevitably also inherited many of the latter’s problems. First of all, both terms are constantly and uncritically applied over hundreds of diverse groups that have been habituating in different corners of Europe for centuries. While ethnic distinctions might appear sharp, in practice these groups have in various degrees intermarried with- and partly originate from- the regional ‘majority’ populations, and do not always share much with each other beyond an ethnic label imposed from outside. Secondly, the word ‘Roma’ or ‘Rom’ has also more restricted meaning, denoting a number of East-European groups (many members of which have emigrated to west in several successive waves from late 19th century onwards), and using it for other groups risks confusion. Despite these problems, I prefer the word Roma in the Finnish context to other options, as ‘Gypsy’ is often considered as derogatory, ‘Romani’ (a term used in contemporary Finland) risks confusion with the Romany language, and ‘kale’, a word often used by the Roma themselves, is unintelligible to many readers. Finally, previously common Finnish word ‘mustalainen’ – literally ‘blackling’ – is a loaded term, felt as derogatory by many Roma today and ill suited for taking analytical distance to the topic of the thesis.

As for the Swedish group – no less contingent than the Finnish one – described in external historical sources usually as ‘tattare’, ‘Ziguenare’, ‘kältringarna’ etc., I will use the term ‘Traveller’. This is not a descriptive term (majority of the people described with the term have been sedentary at least from 1920s onwards), but a direct translation of the term ‘resande’, which is most commonly used by the members of the groups of itself. The term ‘Tattare’ has apparently been used almost exclusively by the majority population and authorities and is considered as clearly insulting by the travellers.⁷⁸

On the other side of the majority-minority divide, simply using the national terms ‘Swede’ and ‘Finn’ would be highly problematic. Firstly, such terms conceal

⁷⁸ Heymowski 1969.

social and cultural heterogeneity of the so-called majority populations, and do not work in analysing different ethnic majority actors and their different motives in relation to the Roma and Travellers. Secondly, as is typical in most nation-states, these terms do not distinguish between ethnic or linguistic group membership and formal citizenship; if ‘Roma’ and ‘Finns’ are presented as mutually exclusive groups, it is implied that the Roma are not Finns, or Finnish, which from purely legal, but also from historical and societal point of view is incorrect.

Whenever this is convenient, I avoid overtly generic shorthands (such as ‘non-Roma’ or ‘the sedentary population’) by using socially or professionally specific terminology. In a number of instances, I talk simply of ‘the peasants’, when referring to a variety of sedentary rural people, whether these were farming land or not. This is naturally very inaccurate, but as a term it is also one that has been used by both the Roma and the Travellers as a generic ethnonym for the ‘ordinary’ majority population (‘*talonpojat*’, ‘*bonde*’), and highlights a structural relation of the to the agricultural producers that is central for the topic of the thesis.

In practice, there is an instrumental necessity use ethnic nominators to at times as kinds of short-hands. I will try to do this in an open and contextualized way and particularly to avoid treating group terms (‘the Roma’, ‘the Travellers’ or ‘the peasants’) as natural categories which would objectively define a collective or individuals. At the same time, my concern is not to give up ‘groupisms’ completely, which, as Zsuzsa Csergo suggests, might not be possible nor necessarily beneficial either⁷⁹. Rather than trying achieve an illusion of consistency through some kind of ‘soft’ ethnic group definitions, I prefer to leave the problem explicitly open to underline the complex and often problematic and slippery nature of ethnicity itself.

Finally, a note on research ethics. It has been clear to me from the outset that the position of an ‘outsider’ doing historical research on the Roma and the Travellers is unavoidably problematic. Research on these groups have been – and continue to be – dominated almost completely by accounts and debates written by non-members. This is the case in relation to most Roma-, Sinti-, Gypsy- and Traveller groups more generally, and has from 18th century onwards given credit to accusations of ‘colonisation’ of these groups’ histories. The past record is not very encouraging: the field of ‘Gypsology’ has been notoriously impacted by research done from patronizing or latently hostile

⁷⁹ Csergo 2008, 395.

perspectives, often with the best of intentions but nevertheless ending up facilitating anti-Roma policies or -views.

I am thus keenly aware of my responsibility as a researcher and of the problems involved in positioning my study. Yet I have also worked with a strong conviction that giving up scholarly historiography on the Roma or Travellers – whoever the writer – or restricting it to ‘politically correct’ themes would be even more problematic than doing research as an outsider. The Finnish Roma and Swedish Travellers have been parts of their respective societies for centuries, and should self-evidently have places in historiography as well. In the context of the current nationalist revivals, this seems particularly important. From 19th century onwards, modern historiography itself bears much responsibility for constructing myths of national ‘unity’ through obscuring the historical fact of social and cultural diversity. Despite premature academic post-mortems and wishful thinking, nationalist simplifications have not left the scene since, and continue to tilt our societal self-understanding. In this context, detailed empirical historiography involving groups which continue to be marginalized in conventional grand narratives has an in-built virtue of serving as an antidote for nationalist reductionism (however small the dose).

Many Finnish Roma and Swedish Travellers are keenly interested in- and conscious of the histories and experiences of their ancestors. As the research sometimes passes on areas which might be felt as sensitive by the descendants of the people mentioned in the text, I am not using the full names of those labelled as ‘zigenare’, ‘mustalainen’, ‘tattare’ etc. when they appear in the study. Instead, the reader is given a combination of first name and an alphabetically running letter representing the surname.⁸⁰ Unavoidably, this makes the text somewhat impoverished. It also leaves out one interesting aspect in the ethnic boundary marking: the often clearly distinguishable and complex naming systems used by the Finnish Roma and the Swedish Travellers. However, these have already been dealt with elsewhere; and what matters here more is to protect the ‘name’ of those concerned.

⁸⁰ Each letter can also stand for several different surnames. Contrary to a common assumption (e.g. Tanner & Lind 2009, 29-30), those seen as ‘Zigenare’, ‘tattare’, ‘mustalainen’, ‘resande’ etc. by themselves and/or by their social environments exhibit a rich plurality of surnames; for example, the roughly 80 named individuals mentioned in the Finnish chapters had more than 60 different surnames. Consequently, simply giving each name a different letter was not possible

2. Historical context: vagrancy control, mobility and crisis

2.1 State, vagrancy and the Gypsies

In terms of their relation to the state, the Roma and Travellers have historically been on the outer margins of the Nordic estate societies, labelled and treated as vagrants, idlers and criminals. This labelling has been tied to the European-wide history of increasing control over mobility, labour and and poor-relief from the late Medieval period onwards. In the context of early modern state-building, localisation of poor-relief, as well as a shift from feudalism to mercantile capitalism, mobile groups that were difficult to control and tax (and competing with guilds when engaged in trade), became increasingly labelled as vagrants and outlaws. Especially in countries which underwent the Reformation, the movement of landless people became an object of restrictions and sanctions, as secularisation of poor-relief gave local elites a strong motivation to keep potentially costly itinerant people out of their parishes. In this context, it was not ethnic distinctiveness as such but the combination of mobility, poverty and being outside the agricultural labour system which mattered for the authorities.⁸¹

In the Swedish kingdom (which included Finland until 1808) the link between the problematization of mobility in general, and Roma/Travellers in particular is visible in that the notions of ‘vagrants’, ‘Gypsies’ (*zigenare*) and ‘tartars’ (*tattare*) co-appeared and were treated as more or less synonymous in numerous 16th-18th century documents⁸². But regardless of ambiguity, the ‘*zigenare or tattare*’ clearly became more than just a subcategory of the so-called vagrants (which, as Lucassen has pointed out, was itself a flexible label and could be applied to all sorts of mobile people⁸³). From the authorities’ point of view, the people known as *tattare* or *zigenare* were from mid 16th century onwards perceived as foreign, unchristian and prone to beggary and crime – in short, as a nuisance. They were profoundly unwanted by post-Reformation state-builders such as king Gustaf Vasa of Sweden (1496-1560), who sought to expand control over the population, increase tax revenues and minimize local poor relief costs.

⁸¹ E.g. Bancroft 2005; Frazer 1992; Lucassen, Willems & Cottaar 1998; Montesino 2002; Pulma 2006.

⁸² Heymowski 1969, 81-88; Pulma 2006, 108-110.

⁸³ Lucassen 1998a, 57.

At least from the 17th century onwards, a basic trait of the Nordic vagrancy- and poor-laws was the division between ‘legitimate’ infirm entitled to poor relief, and those obliged to find employment – including all able-bodied persons without fixed property or specific privileges. Heavy sanctions were decreed to force wandering beggars and ‘vagrants’ either into agricultural or public works or into the ranks of the military. Considered as a class of permanent vagrants, the categories of *tattare* and *zigenare* became criminalized as such, and targeted with tough expulsion policies, illustrated in extreme form by the often cited ‘hanging law’ decreed in Sweden in 1637. This law ordered all ‘Sikeiner eller Tartare’ to leave the country within three months, after which all remaining men would be executed without a trial.⁸⁴

However, the 1637 law illustrates also the fact that decreeing laws and implementing them were two different things in early modern society.⁸⁵ There is no evidence of anyone ever being hanged as a consequence of the law, which seems to have been simply ignored by local authorities.⁸⁶ In general, expulsion laws targeting *tattare* and/or *zigenare*, repeated at times throughout the 17-18th centuries, appear to have been highly inefficient, particularly in the wide and weakly controlled border regions and peripheries of Sweden-Finland and Norway.⁸⁷ Of the Nordic regions, only in small and densely populated Denmark the expulsion laws apparently had a long-term effect which came close to the lawmakers’ intentions - conspicuous ‘Gypsy’ groups either emigrated, assimilated or intermarried with endogenous mobile people by the late 19th century.⁸⁸

This is not to say that the practice of expelling foreign Gypsies would have gone without effects in the rest of Scandinavia either. In a case studied by Anne Minken, the Swedish and Norwegian authorities managed, despite patent indecivness and disagreements, to constantly disrupt the life of a large itinerant Roma band. After repeated arrests on both sides of the border, extended remand imprisonment, interrogations and threats of execution, most of the Roma were finally expelled to

⁸⁴ Etzler 1944, Montesino 2002; Nygård 1998; Pulma 2006; Waris-Westerberg 1984.

⁸⁵ Cf. Frazer 1992, 130.

⁸⁶ Etzler 1944, Pulma 2006 24-25. Whether there were any real consequences to the 1637 law is currently being investigated by Tuula Rekola. Pulma (2006) offers an interesting interpretation on the circumstances surrounding the law’s introduction and its failure. According to him, the law was in fact a tentative attempt by the nobility, including many new members recruited from Germany during the 30-years war, to ‘smuggle’ foreign autocratic legal practices into the Swedish law, and the ignorance which the law met an indication of the strength of the old Swedish common law.

⁸⁷ E.g. Etzler 1944, 87; Svensson 1993, 88.

⁸⁸ Pulma 2006, 19, 25.

Swedish Pomerania in 1729. The band, led by an ex-soldier Per Jönsson Hellbom (discharged earlier from the military because of his Gypsy background) managed to return to Sweden in 1730s and, under a different name, to take up previous livelihood patterns, combining military service and mobile life. In order to do this, however, Hellbom's band was forced to adopt various counter-strategies, such as splitting into smaller groups, moving into peripheral borderlands, assuming false identities and utilizing jurisdictional boundaries and information gaps between different authorities.⁸⁹ All of these remained also later part of what Svensson (1993) has called the interplay between the authorities and the Roma/Travellers.

A more lasting solution for the Roma/Travellers' precarious situation was to seek legitimate status either as farmhands, peasants, artisans, burghers or soldiers. Such possibilities opened up – at least in theory - after a series of amendments to secular and clerical legislation, starting from the Church Regulation Act of 1686, which allowed the children of the Gypsies to be baptized and the adults to settle down and enter particular congregations⁹⁰. A 1713 circular to deputy governors furthermore recognized some rights for Gypsies who had settled permanently in towns and/or who were practicing what was seen as 'honest' occupations.⁹¹

Voluntary recruitment and forced enlistment as a soldier became particularly important for the Roma and Travellers. From the late 16th to the 18th century, the Swedish kingdom was stretched to the limits of its resources by a long series of expansion wars. To fill the ranks of its army, *Ziguenare* and *Tattare*, along with diverse other people classified as vagrants, were both drafted and forcibly enlisted to the army in great numbers. This was so common that according to Etzler, 'one seldom hears [ie. comes across in 18th century sources] of a grown-up Gypsy who was not, or had not been, a soldier'⁹².

In peacetime, the army usually had no means to provide for all its soldiers; drafted and mercenary soldiers were thus given long-term holiday passports and left to procure their livelihood by whatever means they could. Armed, moving with their families and sometimes making their living by force, the soldiers were commonly feared and hated by the peasant populations. In Finland, some of the first available sources referring to *Zigenare* are 18th century complaints about the drafted soldiers'

⁸⁹ Minken 2009.

⁹⁰ Etzler 1946[?], 2; Pulma 2006, 27.

⁹¹ Minken 2009, 5.

⁹² Etzler 1946[?], 2-3.

high-handed behaviour and outright robberies while on leave⁹³; In Sweden, Etzler and Svensson have similarly described the problems which local populations and authorities had in containing itinerant 'Tartare and soldiers on the leave'.⁹⁴

It is probable that belonging mostly to the drafted and mercenary troops rather than to the regular conscript (or 'allotment') regiments of the Swedish army thus meant deepening of the Roma and Travellers' social stigmatization in the eyes of the sedentary population. However, the army was also the most formidable corporation of the early modern Swedish kingdom. Besides being a serious threat to the recruits' life in times of wars, it provided a degree of legitimacy for its rank-and file, even at the bottom of its hierarchy. It seems apparent that incorporation by the military played a key role in the establishment of a distinction between 'foreign' and 'native' Gypsies in the Swedish kingdom, allowing some legal recognition for those considered to be in the latter category.⁹⁵ For a number of Roma and Travellers, the military actually provided pathways of upwards social mobility through promotion into the ranks of officers (although this became very rare after the 18th century).⁹⁶

Still, neither military involvement nor other signs of 'integration' – such as the appearance of legitimate town-based *Tattare* burghers⁹⁷, *Zigenare* tenant farmers⁹⁸, authorized municipal hangmen, horse-shoers or skimmers etc. – meant that the position of those labelled as *Zigenare* and *Tattare* would have been secure. On the contrary, throughout the 18th century, there was a large number of harsh, yet unclear and often contradictory regulations concerning them in the Nordic kingdoms of Sweden and Denmark.⁹⁹ This had the effect of making local and provincial authorities often cautious and even confused in dealing with them, yet also gave them plenty of room of manoeuvre. For example, two Roma were hanged in Norway in 1737, based on a Danish anti-Gypsy law which was more than 150 years old (given in 1580s) and which had in practice remained a dead letter since it had been decreed¹⁰⁰. Another example of contradictions, illustrated by the case of Hellbom, was that being a *Zigenare* could serve as grounds for dismissal from the ranks of the Swedish military¹⁰¹, at the same time as

⁹³ Waris-Westerberg 1984.

⁹⁴ Etzler 1944, 147; Svensson 1993, 81-84.

⁹⁵ E.g. Etzler 1946[?], 2, Pulma 2006, 26-28.

⁹⁶ Lindwall 2005, 18.

⁹⁷ Lindwall 2005, 17-19.

⁹⁸ E.g. Pulma 2006, 34.

⁹⁹ E.g. Montesino 2002, 47-53; Pulma 2006 30-31; Svensson 1993, 87-90; Vehmas 1961 45-47.

¹⁰⁰ Vehmas 1961, 42-23.

¹⁰¹ Minken 2009, 10.

recruiting them was a common practice both within and without the borders of the kingdom. Also, the distinction between ‘foreign’ and ‘Swedish’ *zigenare* (set most clearly in a 1748 law specifically centred around the Roma and Travellers) could be superfluous and only protected those who could prove having been born on Swedish soil, which, in the frequent absence of birth certificates, could be far from self-evident.

Roma/Travellers and the 19th century changes in vagrancy laws

In conjunction to the Napoleonic wars, Sweden lost its Finnish provinces to Russia, which annexed these in 1809 as an administratively separate Grand Duchy of Finland. From this onwards, the legal position of the Roma and Travellers on different sides of the Bothnic Gulf started to diverge. This happened only gradually, however: the autonomous position of Finland within the Russian empire meant that it inherited the core of its civic legislation – including vagrancy laws - from Sweden. As the Russian Czar abstained from summoning the legislative assembly (or, the Diet) between 1809 and 1863, Finland actually retained many of the old statutes longer than Sweden.

19th century changes in legislation targeting the *Zigenare* or *Tattare* – or rather, the eventual scrapping of this legislation – connected to changes in legislation concerning the movement of labour, poor-relief and public order. These developed roughly to similar direction in both countries (although with Finland as a rule lagging some decades behind).

Throughout the 19th century in Sweden, and from 1863 onwards in Finland, vagrancy laws were gradually relaxed in both countries. This was not a straightforward development, and both countries went also through periods of renewed restrictions. Still, a series of reforms eventually led in both countries to the de-criminalization of mere unemployment and homelessness, and to the abolishing of labour regulations which had bound landless population to the landowners. To an extent, the changes in legislation were a *post-facto* reaction to a situation in which rapidly growing mobility and internal migration had already made the upkeeping of rigid vagrancy laws an impossibility. From 1819 onwards in Sweden, and 1865 onwards in Finland, evidence of ‘ill-mannered’ or criminal behaviour, begging or living permanently without means, was required for a vagrancy sentence.

Moreover, enforced enlisting into the military, previously highly important, also ceased to be part of the vagrancy control. In Finland, the annexation into the Russian empire meant the abolishment of the Finnish regiments, and in Sweden, amendments to the vagrancy law in 1824 stopped forced enlisting of the detainees.¹⁰²

In tandem with the loosening of the vagrancy laws, occupational choices and the migration of labour were liberalized in 1846 in Sweden, and in 1879 in Finland. Basically, what took place in both countries was a shift into a ‘modern’ capitalist order, in which the growing landless population became more or less free to move and to choose its occupations, but was at the same time increasingly set on its own, as the paternalistic responsibilities of the land-owners and parishes were loosened. This liberalization went hand in hand with the growth and professionalization of the police force. Control over dispossessed classes, previously exercised to an important degree by priests and landowners, was now increasingly put in the hands of regular police forces, the organizations of which were modernized in a series of reforms undertaken in 1848-50 in Sweden, 1890-97 in Finland.¹⁰³

It was in this context of unravelling of old rural ties, increasing social stratification and the emergence of ‘modern’ institutions of social control that the position of the Roma and Travellers was then reformulated. The pace of changes also reflected wider transformations in the two societies. In Sweden, the category ‘*Zigenare or Tattare*’ disappeared from vagrancy legislation already in 1819, after which Roma and Travellers were in principle on equal footing with other Swedish inhabitants. Finland, meanwhile, retained the 18th century Swedish legislation equating all *Zigenare* automatically with vagrants. Administrative orders given in Finland before 1863 confirmed the status of *Zigenare* as a special targeted category, to be treated more severely than others.¹⁰⁴ The 19th century legislation in the Russian mainland regarding the Roma – namely, ineffective efforts in 1809, 1839 and 1894 to register Russian Gypsies in particular localities and to hinder their movement from there¹⁰⁵ – did not concern the Finnish grand duchy.

¹⁰² Nygård 1998; Pulma 2006; Svensson 1993.

¹⁰³ Nygård 1998; Pulma 2006; Svensson 1993.

¹⁰⁴ According to an imperial announcement in force between 1842-1861, the male children of detained Roma should be taken from their parents and sent to military schools in Russia. In 1852, a statute on legal protection tightened the regulations concerning work obligation and vagrancy. The statute reinstated the automatic treatment of all *Zigenare* as vagrants; but unlike with other vagrancy detainees, denied them of the possibility to find themselves an employer so as to avoid the sentence being put into force. Pulma 2006, 49, 74.

¹⁰⁵ Komiteamietintö 3/1900, 18-19.

In 1863, the Diet of Finland was resummoned by the Czar, and subsequently convened at more or less regular intervals. Already from the first congregation onwards, the so-called ‘Gypsy question’ became a disputed issue, leading to the commissioning of a special Gypsy survey, the data of which was compiled by local parish priests. The debates connected to this will be dealt in more detail in chapter 3.1. A new vagrancy law was put into force in 1865, which still retained the special treatment of *Zigenare*, by making it more easy for local and provincial authorities to sentence them into forced labour than what was the case with other vagrants. Only in the vagrancy law of 1883, in the aftermath of liberalization of economic life and internal migration, the ethnically based blanket criminalization of *Zigenare* was abolished.¹⁰⁶

Centre of gravity: local and provincial level

In the sense of being able to formulate a consistent and practically implementable policy, the position of the *Zigenare* and *Tattare* can be seen as a test case which the Swedish kingdom as well as the Finnish grand duchy passed poorly – as did most other European states at the time.¹⁰⁷ Again, this is not to claim that the state policies of expulsions, vagrancy arrests and forcible enlistings would not have had effects before the abolishing of ethnically targeted legislation during the 19th century. However, it can be argued, as Lucassen has done in the English, Dutch and German context¹⁰⁸, that even before this, it was the *local* level which was the centre of gravity with respect to ‘deviant’ groups and individuals, among whom the Gypsies were routinely counted.

Lucassen argues that the local governance has in many European cases been relatively sophisticated and ‘modern’ already well before the expansion of top-down rule of the centralized nation-states. In effect, towns and parishes could act as miniature welfare-states, imposing legibility over their population to administer local poor relief, collect taxes, codify property rights and discipline religious behaviour.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Nygård 1996; Pulma 2002.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Lucassen & Willems 2003, 304.

¹⁰⁸ Lucassen 2008, 431.

¹⁰⁹ Lucassen 1998a, 57-59; *ibid* 2008, 427.

The interplay between local, regional and central authorities is, of course, always highly complex and dynamic.¹¹⁰ Still, a bottom-up emphasis seems justified also in regards to the Roma and Travellers in Finland and Sweden. Most consequential for their everyday reality were arguably not the ethnically targeted national-level policies, but rather a system of local social control which had become deeply entrenched in all Nordic societies during the early modern period. Even though state-level expulsion laws had generally been unable to drive the Roma and Travellers outside the physical boundaries of the the Sweden and Finland altogether, formal and informal social control on the local level nevertheless continuously pushed them to the margins of the legitimate society.

What had emerged - and remained in place throughout the research period - was an overlapping control system in which the clergy and officials of the parish, municipality and jurisdiction (usually with coinciding borders) worked together with landowners and notability in monitoring, taxing and disciplining local populations. Legitimate local status was tied to ecclesiastical control over the life-course (baptism, confirmation, communions, marriage, burial to the church grounds) and either to owning or renting fixed property in the parish, or working for the ones who did. Of course, reality did not always match with the well-ordered ideal, and complete surveillance of the wide Nordic woodlands was beyond the means of the thin network of rural bailiffs. Still, the control system seems to have been robust enough to make it difficult for unregistered or -baptized 'outsiders' and 'loose people' to gain formally recognized status in any parish/municipality.

The policing of municipal boundaries was the task of the county bailiff (*länsman*, *kronolänsman*), who could lean on loosely defined vagrancy statutes to arrest and send back home illegitimate and unwanted migrants. Another 'gatekeeper' of the legitimate society was the parish priest, whose position as a moral guardian was connected to very concrete powers in controlling the parishioners' reputation, migration permits, marriages, etc. Behind the bailiff and the priest, there were local landowners and notability, whose power in municipal- and poor relief-boards, district court and the parish meetings leaned on a voting system based on wealth. As the most important taxpayers, these groups had strong economic incentives to drive poor outsiders out of their municipalities to avoid responsibility for their poor relief costs. At the same time,

¹¹⁰ Cf. Zimmerman 2007, 12.

limiting the mobility of the local labour and making them legally dependent on the ‘protection’ of landowners had previously been an important way to guarantee cheap labour force for the latter.

In practice, the reforms of the vagrancy- and labour laws during the 19th century altered this system less than what the statutes in themselves might have implied. Although vagrancy regulations were significantly loosened both in Finland and Sweden, particularly in 1880s, the new laws maintained or even increased latitude in determining who was a vagrant and who not. In Finland, the criteria of being ‘work-shy’, ‘indecent’ or ‘otherwise ill-mannered’, named in the 1883 statute, were deliberately left open for interpretation. In Sweden, the 1885 vagrancy law similarly criminalized, besides itineracy not clearly aiming for employment, those with ‘a lifestyle that endangers the general safety, order or decency’. Also this left much to depend on the interpretation of the law by local authorities. Only a new statute forbidding arrests of those with means to support themselves seems to have had some factual sheltering effect.¹¹¹ With this exception, it was thus mostly the case that the bailiffs simply used the new vagrancy statutes to continue business as usual, driving away or arresting ‘beggars, Gypsies and wolves’¹¹² - in practice, any poor migrants deemed troublesome, costly or otherwise unwanted. In many areas the rapid growth of landless population actually intensified the local authorities’ efforts to sort out ‘bad elements’ and keep their backyards clean.¹¹³

Those labelled as *tattare*, *Zigenare* or *mustalainen* remained in this context subjected to exceptionally strict policing, whatever their nominal legal status. In fact, as the ‘Gypsy clause’ was to be removed from the Finnish vagrancy law, the public was reassured that “no trouble should become of this, as the proposed punishments [for vagrancy] [...] can be fitted according to circumstances [...]”¹¹⁴ In other words, nominal equality in vagrancy procedures did not preclude treating the *Zigenare* more strictly than others. Meanwhile, in Sweden, in which targeted legislation on *Zigenare* or *Tattare* had been scrapped early in the 19th century, a wave of local ordinances were frequently passed, particularly from 1870s onwards, which were meant precisely to hinder the movement of people considered to belong under these categories.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ E.g. Svensson 1993, 155-156; see also Ch 7.

¹¹² *Folkvännen* no 32, 7 Aug 1872.

¹¹³ Nygård 1998; Svensson 1993; Pukero 2009.

¹¹⁴ *Tapio* no 33, 2 May 1877. For the complete quotation in original language, see Appendix 1.

¹¹⁵ This will be dealt with in more detail in Chapters 3.2 and 7.2.

When no home parish could be decreed for ‘unprotected’ or ‘loose’ (*lösa*) people, the bailiff could raise charges of vagrancy and send the person/s to be interrogated by the governor of the province. In this, however, the bailiffs began to run increasingly against the governors, who were ultimately responsible for maintaining order in the provinces. After the forced enlisting of vagrants into military ceased to be an option early in the 19th century, the provincial governors had as little incentive to take responsibility for the suspected vagrant as the local officials. Prisoners were expensive to upkeep and workhouses, when existing, often full and not always economically profitable. Consequently, after an interrogation and a warning, suspects were mostly sent back to their whatever could be considered as their home parishes, and released there. In areas with large landless populations, such as Eastern Finland, a tug of war emerged between the municipal and provincial authorities, in which the former kept sending increasing numbers of detainees to the Governor who, after a short hearing, usually simply sent them back to their home parishes – often the same place where they had originally been sent from.¹¹⁶

This was very much the case for the Roma, whom the bailiffs routinely regarded as vagrants, whether they fulfilled the formal criteria of vagrancy or not. In province of Kuopio, Eastern Finland, for example, there were 48 Roma detained by the municipal bailiffs and sent to the Governor between October 1892 and December 1895 (representing 5% of the total 899 detainees). After hearings at the governor’s office, 24 of the Roma were immediately sent back to their home parishes to be set on free foot; 17 were sent to be investigated by a Governor of another province; one person was sent to alms-house; another to prison for resisting poor-relief authorities; and one child was sent to children’s home. Finally, only two men and two women out of the 48 detainees were actually given a vagrancy sentence by the governor’s office, with sentences ranging from six months to one year of forced labour.¹¹⁷

The conflicting interpretation of vagrancy laws in regards to the Roma led at times lead to open confrontations between the local and the provincial authorities. In a case cited by Päivi Pukero, for example, the bailiff of Savilahti detained the same band of Roma (four men, five women and two children) twice during 1864, sending them

¹¹⁶ Nygård 1998; Pukero 2009.

¹¹⁷ JMA, Kuopion lääninkanslia, B Va 17, Kuopion lääninvankilassa säilytettyjä irtolaisia koskeva päiväkirja 1892-1908. This was actually close to the normal proportion of vagrancy sentences/arrests, which, according to Nygård, ranged in 1883-1917 between 10 and 22 percents. Nygård 1998, 46.

both times to be investigated by the Governor's office. The group had no passports or certificates, and the bailiff claims to have suspected them of planning thefts. This was not enough for the governor of Kuopio province, Samuel Henrik Antell (1810–1874), since there was no evidence of criminal intent, and since the Roma were legitimately registered in Pielavesi parish in the same province. Setting them on free foot on both accounts, the governor reproached the bailiff after the second time and told him not to send any more people with a legitimate status for vagrancy investigations.¹¹⁸

Governor Antell was clearly exceptional in his attitude towards the Roma; for example, he was the only official consulted in conjunction to the 1863-65 Gypsy survey to give a hearing also to the Roma, summoning settled families in his office in 1864 to question them about the habits and beliefs of the group.¹¹⁹ Also Antell's relative leniency in respect to vagrancy detainees seems to have been exceptional. More commonly, however, when a Roma detainee had history of previous arrests, or when they were deemed as particularly troublesome, they *were* sentenced to prison or to a workhouse, for periods that could range from six months to 'indefinite'. This was a purely administrative decision, made without a trial, and subsequently with no possibility to complain.¹²⁰ A grim example of the resulting arbitrariness can be read in letters concerning petition made by imprisoned *Zigenare* Abraham A. to the authorities of the prison fortress Viapori in 1853. Abraham asked to be released from vagrancy imprisonment which had lasted already 19 years, pleading to his old age and broken health. However, the authorities claimed to be unable to determine Abraham A.'s home parish, and since they found no household which would take responsibility of him, allowing him a legitimate status, he was ordered to remain in Viapori.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Pukero 2009, 69-71.

¹¹⁹ See Ch 5.3.

¹²⁰ Pulma (2006, 49) holds that the 1852 vagrancy laws enabled at least in principle lifetime imprisonment without trial; while Pukero (2009, 67) is doubtful whether such indefinite sentences were put into practice.

¹²¹ KA, Viaporin linnoitus, saapuneet vankipassitukset 1863.

Effects of the vagrancy control

In practice, the social control system was a limbo, which at its most lenient kept itinerant, unemployed and dispossessed people on the move, and at its most harsh decreed them without a trial to serve arbitrary sentences of forced labour, military service or imprisonment. Even after simply being seen as a *Zigenare* or *Tattare* ceased to be criminalized as such, the Roma and Travellers were arguably still particularly exposed in the rural control system. More than others, they were conspicuous to the county bailiffs, as they moved around in extended family groups and were often visibly distinguishable from others.¹²² More than others, they entered matrimony, got children, named them and raised them without the sanction of the church, and thus without legitimate resident status or travel permissions tied to parish membership. Whereas individual seasonally unemployed people could in normal times mostly find a house to serve in and gain the legal ‘protection’, this was much more difficult for the Roma, travelling in extended family groups, should they have sought work as farmhands or -maids.

As said, the authorities could never exercise a complete control over their jurisdictions, and provincial policing could, in the last instance, rely on a very small number of local officials. Furthermore, municipal bailiffs were tied by the boundaries of their jurisdiction, and co-operation with their colleagues could be cumbersome. In 19th century Finland, the Roma travelling without permits were often not detained, as the bailiffs knew that these were just passing by, and did not bother with a chase. The children travelling with the Roma and Traveller bands also seem to have often sheltered them from arrest, as imprisonment would have led to complex questions of custody of the children.¹²³ And of course, capturing a band of Roma, travelling with horses and sometimes armed, could be physically a troubling task. *Uusi Suometar* reported on June 1878, for example, of a group of 15 Roma in Pudasjärvi, Northwest Finland, who, as the local bailiff of decided to arrest them as vagrants

¹²² I will return in Chapters 5 and 7 to the question of into what degree the Roma and Travellers were- or were not physically distinguishable from the rest of the population, in terms of clothing, phenotype, etc. There are numerous references in folklore-, press- and literary material to certain characteristic ‘Gypsy’ features in phenotype, costume, speech, manners etc.; however, there are also counter-examples such as the so-called ‘white Gypsies’ in Finland and Sweden, and indications that many people considered as Roma and Travellers did not significantly stand out from the rest of the population in physical terms.

¹²³ E.g. Svensson 1993, 133.

[...] tried violence against him as he had sought to catch them. They attacked him, hit him (according to many accounts, quite badly too), and shoot seven pistol shots towards him and the bridgebailiff [*siltavouti*].¹²⁴

This kind of armed resistance was rare, and some of the Roma bands in the region concerned were known as exceptionally troublesome from the authorities' perspective.¹²⁵ But in any case, physical resistance was something that the bailiffs had to take into consideration. On the other hand, many Roma and Travellers had an established local position within particular localities and enjoyed a level of toleration, even protection, from the segments of sedentary population they were in economic dealings with. Sometimes it was even claimed that the bailiffs themselves were in overly friendly terms with the local Roma or Travellers.¹²⁶ These accusations seem to have not always been completely groundless. Tacit co-operation could evolve between municipal police and locally established Roma/Traveller strongmen; the latter had an interest to keep intruding kinsmen at bay in order not to jeopardize their own position. In Tornio, at the border region between Finland and Sweden, for example, a local correspondent of *Helsingfors Tidningar* reported in 1865 that the 'Gypsy king' Petter B. was actively co-operating with the local police, or rather, co-policing the municipality in all matters relating to Roma who might have perpetrated a crime in 'his majesty's' territory.¹²⁷

Such alliance between the authorities and local Roma was of course highly exceptional. In any case, both in Finland and Sweden, complaints of the authorities' laxness in regards to the Roma and Travellers were repeatedly voiced throughout the 19th century, and formed a recurring theme in public debates.¹²⁸

In sum, it appears that the local authorities had often somewhat limited possibilities to interfere in the mobile life of the Roma and Travellers. Svensson, in particular, has emphasized this in the Swedish context.¹²⁹ But from the Roma and Travellers' perspective, the leniency of the peasants and indolence or weakness of the bailiffs could not be relied upon. The Roma could just as well be arrested and prosecuted with vagrancy charges, with consequences which *could* be extremely serious, ranging from confiscation of property, in some cases even children, to

¹²⁴ *Uusi Suometar* no 86, 20 Jul 1878.

¹²⁵ Pulma 2006, 63.

¹²⁶ E.g. *Tapio* no 20, 9 March 1878.

¹²⁷ *Helsingfors Dagblad* no 103, 5 May 1865.

¹²⁸ E.g. Pulma 2006, 77-78.

¹²⁹ E.g. Svensson 1993, 134.

whippings and long sentences of forced labour. Rule of law could also offer scant protection to the Roma and Travellers. As the local authorities had relatively much latitude in decreeing their policy towards the Roma, the changing of the bailiff could turn previously safe areas overnight into hazard zones. For example, local respondents from Ydre, province of Östergötaland, give information in their reminiscences of a ‘cleansing’ of Travellers upon the changing of bailiff, in a story set somewhere in 1870-1880s. According to the informants, ‘tattare’ were arrested, but no charges were raised; instead, they were beaten up and driven outside the borders of the municipality.¹³⁰ In Frosta, province of Skåne, there are similarly reminiscences of ‘eradication-wars’ (*utrotningskrig*) conducted at times by the bailiff against the ‘tattare’ in the late 19th century.¹³¹

In Finland, a cursory study of lists of vagrancy arrests and deportations to Siberia, ‘black books’¹³² and lists of inmates in prisons and workhouses¹³³ seem to indicate clearly enough that the social control system upheld by the state was in practice targeting the Roma disproportionately. In provinces with a significant Roma population (Viipuri, Kuopio, Mikkeli, Oulu), their proportion of the annual number of detainees/deportees ranged typically somewhere between 2 and 10% around the turn of the 20th century.¹³⁴ Among a list of 3427 prisoners deported to Siberia during the 19th century, compiled by Alpo Juntunen from several judicial sources, I have found 39 individuals recognizable as Roma. Although this number might seem small, proportionately it is still a high relative occurrence, 1,14%, considering that the Roma did probably not make much more than 0,06% of the Finnish population at the time.¹³⁵

To some extent, this overrepresentation is not very surprising: the mobile majority of the Roma did certainly fulfil the 19th century criteria of vagrancy more often than the rest of the population. In any case, from the point of view of Roma individuals

¹³⁰ NM, EU78, 22439.

¹³¹ NM, EU78, 23830.

¹³² MMA, Sortavalan maaseurakunta, Mustakirja 1869-1909.

¹³³ E.g. JMA, Kuopion lääninkonttorin arkisto, Förteckningar öfver personer som varit inskrifna vid Luosta arbets- och korrektionsinrektioning 1860-1873; Kuopion lääninvankilassa säilytettyjä irtolaisia koskeva päiväkirja 1892-1908; MMA, Mikkelin lääninkanslia, Kansliakuulustelupöytäkirjat 1881-1905.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Juntunen’s list is available online at <http://www.genealogia.fi/emi/siperia/siperiaa.htm>. The 39 deportations were certainly no ‘final solution’, nor was exile in Siberia apparently given particular privilege as a measure in the judicial dealings with criminal convict- or ‘vagrant’ Roma, even though many authorities would have supported such a policy, according to statements connected to the 1863-65 Gypsy survey (Pulma 2006, 63). 15 of the 39 deportees actually chose themselves to ask for a conversion of their sentence of imprisonment into exile in Siberia – although we cannot of course know if their applications were always genuinely voluntary.

and families, the cumulative effects of the vagrancy control could be devastating. Pukero, who has studied vagrancy control in Eastern Finland, has noted that the Roma were in greater risk of falling into a long-term spiral of arrests, imprisonments and corrective institution sentences than other vagrancy suspects. According to Pukero,

The [vagrancy] control over a family of Roma was typically continuous and stretched over very long periods. They were interrogated first together with their parents, then as independent adults or with their own offspring, and finally their children fell into the same vicious circle. They became familiar with the prisons and provincial governor's offices in numerous localities [...]¹³⁶

This kind of dramatic impact of vagrancy control on over-generational life course of the Roma is confirmed by several family histories as they appear in the 1863-65 and 1895 Gypsy survey data, court records and parish records. Even families which seem to have been relatively firmly established on the local level usually included at least some members who had undergone one or more vagrancy sentences.

Also with many Swedish Traveller lineages, it is clear that vagrancy control affected heavily the life-course of successive generations. As various genealogical records attest to, many Travellers were born in a prison or a spinning house, received their first sentences as *obehöriga kringstrykande* along with their parents at very young age, and in many cases continued the cycle by spending much of their life varying between vagrancy- and more serious criminal sentences, sometimes also ending their lives either in prisons or in workhouses. Prison terms punctuated precarious civil life, in which a legitimate local status seemed an impossibility for many.¹³⁷

Svensson argues that the presence of imprisonment was clearly growing in the life of many Traveller lineages towards the end of the 19th century.¹³⁸ It appears that any difficulties to hinder the Travellers' mobility through vagrancy laws were moreover 'compensated' by jurisdictions by giving harder sentences for 'tattare' for petty crimes. For example, Nils Petter A. was sentenced in 1884 to prison for seven years for minor theft of food and property of relatively little value. Nils Petter denied having perpetrated the crime, and made a petition for clemency to the highest court. The petition was dismissed, however, with the reasoning that no improvement could be expected from

¹³⁶ Pukero 2009, 69.

¹³⁷ Cf. genealogical data presented in Jularbo 1990; Lindgren & Lindwall 1992; Lindwall 1984; 1995; 2003; 2005; SOU 1923:2 (C. Specialundersökningar). Further examples of the heavy impact of imprisonment on life course are offered by Svensson (1993, 130, 147, 151, 154).

¹³⁸ Svensson 1993, 136-140.

the defendant, 'since he is from a *tattare*-family, and as such used to live an itinerant and lazy life'.¹³⁹ Similarly, Elias B. was given in 1888 a lifetime sentence for a theft of a purse with 10 Swedish crowns, with the motivation that as an offence repeater and as a 'tattare' he was considered as beyond improvement.¹⁴⁰

In Finland, also Roma who were duly registered in certain parishes had often difficulties in getting legitimate travel documents from the local authorities. This worked to indirectly criminalize itinerant occupations such as gelding, and made even those looking for work as farm-hands or day-labourers susceptible for arrests and imprisonment. That the Roma were discriminated in this respect was also acknowledged by some authorities, such as A.G.Walle, the Vicar of Leppävirta, who took the issue up in his comment to the 1863-65 general Gypsy Survey questionnaire:

When for example a girl or a boy of Savolax youth [...] take out a travel certificate to look for work or service in some house, they often stay several years outside their parish without being duly registered anywhere, or stay in an another parish than that for which the passport would allow them to stay in; often, they do not care to have their comings and goings marked on the passport nor to hand it for the priests when they return. Do all of these people not live a Gypsy-life? Still, they get the passports, but the Gypsies do not.¹⁴¹

All in all, even as the central policies targeted specially against 'Zigenare' and 'tattare' were non-existent for much of the research period, people labelled as such were nevertheless more prone to face the severe face of the vagrancy control than most of the 'common' rural poor. The effect of the local social control systems could be likened to a kind of a rural panopticon; the Roma and Travellers were for most left to their own devices, but could never rely on the peace to be permanent. There seems to have been a kind of a circular logic, in which formal and informal social control was in effect marginalizing the marginalized. This was recognized also by some local authorities, such as Carl Herman Bergström, the parish priest of Impilahti (situated in Eastern Finland, province of Viipuri). Bergström attached a letter in his reply to the 1863-65 Gypsy survey, in which he stated:

¹³⁹ 'enär han är af tattaresläkt och såsom sådan van att föra ett kringstrykande och lättjefullt liv'. Cited in Svensson 1993, 139.

¹⁴⁰ Svensson 1993, 144.

¹⁴¹ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51 1863, Vicar of Leppävirta to the Chapter of Porvoo. (In the following, I will only specify the parish from which information is sent to the Chapter in regards to the letter of exchange in conjunction to the 1863-65 Gypsy survey).

That these Gypsies lead a life of constant itineracy is natural, since they do not have any home, and flee from the authorities [*kronobetjeningen*] from one municipality to the other. But not all Gypsies choose this kind of life voluntarily. Some are forced to this by the aforementioned reasons, some by poverty, while poor-relief is extremely seldom sought by them [...]¹⁴²

According to Bergström, the biggest obstacle for the Roma to adopt a lawful way of living was that they were not given the same rights as other inhabitants; particularly, they were hindered on the local level from settling down, being inscribed as legitimate residents and gaining access to poor-relief when they were infirm.¹⁴³ (In fact, the rarity of being a poor-relief customer is frequently observed and evident throughout the research period, both in the cases of the Finnish Roma and Swedish Travellers.¹⁴⁴) The circularity of the system laid in the fact that the *de facto* criminalization of the mobile livelihood strategies as ‘vagrancy’ effectively prevented most Roma and Travellers from adopting any *other* way of living, as it was usually very difficult for them to gain the prerequisites of legitimate sedentary life in any particular locality.

¹⁴² KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51 1863, Impilahti.

¹⁴³ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51 1863, Impilahti.

¹⁴⁴ E.g. RA, Civildepartement, Länshövdingarnas femårsberättelser 1886-1890 (EII baa vol 39); KA, Sosiaalisen tutkimustoimiston arkisto, köyhäinhoidon lomakkeet, Sortavalan maalaiskunta 1918-1920 (HIaa112).

2.2 Mobility and crisis in the countryside

Whereas encounters with the authorities were a source of severe risks and uncertainty for most Roma and Travellers, encounters with the peasants, tense as they might be, were also the basis of livelihood, and as such a constant necessity. Before going in to the details of how this relationship worked out on the micro-level (particularly, chapters 4 and 7), I will here briefly mention some background factors which seem important in understanding the interaction between the Roma/Travellers and the rural populations, namely 1) the constant growth of ‘pariah’ mobility from 18th century onwards, peaking during economic crises, and 2) deeply-seated practices and norms supporting interaction between the sedentary rural population and various people on the road.

Moving from house to house to find work and to make a living has been an integral part of the rural life in Nordic countries well into the post-WWII period. Besides Roma and Travellers, a wide variety of seasonal labourers, pedlars, artisans, craftsmen, ex-soldiers and entertainers of diverse nationalities have been moving around in the countryside. Most of these people took to the roads only seasonally, looking for opportunities for work or trade, but there were also a small number of year-round pedlars, and vagabonds living on alms and odd jobs. Further, those dependent on the municipal poor relief were regularly on the road, making their way between the different peasant houses charged with their upkeep (in Finland, this system was in force until 1910s).¹⁴⁵

While there was a constant economic demand for the services and labour provided by mobile people in the pre-industrial rural society, it is clear that the ‘push’-factors – poverty and economic crises – were also crucial in setting people on the move. In Finland and many parts of Sweden, moving around after work and living increased greatly from the late 18th century onwards and particularly in the 19th century as a consequence of rapid growth of the landless population, harvest failures, slumps and a general trend of downwards social mobility. In regions such as Karelia, Savo and Bothnia in Finland, Skåne and West-Central shieldlands in Sweden, a wide class of landless, underemployed people were formed in the bottom of the rural hierarchy, known as ‘*loiset*’ (literally ‘parasites’) in Eastern Finland, and as ‘*gatehusfolket*’ in Southern

¹⁴⁵ Häkkinen 1999, 150; Häkkinen & Tervonen 2004.

Sweden. In Finland, the number of dependent and landless population has been estimated to have exceeded 50% by 1875¹⁴⁶. Despite its greater affluence, there were similarly areas in Sweden, particularly in Skåne, in which landless population made out almost half of the population in the late 19th century.¹⁴⁷

The Great Finnish Famine of 1866-68, following a series of poor harvests from 1862 onwards, hit the poorest sections of the landless population hardest. Also in Sweden, there was a series of very bad harvests in the 1860s, affecting particularly Northern parts of the country, increasing both internal migration and emigration; but the situation never deteriorated into an outright famine. From mid 1870s to 1890, turmoil on the agricultural markets, together with major harvest failures in 1881, 1892 and 1902 worsened again general pauperization in both countries.¹⁴⁸ Flood of cheap grain imported from USA, Canada, Australia and Russia led to a shift in agriculture from cash cropping to much less labour intensive animal husbandry.¹⁴⁹ Meanwhile, the international so-called 'long depression' of 1876-1892 meant that the emerging industries and cities could absorb only a fraction of the excess labour force. Still, the landless population became the key group in the late 19th century waves of urbanization and overseas migration, which grew to massive proportions both in Finland and Sweden. The ones who stayed at the countryside became increasingly itinerant, lodging in doorways, saunas and outhouses of land-owners and –renters. In times of shortages, economic depressions and harvest failures, tens of thousands were forced on the roads and sidetracks, looking for the next meal and a roof to stay under.¹⁵⁰

But despite such proletarianization, mobility was in the late 19th and early 20th centuries still far from being only an outcome of poverty. Both mobile professionals (craftsmen, artisans, pedlars) and agricultural labourers, 'the nomads of the agrarian society',¹⁵¹ continued to fill crucial functions in the rural economy. This, together with periodical crises and the long-term growth of landless population, meant that the authorities' attempts to curb mobility could have only very limited effects. To

¹⁴⁶ This figure, however, includes also tenant farmers, who were sometimes economically quite well-off. Soininen 1974, quoted in Pitkänen 1980, 382.

¹⁴⁷ Svensson 1998, 130.

¹⁴⁸ E.g. Soininen 1980, 1982.

¹⁴⁹ For the European-wide agricultural crisis, see e.g. Peltonen 1990, 196-199.

¹⁵⁰ E.g. Häkkinen 1999, 150, Soininen 1980, 391-392.

¹⁵¹ Jutikkala 1995.

paraphrase Lucassen, sedentarism might have been the norm, but migration was the rule.¹⁵²

Well into the 20th century, then, the sedentary rural population was accustomed to travellers from a wide range of backgrounds. Giving food and shelter to people on the move formed a kind of an informal institution, with a set of unwritten rules, norms and practices. Oral histories and written memories have brought out elaborate procedures of evaluating and accommodating visitors; skilled professionals, for example, were invited to eat at the table with the housefolks and given a bed in a guest room, whereas people considered lower in the hierarchy ate by themselves and slept on the common floor. In this way, workmen, beggars, artisans, entertainers, pedlars – as well as Roma and Travellers – were routinely taken into houses, given food and a place to sleep, and sometimes even offered a cart-drive to the next house. Of course, this did not imply a relation on equal basis, and giving help was usually conditional on some form of compensation, more often work or services rather than money (which the travellers seldom had).¹⁵³

As Sakari Saaritsa has noted¹⁵⁴, it is often impossible to draw a clear line between begging and other forms of mobile economic activities. Landless people could – and were often forced to – combine short-term work and petty trade to simply begging for food and lodging. Conversely, what could seem like “favours” or “gifts” to the travellers could actually be payments for work or services – particularly harvesting – done earlier to the benefit of the houses. Services such as gelding or tinkering were regularly compensated with food and shelter, and payment for harvesting could be done gradually along the year in ways which could make it appear as a gift – undoubtedly often to the farmer’s advantage.¹⁵⁵

Not all houses welcomed travellers. In times of crises, certain ‘lenient’ households became junction-points for diverse people on the move, whether the former were motivated by Christian ethics or by more utilitarian considerations. Information on where food and shelter might be on offer or for trade spread by word of mouth and was eagerly given from the houses which wanted to get rid of visitors.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Lucassen 1998, 66.

¹⁵³ Eenilä 1971; Häkkinen 1999; Saaritsa 2001.

¹⁵⁴ Saaritsa 2001, 20.

¹⁵⁵ Eenilä 1971, 101; Saaritsa 2001, Saaritsa 2008.

¹⁵⁶ Saaritsa 2001, 125-127.

The Swedish and Finnish countryside in the late 19th and early 20th century were characterized by recurrent economic crises, scarcity, and a culture emphasizing compulsory physical labour rather than unconditional altruism.¹⁵⁷ Still, the existence of ‘grey networks’ of mobile people and lenient houses, as well as of conventions to receive various sorts of travellers into the peasant houses seems to be a crucial backdrop for understanding the interaction between the Roma / Travellers and the peasants in the research period. Whatever forms the ‘wandering’ of the Roma and Travellers might have taken, mobility was in any case a common survival strategy in the late 19th – early 20th century countryside, and supported by established set of norms and practices.

¹⁵⁷ E.g. Levander 1934; Petersson 1983; Soikkanen 1991; Saaritsa 2003; Virkkunen 2010.

3. Nationalism, press and the ‘Gypsy question’ / *‘tattare burden’*

3.1 Finnish nationalism and the problematization of the Roma

Nineteenth-century Finnish history can be read, at least on the surface, as supporting a ‘modernist’ thesis of politicization of ethnicity along with nation-state formation. As the emerging Finnish nation-state was drawing its internal and external boundaries, matters of identity became increasingly politicized and publicized. Besides heated debates and struggles around the so-called ‘language question’, concerning the position of the powerful Swedish-speakers in the emerging nation, the ‘questions’ of Jewish and Roma populations, and later of Russian refugees, were successively debated in the Finnish press and diet. Together with nationalism, what Benedict Anderson has called the ‘print-capitalism’¹⁵⁸, i.e. the rise of national press, was instrumental in this.

To contextualize the rapid politicization of identities in the late 19th century Finland, it is necessary to make a brief recourse into the position of the Finnish Grand Duchy within the Russian empire. Finland gained formal independence shortly after the collapse of Tsarist Russia, on 6 December 1917. However, the institutional and ideological emergence of the Finnish nation-state had by then already been a century-long process, beginning with the separation of mainly Finnish-speaking provinces from the Swedish kingdom after the Russian conquest in 1808. In 1809, these provinces were granted a position as an administratively separate grand duchy within the Russian empire. Under imperial supervision, the local elite were put in charge of the day-to-day running of a new administrative unit. In contrast to other Russian conquests - such as the Baltic states, Poland and Bessarabia- the grand duchy of Finland was socially stable with a strong freeholding peasantry, and lacked memories of national golden ages which could inspire resistance to Russian rule. The Finnish elite thus faced a comparatively easy task of maintaining order in the empire’s northern borderland, and became an exceptionally loyal administrative force for the Tsar, on whom their newly gained position depended.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Anderson 1983.

¹⁵⁹ Alapuro 1990, 225-231.

Peripheral and peaceful grand duchy was given relatively much leeway for much of the nineteenth century, and gradually began to resemble a separate state in its own right. Accompanying this was the emergence of a Finnish national ideology, the so-called *Fennoman* movement. However, it was nothing like the contemporaneous nationalism of Poland, for example, which aggressively defined itself against the Russian rule. Instead, the Fennoman movement begun as a conservative-romantic cultural project, advocated mainly by members of university-educated urban gentility, most of who were native Swedish-speakers. Organizations such as the *Finnish Literature Society* (founded in 1831) functioned within officially sanctioned forms, and were up until 1840s even supported by the Russian authorities, who saw the promotion of Finnish national sentiments as a means of distancing the grand duchy from its former Swedish rulers. However, aspirations by the academic Fennoman elite to form connections with ‘the people’ were not tolerated, and any such attempts were quickly subdued by the authorities.¹⁶⁰

From 1870s onwards, the Fennoman movement developed a more ambitious political agenda, in conjunction to the rise of representative politics, civil society and a national press. The movement also begun to widen its social basis, gradually evolving into an ideological alliance between the town-based gentry and the Finnish-speaking freeholding peasantry. By connecting old elites with rising new classes, the Fennoman movement gave stability and ideological legitimacy to a state which had *de facto* emerged. Yet, the paradox of Finnish nationalism was, that right until the end of the nineteenth century, it was not aimed against foreign Russian rule in any significant way. Before the first ‘russification’ policies of 1889, the Finnish ruling class and intellectual circles remained remarkably loyal to the Tsar. They even acquired an attitude of self-censorship in order not to provoke imperial reactions, as it was recognized that these would only jeopardize their relative freedom.¹⁶¹

It was in this context of a nationalist movement lacking political incentive and the practical possibility to define itself against the most obvious and important external ‘Other’, in which the Finnish ‘national question’ arguably turned inwards, towards questions of linguistic and ethnic differences. As said, by far the most significant of these was the language question – in effect, the challenging of the prevalence of the Swedish language and the Swedish-speaking elites by the rising Fennomans. Yet also

¹⁶⁰ Liikanen 1995, 90-97.

¹⁶¹ Alapuro 1990, 225-231; Liikanen 1995, 89-90.

other deviations from the new ideal of national unity came to be seen as increasingly problematic. Thus even such small and marginal groups as the scattered Jews and Roma started to receive political and public attention that appears quite disproportional to their practical significance.

'Gypsy question' in the Diet

The Gypsy question, i.e. the question of the status and position of about 1000-2000 Roma - less than a permille of the total Finnish population¹⁶² - was debated on six of the eleven congregations of the Finnish Diet during the late 19th century (1863-64, 1872, 1877-78, 1888, 1894 and 1897). The four social estates presented in the diet - nobility, bourgeoisie, clergy, and peasantry - each had their own line on the issue, with clergy and peasantry showing most interest to it. The basic ingredients of the problem were seen to be the moral, economic and physical hazard presented by the Roma, who were mostly itinerant, 'masterless men' outside the reach of the church and the state, and considered as lazy, unlawful and prone to crime in the countryside. Suggested 'solutions' varied from missionary activities to forced settlement and confiscation of the Roma children.¹⁶³

The most aggressive proposals came from the peasantry – or, more precisely, from a conglomeration of wealthy land-owners and rural merchants represented by the 60 peasant delegates at the Diet of Finland.¹⁶⁴ The core of this group was formed by the freeholding peasants, who experienced a social as well as a political rise during the latter half of the 19th century. After a reform of municipal laws in 1865, they gradually gained power in most rural councils. Moreover, the increasing predominance of nationalist ideas worked to empower them in the national politics. As the only estate represented in the diet which consisted predominantly of Finnish-speakers from outside the ranks of town-based gentry, the freeholding peasants could fashion themselves as the most legitimate representatives of 'the people' and its 'will'. Although far from unanimous politically, the peasants' political leaders consequently became ardent Fennomans, active in reforms aiming to enfranchise wider segments of the rural

¹⁶² Based on estimates given by Pulma 2006 and Jutikkala, Kaukiainen, Åström (eds) 1980, 367.

¹⁶³ Pulma 2006; Vehmas 1961, 58-61; Virolainen 1994, 33-44.

¹⁶⁴ Only landowning men, about 4,5% of the rural heads of households at the turn of the twentieth century were entitled to vote in the indirect elections, selecting 70 (60 in an earlier stage) representatives on a municipal basis. Jutikkala 1958, 404; Paloposki 1961.

population, and a driving force in the political struggles over language- and nationalities questions.¹⁶⁵

As the peasants delegates repeatedly took up the Gypsy question in the diet, they were also claiming to convey the grievances of ‘the people of Finland’. As I will argue below, this was only partially correct; and in any case, it is clear that the freeholding peasants also had their own interests in the issue. As the most important employers and taxpayers in the rural parishes, they had strong incentive in defending old paternalistic vagrancy laws, which had for centuries tied the landless population to landowners, guaranteeing the latter with cheap labour force.

Yet the peasantry was relatively weak and divided estate in the diet.¹⁶⁶ Blunt proposals such as the confiscation of all horses of Roma met outside their home parishes, put forward by peasant delegates in 1872, failed to pass even within their own ranks.¹⁶⁷

Despite a number of setbacks suffered by the peasant representatives on the Gypsy question, a relative consensus emerged in the diet on the need to measure the extent of the ‘problem’, i.e. to produce reliable knowledge on the number, nature and position of the Roma population in Finland. Accordingly, national Gypsy surveys were carried out in 1863-1865 and in 1895, first by parish priests and in 1895 by county bailiffs.

After the surveys had been completed, attempts at prohibitive legislation followed. Regardless of disagreements on the significance of the Gypsy question and the proper measures to tackle the issue, the goal of assimilating the Roma was more or less shared across the political spectrum. Especially the proposals of the so-called Gypsy committee, published in 1900 following the 1895 survey, aimed explicitly at the eradication of the Roma culture. This was to be done through forced assimilation, with a special targetting of the Romani language and way of life. For example, the committee recommended public custody and obligatory reform schools for the children, a special police register for the adults and targeted criminalization of many of the Roma’s trades.

On the surface, nineteenth-century debates on the Gypsy question in the Finnish diet were not ‘nationalist’ in the sense of explicitly questioning the citizenship rights

¹⁶⁵ Jutikkala 1958, 400, 405, 413.

¹⁶⁶ E.g. Peltonen 1992, 273.

¹⁶⁷ Pulma 2006, 79; Virolainen 1994, 39. In fact, the proposal to confiscate the Roma’s horses received even scorn in the provincial press, being treated a decade later as an archetype of dim-witted legislative initiative (*Pohjois-Suomi* no 6, 22 Jan 1881).

and national belonging of the Roma. It was acknowledged that there had been a Roma population in Finland already for centuries (citizenship was much more an issue for the few hundred Jews, most of whom had arrived only in the latter half of the nineteenth century). Pulma has also argued that language nationalism proper did not significantly affect the understanding of the 'Gypsy question', at least in the initial debates of 1860s, pointing for example to the suggestion of the clergy to promote learning of the Romani language among the priests in order to do missionary work among the Roma.¹⁶⁸

Toward the end of the century, however, there was little disagreement over the aim of eradicating the Romani language as a part of a culture which was now clearly seen as a problem in itself. Ultimately, it can be argued that what gave such urgency and legitimacy to the Gypsy question in the Diet of Finland was a growing, if tacit expectation of a new kind of national future, into which the Roma were seen as ill fitted. Nationalist framework produced a cultural dichotomization which made the Roma appear as a problematic anomaly. Beneath the surface, then, the question was how to integrate what was seen as an archaic and non-national group into the emerging modern, unified nation-state.

Almost invariably, the answer involved dissolution of the Roma as a separate group. The only ones seen as potentially fit for a 'national life' were the Roma youth, as was argued in 1864 by *Tapio*:

[...] if they [Gypsy youth] could be separated from their parents, it should be tried though Christian faith and education to mend the inborn brutality of their minds and thus to bring out the tendencies and demands, which regular and peaceful national life [kansakunnallinen elämä] produces.¹⁶⁹

As the quote makes clear, conceptions of the Roma as inherently inferior ('inborn brutality') as well as 'non-national' were already firmly in place at the early stages of the debate. However, towards the end of the century, the Gypsy question became more explicitly racialized, concurring with new scientific ideas. Although explicit racial research on the Gypsies never emerged in Finland, the influx of racial theories was visible in the official statements, committee memoranda etc, which associated various negative traits with the Roma, saw these as inborn qualities, and explained social problems as their natural outcome. The language used to describe the 'Gypsy question' was biologicized; in 1894, a special committee was talking of the

¹⁶⁸ Pulma 2002, 49, 65.

¹⁶⁹ *Tapio* no.29, 16 Jul 1864.

Roma as a ‘disease in the body of the society’, whose ‘quality and nature’ had to be thoroughly learned in order to ‘expunge’ the ‘illness’.¹⁷⁰

However, from the first re-congregation of the Diet in 1863 onwards, there was also a steady opposition to ethnically specific legislation by a small but influential number of state officials, lawyers, priests, representatives of the Diet and university professors who conceived the state in universalistic rather than ethnic terms.¹⁷¹ As an example, the Statistical Central Office held in its response to the memorandum of the so-called Gypsy committee in 1900 that ‘special legislation for the country’s own Gypsies [...] would certainly only strengthen the Gypsies’ separateness and make it more difficult for them to join in with the rest of the population.’ Another reason for the Central Office’s scepticism was a recognition – rare in reference to the Finnish Gypsies – of the complexity of ethnic boundaries; for diligent statisticians, it was difficult to avoid the fact that ‘it would in many cases be difficult to decide who should rightly be placed under the title “Gypsy”’.¹⁷²

In the end, however, this kind of subtle critique mattered much less in the failure of the various attempts to ‘solve’ the Gypsy question than two concrete obstacles. Firstly, in respect to the restrictive proposals aiming to tighten the authorities’ control over the Roma, the problem was that mobility in the countryside of late nineteenth-century Finland was both growing and increasingly sanctioned by the new, economically liberal legislation. The political weakness of the peasants in the diet became apparent in this respect: regardless of their vehement opposition to allowing more room of manoeuvre to itinerant Roma, it proved to be beyond their means to single the latter out in the legislation at a time when the tide of politics had turned towards liberalization of the countryside.

Secondly, there was a dramatic shift in the political agenda in the last decade of the nineteenth century, brought about by the increasingly open confrontation with Russian imperial rule. The hostility of Russian nationalist circles towards Finnish autonomy started to gain political weight from 1880s onwards, particularly during the reign of Nikolai II (1894-1917). After early warnings, such as the 1889 extension of the

¹⁷⁰ Citation from the proceedings of the Diet (1894, Appeal committee report n:o 16) in Vehmas 1961, 61.

¹⁷¹ E.g. Pulma 2006, 76; Virolainen 1994, 40-41. Numerous ‘universalist’ (or civic nationalist) arguments in the debate on ‘Gypsy question’ are dealt with by Virolainen (1994, 40-41). Apparently, the opposition was partly associated with the ‘*Svekomani*’ movement, a liberal circle defending the position of Swedish language against the Fennomans, who countered J.V. Snellman’s ideal of ‘one people, one mind’ with a more inclusive catchphrase ‘two languages, two people.’

¹⁷² KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 10/375 1900.

Russian state police force to Finland and the unilateral ordinance on the reorganization of postal services in 1890, the Russian authorities launched a full russification programme in 1899, aiming at abolishing the institutional and cultural separateness of the Grand Duchy.

Eventually, the unification programmes failed along with the breakdown of the Czarist state during the latter part of the First World War. But already earlier on, it was clear that the heavy-handed Russian attempts to rein in its increasingly self-conscious borderland had turned against their purpose. The so-called 'oppression years' were felt as a shock throughout the Finnish society, politicizing it to an unprecedented degree. The attacks on Finnish autonomy finally turned the core of the elite against Russian rule, as well as provided mass support for the Finnish nationalist movement, even in the face of increasingly sharp class tensions.

Paradoxically, while the open political confrontation with Russian rule seems to have sharpened the ethno-nationalist edge of the Fennoman movement, it also turned political priorities decidedly away from the Gypsy question. The latter appeared insignificant in comparison with the all too real threats now posed to the Finnish nation by the autocratic Russian rule. The dawning prospects of independence also brought with it concerns on other, much wider societal 'questions'; some, such as the position of the rapidly growing landless population, had explosive potential for the nation on the making. In this situation, there was little political motivation or resources for realizing proactive Roma policies – much to the frustration of 'gypsologists', philanthropists and Christian reformers such as Arthur Thesleff and Oskari Jalkio¹⁷³.

It appears more than coincidental that once the juxtaposition between the Finnish nationalist movement and the Russian ruling power became increasingly open, the internal nationalities' question and particularly the Gypsy question lost much of its political weight. The latter also proved highly elusive to straightforward political solutions. Shortly after the memorandum of the so-called Gypsy committee was published in 1900, the Gypsy question largely disappeared from the national agenda, re-emerging only in the 1950s, in the context of post-war reconstruction and the forced urbanization of the Roma population.

¹⁷³ Pulma 2006, 90; *Kiertolainen* 1923; *ibid* No 1, 1925.

Dichotomization in the press

The opening up of the new, nationalist horizon of expectations in Finnish politics was intertwined with the rise of commercial press publishing on a local and national scale. This emerging new public sphere was also central for the articulation of the Gypsy question. As can be seen from figure 1, discourses on the Roma thus grew closely in pace with the expansion of the press. From scattered articles, published once or twice a year in the first part of the nineteenth century, writing on the Roma turned almost into a daily matter by the 1890s, with the average yearly number of articles going from c. 1.5 between 1830-35 to 114.5 between 1886-1890. The rise was fast and constant; only the harvest catastrophes of 1867-68 and 1881 momentarily diverted the attention of the press from the ‘Gypsy question’, only to return more strongly immediately in the following years.

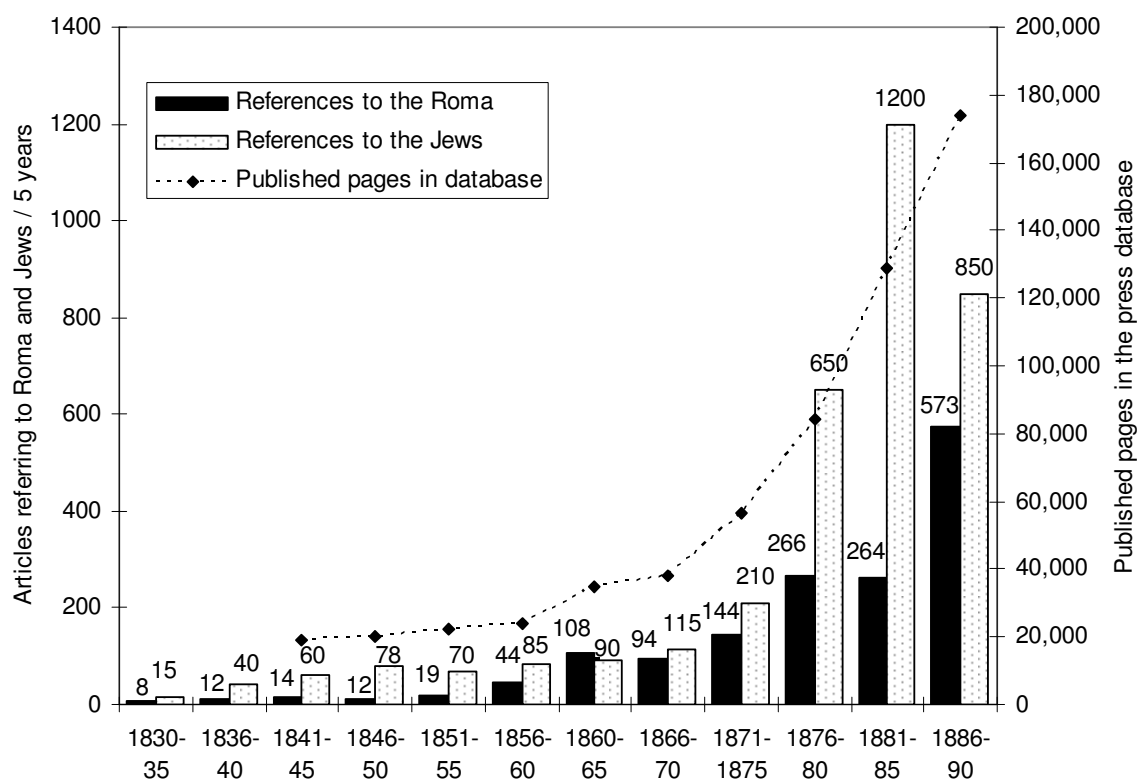


Figure 1. Articles referring to the Roma and to the Jews, and the overall volume of publishing in the Finnish press, 1830-1890.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ The figure is based on a survey of the Finnish National Library's digital newspaper archive (Historiallinen sanomalehtikirjasto), available at <http://digi.lib.helsinki.fi/sanomalehti/secure/main.html?language=en>. The database included at the time of the survey (2008) major part but not 100% of the newspapers published in Finland in 1771-1890. The

Figure 1 indicates also two things which qualify the growth in the volume of writing about the Roma. Firstly, the public rise of the ‘nationalities question’ was clearly not only confined to the Roma. Instead, it included all of those, who for various reasons were difficult to fit into the new ideal of ‘one language, one mind’.¹⁷⁵ Particularly, the position of the Jews was heavily debated from 1870 onward. Parallel to the rise of volume in writing about the Roma, there was then an even stronger growth of references to the ‘Jewish question’, with intensive debates on whether to grant Jewish residents the rights of citizenship or not.

Some of these debates were directly linked with the Gypsy question, such as the editorial of the Swedish-language *Helsingfors Dagblad* in 1872, which opposed an initiative to exclude Jewish residents from full Finnish citizenship:

It is a completely new view in our state law to take race and origins into consideration in deciding who shall be a Finnish citizen [*medborgare*] and who not. None of our laws have previously posed such a condition. Never has a certain origin been seen as excluding from citizenship right. A Negro, a mulato, a Gypsy, a Lapp etc. can be a Finnish citizen as much as those, who can show a most genuine Finnish origin. [...] And now, persons would be excluded from this right on the grounds that they are the heirs of Abraham, Isak, Jacob and his twelve sons [...] ¹⁷⁶

Ultimately, what was at stake in debates such as this was how nationality and citizenship were to be understood in the emerging Finnish state. This question concerned not just the theoretical ‘mulatto’ or ‘Negro’ citizens, or the tiny populations of Jews and the Roma, but was, above all, crucially important for the Swedish-speaking political and social elite, which remained a key group in the press and government – and to a large extent also in the Fennoman movement. The high stakes of the citizenship issue for the future of this group guaranteed a high visibility to the ‘nationality questions’ throughout the period.

A second qualifying factor has already been mentioned: late 19th century was the period of birth for the modern public sphere in Finland, and the overall volume of

number of references to the Roma means individual newspaper articles, in which there is at least one explicit reference. The digital database search based on keywords might naturally omit some cases. Number of published pages is an estimate based on all the material in the digital press database, given by the Finnish National Library (2008).

¹⁷⁵ Advocated by J.V.Snellman, a student of Hegel’s philosophy and one of the most influential proponents of the Fennoman movement

¹⁷⁶ *Helsingfors Dagblad* no 94, 8 Apr 1872.

newspaper writing increased almost tenfold between 1840 and 1890. In relative terms, then, the growth in the volume of writing on the Roma is perhaps not all that surprising.

Still, the rise of the press and the political centrality of the ‘nationality question’ do not explain away the question of why the Roma were subjected to such a high public exposure from mid 1800 onwards. There is no ‘natural’ or self-evident reason why the tiny Roma population should have been getting such a constant and intensive attention, particularly as the whole society was at the same time going through profound transformations and severe crises.

As the volume of reporting on the Roma grew, also its content changed, as illustrated by Figure 2 (the figure is based on a content analysis of a sample of 310 newspaper articles).

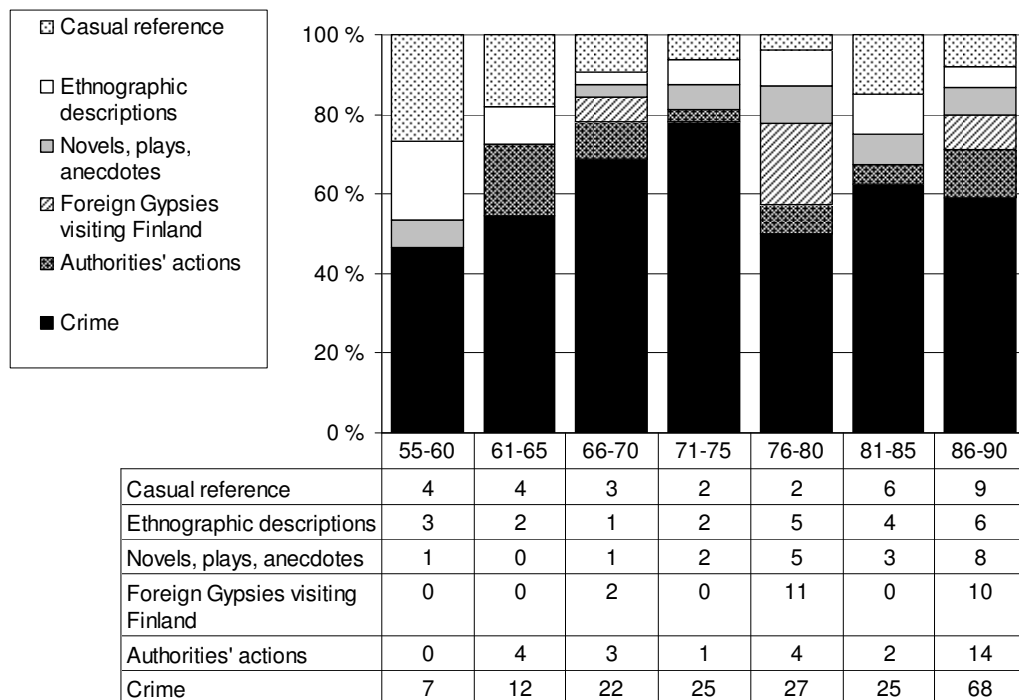


Figure 2. Primary context of writing on the Roma in a sample of newspaper articles, 1855-1890 (n = 310). Source: Historiallinen sanomalehtikirjasto. (<http://digi.lib.helsinki.fi/sanomalehti/secure/main.html?language=en>)

In the first half of the 19th century, the scattered articles on the Roma were often relatively long ethnographical and historical accounts, popularizing basic notions of Grellmannian ‘Gypsology’ – Indian origins, cultural peculiarities and racial attributes of the Gypsies in Europe and in Finland. There were also casual, more or less neutral

passing references to the Roma in stories dealing with various aspects of rural and national life, ranging from the use of trinkets in horse carriages to consumption of mushrooms ('only Gypsies eat such food') and to comparisons between sophistication of different languages in Finland, with the Gypsy language assumedly ranking lowest¹⁷⁷.

Occasional visits by foreign Gypsies, mostly travelling bands from Central and South-Eastern Europe, were keenly covered by the press. Such visits, which were reported at least from 1869 onwards, seem to have caught the public's imagination, visible in the fact that they were usually followed by a wave of ethnographic articles, plays and fictional stories featuring romantic Gypsy figures.

Particularly the largest bourgeoisie newspapers published translations of plays and novels in which Gypsy characters appeared, ranging from home-grown morality stories to popularized pieces of international high literature. What was in common for the stories was the stereotypical image of free and natural, yet sinful and ultimately perilous Gypsy life, remedied only by Christian faith and hard work – in many stories imposed on a Gypsy child or youth by religious foster parents.

In effect, what took place all through the late 19th century was an importing of an international stereotype of the Gypsy as romantic, mysterious and natural, yet parasitic and pathologically criminal figure, that was thought to share an essential sameness all over Europe. In the imagery depicting the Gypsies, the Finnish Roma could be lumped in a wider ethnographical depictions of 'this strange people' which was 'the same all over the World'¹⁷⁸, and stories about them illustrated with pictures of foreign Gypsies, as in Picture 1, in which an engraving depicting a small band of East European Roma is simply entitled 'Gypsies' ('Mustalaisia.').

¹⁷⁷ *Sanan-Lennätin* no 32, 9 Aug 1856; *Suomen Julkisia Sanomia* no 7, 21 Jan 1860.

¹⁷⁸ *Turun Sanomat* 4/1887.

Already from the beginning of the century, however, it was crime stories which made up the most prominent part of the press coverage on the Roma. From 1860s onwards, the emphasis of the writing shifted firmly into this category (even though visits by foreign Roma could momentarily divert the public attention). Subsequently, stories about alleged property crimes, violence, arrests, escapes and chases, together with general complaints about Roma criminality made up as much as 60-80% of all writing related to them. Of these, more than half dealt with alleged property crimes: thefts of horses, carriages, household goods, money etc. Also violence between Roma and the peasants was prominent in the reporting.

Typically, inter-ethnic violence appeared in connection to news of the Roma's forcible accommodation in peasant houses. Such cases seem to have been rare,¹⁷⁹ yet received intense, often nation-wide coverage. The few known cases in which one or more Roma were involved in death of a peasant could become objects of downright moral panics. One such case, in which a fight between a group of Roma and villagers led to the death of a peasant, taking place in 1863, led to some condemnations which had an outright genocidal tone, such as the one published in *Tapio*:

Would it not be a high time to wipe out [*häwittää*] this whole enemy of men from the country, for one has never heard anything good of them, only great evil and homicides and robberies, and we do not know what use they are for those, who set them free!¹⁸⁰

Other papers, such as *Sanomia Turusta* were somewhat more restrained in their tone, but made angry demands of efforts by the authorities to 'stop those wild beasts from moving in flocks'.¹⁸¹ Although nothing was directly done for such end, the murder case was in fact cited by the Governor General as a background motivation as he ordered the first Gypsy survey to be conducted in 1863.¹⁸² Incidentally, the case also appears in my court record material, and is dealt with in chapter 6.4.

Also lesser crime stories, from vague allegations to detailed accounts were often accompanied by moral condemnations and sarcastic slurs on the Roma people as a whole. Still, there were also relatively neutral descriptions on cases such as petty thefts, and particularly on incidents of violence between two or more Roma, which could be described in very laconic style.

¹⁷⁹ More of this in chapters 4.4 and 6.

¹⁸⁰ *Tapio* no 46, 14 Nov 1863.

¹⁸¹ *Sanomia Turusta* no 46, 13 Nov 1863.

¹⁸² KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51.

The growing emphasis on crime was connected to a more general rise of hostility towards the Roma in the press. Until the 1860s, the press was dominated by university educated Fennoman intellectuals and bourgeois writers influenced by ideas of political enlightenment as much as of national romanticism.¹⁸³ An open interpretation of national belonging was indispensable for this group, whose members often did not speak Finnish and whose ties with 'the people' they claimed to represent could be feeble to say the least. Accordingly, many urban and moderately nationalist papers still understood the Roma and other minorities from a 'civic nationalist' perspective as part of the nation, sharing equal citizenship rights (even as their culture might have been seen as inferior). *Suometar*, a major Fennoman paper based in Helsinki, thus wrote in 1859:

Everyone can understand that the Lapps, Russians, Germans, Gypsies and the Swedes, as much as every other permanent inhabitant, are members of this common fatherland, Finland, and have a full right to call themselves its citizens, which they indeed are.¹⁸⁴

But not everyone understood or supported such a perspective. In fact, well before the dissemination of the intellectual Fennoman version of Finnish nationalism, the debates on the Gypsies brought out very different kinds of interpretations of the Finnish nation, revealing a distinctly popular notion of ethnicity- and work-based nationhood. In 1835, for example, the east Finnish *Sanan saattaja Wiipurista* published the following poem by a self-taught folk poet Paavo Korhonen, in which the Gypsies were unambiguously excluded from the rest of the nation (*kansakunda*):

¹⁸³ Salokangas & Tommila 1998.

¹⁸⁴ *Suometar* no 47, 2 Dec 1859.

A poem on the Gypsies

The black family of Gypsies,
Who have that strange language,
Unknown to all the people,
Which is not taught in schools,
Nor known in classrooms,
That they chubbily speak
Shamelessly grunt.
The black family of Gypsies,
A people without work, wandering,
Which does not sow nor plough,
Nor reap, nor lay,
Eats their bread like a lazy dog,
[...]
I have wondered all my life,
It is strange to me,
How long will the nation,
Tolerate that family
[...]

Runo Mustalaisista

Suku musta, Mustalainen,
Jolla on se outo kieli,
Kansan kaiken tuntematon,
Jot' ei kouluissa kysytä,
Oppihuoneissa osata,
Siitä pulskasti puhuvat,
Röyhkeästi röykyttävät.
Suku musta, Mustalainen,
Kansa työtön, kulkewainen,
Jok' ei kylwä, eikä kynnä,
Eikä niitä, eikä laita,
Leiwän syö kuin laiska koira,

Ihme on ikäni ollut,
Minun kumma mielestäni,
kuinka kauwan kansakunda,
Sietääpi sitä sukua,
[...]¹⁸⁵

While the universalist view on citizenship never disappeared from the press, the harsh ethno-nationalism - combined with a kind of vernacular racial thinking - represented by Korhonen's poem gained increasing pertinence during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and particularly from the late 1860 onwards. This coincided with a shift in the social composition of the newspaper writers. The expansion of Finnish-language provincial press and the new practice of using ordinary rural inhabitants as local correspondents brought in a growing influx of popular voices into the Finnish public sphere.¹⁸⁶ The new correspondents often originated from a freeholding peasant background, and their views thus tended to reflect the tougher line on the Roma demanded by the peasant delegates in the Finnish diet. They could be openly critical towards what they saw as overly lenient liberal elites. When the local correspondent of *Tampereen Sanomat* wrote about a series of household thefts on the central-Finnish countryside in 1866, for example, the rhetoric was not aimed only against the Roma - dubbed as 'beasts on two legs':

Humanists, particularly educated folks, feel pity for this unfortunate people, and indeed pitiful they are; and yet it is certain that this people, which in its perennial vagrancy has habituated itself into complete dishonesty and deception, is an outright nuisance to

¹⁸⁵ *Sanan saattaja Wiipurista* no 7, 14 Feb 1835.

¹⁸⁶ Salokangas & Tommila 1998.

communities, as flocks of them roam around from one house to the next throughout the year, together with their horses and other beasts [...]¹⁸⁷

Besides the rural correspondents, secular and religious authorities, professional journalists, intellectuals, scholars and amateur writers of all stripes wrote texts on the Roma. While the context and tone of writing varied, what was usually common was the Roma's role as 'abnormal' objects, culprits, suspects, or curiosities. There are very few news articles in which the Roma are presented neutrally, as one kind of actors among others. After the turn of the century, ingrained anti-gypsyism became expressed in banal slurs and insults, in which casual references to Gypsies served as a shared code signifying bad or dishonourable behaviour.

What several decades of newspaper writing on the Roma both reflected and accentuated, was a sharpening sense of cultural separateness, a growing significance of ethnic boundaries and an automatic assumption of mutual hostility. The barrier between the Gypsies and the rest of the Finns came to be seen as insurmountable; the Roma could be compared to 'drops of oil stirred into water', which

'[...] are divided into small, almost invisible parts and disappear into the water; but they do not merge with it, because oil and water are completely different, alien to each other and hostile elements.'¹⁸⁸

The strong predominance of non-elite local correspondents in evoking the Gypsy question after 1870s makes it clear that the construction of the Roma as 'others' was not an elite-driven or top-down process. Without any intentional nationalist programme aimed against the Roma, it seems that a certain dualistic logic, ingrained in a nationalist perception of social reality, worked to naturalize a perception of the Roma as anomalous outsiders (now seen as part of an exotic Indian diaspora rather than of the Finnish polity). Despite their centuries long presence in Finland, the Roma became to be presented as 'not our own countrymen, even though they stay here [Finland] as if in their own home'.¹⁸⁹ As the Roma were rhetorically demarcated from the rest of the population, time and time again, it was implicitly affirmed that a single national entity existed as the positive counterpart of such alterity – the Finnish people.

¹⁸⁷ *Tampereen Sanomat* no 35, 28 Aug 1866

¹⁸⁸ *Turun Lehti* no 137, 23 Nov 1886.

¹⁸⁹ *Tampereen Uutiset* no 24, 3 February 1900.

The 'Gypsy question' and local power

As seen, the Roma began to serve as a negative counterpart in Finnish nationalist discourses from the mid nineteenth century onwards, although with a vocabulary which often drew from older popular anti-Gypsyism as much as from later Fennoman rhetorics. At the same time, the 'Gypsy question' also revealed a political gap between the two most important constituent groups in the Fennoman movement, the urban bourgeoisie and gentry on one hand and the upper- and middling landowning peasantry on the other. This political gap was reflected in a difference of the tone and content of writing in the nation-wide bourgeois papers and small regional newspapers, with the latter clearly less willing to conceive the Roma (as well as the Jews and Swedish-speakers) as potentially part of 'the nation'.

However, this was not the only dividing line: on local level, the Gypsy question also highlighted divergence between different echelons of the peasantry.

In the aftermath of the great famine in 1867-68, verbal attacks against the Roma by the provincial magazines grew increasingly fierce. The language used by the rural correspondents to express their hostility also became explicitly, even radically ethno-nationalistic, as in *Kansan Lehti*'s (literally, the 'Magazine of the People') calls for 'extermination' of the 'destroyers' of the 'fatherland', in 1869:

How long can those destroyers of the land, the Gypsies, wonder in our beloved fatherland; wouldn't the authorities have some way to exterminate them; for they start appearing again and their numbers increase constantly. Doubtable is, whether they are of much use to the peasants who keep them in their houses, and often even write them off as household members. It would be much desired that they would drive such folks from their houses; for they only damage the residents of the municipality.¹⁹⁰

As visible in the comment, a new recurring theme emerged: condemnation of the farmers and cottagers who were engaged in economic activities with the Roma. Heavy judgement was given particularly for those, who offered the Roma legal protection by inscribing them as nominal members of their household economy as farmhands, maids or tenants. In appealing to such 'collaborators', a notion of the legitimate residents of the municipality ('*kuntalaiset*') as a community with shared interests was invoked, and used side by side with the nationalist idea of fatherland (*isänmaa*).

¹⁹⁰ *Kansan Lehti* no 32, 14 Aug 1869.

However, the ideal of a natural, exclusive peasant community ran into the divergent interests of different layers of the peasantry. It is apparent that the appeals and condemnations made in the community's name fell on deaf ears; between 1868 and 1899, there were attempts in numerous rural municipalities to impose relatively heavy fines on those accommodating Roma in peasant houses.¹⁹¹

The attempts to impose fines on the houses 'favouring Gypsies' had the potential of worsening the tensions between the wealthy freeholder peasants and the tenant farmers, which, by the end of the century, were becoming disruptive in rural communities. The ones involved in economic and social dealings with the Roma, stigmatized as 'Gypsies' nests' and deemed as potential lawbreakers by the municipal meetings, belonged mostly to the class of smallholding peasants and tenant farmers. Meanwhile, as the delegates to the municipal meetings were selected according to property and the amount of land owned, the ones passing the degrees were overwhelmingly the wealthiest freeholding peasants (whose representatives were also the ones increasingly vocal in the provincial press).

While the voice of the smallholder peasantry and tenant farmers was missing from the municipal meetings, it seems that also the few office-holding burghers and gentlefolk at rural communities could at times be opposed to the landowning peasants' anti-Gypsy proposals – although the reasons for their opposition must have been political rather than economic in its nature. In the border parish of Rautua in Eastern Finland, for example, the municipal meeting agreed on a fine in 1878, but not without the dissidence of 'a couple of gentlemen':

4§. On the request of a certain landed peasant [*talollinen*], different means of lessening the lodging of Gypsies in our community were discussed. There was a lively debate on the issue, in which it could be seen that all of the numerous peasants present wanted to impose a fine; only a couple of gentlemen [*herrasmies*] enthusiastically opposed this. Subsequently the community ordered twenty marks fine on all those, who give shelter to the Gypsies.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Without systematic charting I have found 18 cases from newspaper articles and research literature in which the municipal community proposed statutes aiming at the restriction of the Roma's movements and their accommodation: Haapavesi (1868), Rautu (1878), Lappajärvi (1879), Kortessjärvi, Alajärvi, Soini and Kirvu (1881), Viitasaari (1887), Kuusamo and Impilahti (1888), Saloinen (1889), Keuruu, Pielisjärvi and Juuka (1890), Jurva (1899). Robert Kojonen (1899, 229) also describes similar legislation in Petäjävesi, Jaala and Iitti. Proposals of anti-Gypsy statutes seem to have been particularly popular in Pohjanmaa, a western coastal region with relatively large Roma population, in which attitudes had hardened against all kinds of itinerant, begging and peddling people during and since the great famine years 1867-1868 (Häkkinen 1990, 109, 120, 123). This was also a region where many of the violent conflicts between the Roma and peasants took place

¹⁹² MMA, Kuntakokousten pöytäkirjat, Rautua 18 May 1878.

Rautua is an illustrative case in that many of the municipalities seeking to restrict the movement of Roma were through-passing areas rather than places with large established Roma communities. Rautua was itself one of the few parishes in the province of Karelia not to have any registered Roma residents. However, it was situated on the Russian border, halfway between the metropolis of St.Petersburg, and the relatively large Karelian Roma ‘settlements’ of Sakkola, Viipuri and Säkkiarvi, which were likely to have been using Rautua as a through-passing route. The case of Rautua also points to the connection between the local Gypsy issue and the nationalist Fennoman agenda as it was conceived by the Finnish-speaking freeholding peasants. Thus in the year following the decision on fines, the municipal meeting of Rautua officially abolished the use of Swedish in its official documents and assemblies.¹⁹³

In the last instance, the local conflict between different layers of the peasantry over the Roma issue did usually not materialize. The fines proposed in Rautua and in numerous other communities did not get the approval of provincial governors, since the existing laws on vagrancy were usually interpreted by the latter as already decreeing the treatment of *Zigenare* and other vagrants. This undoubtedly added to the irritation aroused by the repeated failures of the prohibitive measures proposed by the peasant delegates in the Diet of Finland. Throughout the late nineteenth century then, the gentle criticism of the ‘educated folk’ in the provincial papers took on a more bitter tone. It was argued that

The gentlefolk do not know of the plight, which that lazy people afflicts on the Finnish peasant. At least it does not see it to be as great, as it really is, since the gypsy usually avoids going to the gentry mansions, even at the countryside.¹⁹⁴

The political frustration combined with expressions of extreme hostility towards the Roma. In 1875, for example, a correspondent of *Tapio* from Lapinlahti (Province of Kuopio, East-Central Finland) equated the relationship between the Roma and the rest of the rural population with an outright war, fought against ‘internal enemies’. Also the familiar critique of ineffective authorities and oblivious townfolks is bitterly brought out:

¹⁹³ MMA, Kuntakokousten pöytäkirjat, Rautua 3 Jun 1879.

¹⁹⁴ *Suomalainen Virallinen Lehti* no 144, 4 Dec 1875.

[...] Could our dear authorities not come up with some new, more effective means to wipe out such enemies! The people of Finland are ready to defend their country against external enemies; surely also against internal ones! Yet the cries for help from the heartlands do not always reach the towns, and when they do, they do not sway those, who enjoy sweet peace. – “Peace”, I suppose, is life, in which each can freely keep their lives and their properties; but war – and even worse – when one doesn’t know when one’s belongings and life are taken away.¹⁹⁵

Was there, then, a war going on in the countryside? Does the heated rhetoric reflect a real situation of increasing physical conflicts, attacks and robberies between the Roma and the peasants – in short, an ethnic conflict?

It seems clear that the Roma were, as a group, disproportionately often involved in certain kinds of crimes, especially household- and horse-thefts. Still, an analysis (presented in detail in Chapter 6) of late nineteenth-century court records in provinces of Waasa and Viipuri – two areas with the largest Roma populations – gives no indication of high levels of violence between the Roma and the peasants. On the contrary, between 1860 and 1890, it appears that actualized physical force did not play a major role in the relations between the Roma and the peasants, and there was no significant change in this during the period. Cases of inter-ethnic violence were extremely rare, and conformed only in few known cases to the common horror stories of house-intrusions, forced accommodations or violent robberies. In the meantime, violence within both groups were rising, and there was a general surge of homicidal violence in Finland between 1870 and 1890.¹⁹⁶

But why then the language of warfare? Some of the socio-economic factors behind the peasants’ deep-seated hostility towards the Roma have already been mentioned, and will be dealt in more detail in Chapter 4. The political background of the harsh rhetoric has also already been touched upon. The top segments of the Finnish-speaking freeholder peasantry had risen both in wealth, influence, level of education and self-esteem during the nineteenth century. It was formally equal with the other social estates in diet; it held power in most municipal councils; it was vocal in the provincial press; and it could make the most authentic claims of representing ‘the people’ within the Fennoman movement. Yet, the Gypsy question was among the issues which pointed out the limits of the peasantry’s power painfully clearly, both on the national and the local level.

¹⁹⁵ *Tapio* no 36, 4 Sept 1875.

¹⁹⁶ For general trends in homicide rates, see Lehti 2001, 82-83; Rajala 2004 53-55.

There were also troubling challenges to the freeholding peasants' newly achieved local power position. The late nineteenth century was a period of transformation, politicization and uncertainty in the countryside. There was a rapid increase of landless population, a loosening of the legislation which controlled their movement, a drop in commercial farming revenues, increasing violence and rising class tensions. The abolition of laws which had bound propertyless labourers to the landowners changed the relationship between these groups profoundly, severing paternalistic ties and setting the scene for increasingly open confrontations. Also the relations between land-owners and tenant farmers were strained close to a breaking point by the end of 19th century.¹⁹⁷ Repeated rumours of radical equalitarian land reform even hinted at revolutionary undercurrents among the tenant farmers and landless population. Where the previous means of social control within communities seemed to be slipping from the middling peasants' hands, the presence of itinerant Roma could be singled out as the most visible symptom of a more general turbulence. The connection between the Gypsy question and more existential anxieties felt by the peasants were sometimes laid bare, as in Jurva (Province of Waasa), in which the municipal council decreed in 1899 a 50 marks fine on 'pedlars, vagabonds, gypsies and the spreaders of false rumours over the partitioning of land'.¹⁹⁸

What the 'Gypsy question' brought up on the local level was a distinctive freeholder peasant conception of the 'nation', with an emphasis on shared language and ethnicity (or even 'race'), economic self-sufficiency and patriarchal peasant communality. The Finnish-speaking freeholding peasants were a group which mediated between 'popular classes' and the 'elite'. They interpreted the Fennoman ideas as ascribing them a central place in the emerging nation, and were thus eager to appropriate the nationalist ideals, as the movement begun to widen its social basis in the last decades of the 19th century. However, they seem to have had their own conceptions of nationhood already prior to the reaching out of the gentry-based Fennoman movement. These preconceptions affected the way in which their version of the modern nationalism developed. In the context of political setbacks and social turmoil, the freeholding peasants accommodated the Fennoman ideology to a localized view of

¹⁹⁷ One underlying reason for this were the economical hits which the freeholding peasants had suffered from the flood of cheap foreign grain on the Finnish grain markets; as a consequence of reduced money incomes, the freeholding peasants imposed a number of new restrictions, fees and demands on their tenant farmers. Peltonen 1992, 285.

¹⁹⁸ *Pohjalainen*, 12 May 1899.

hierarchy and order, in some ways reminiscent of what Eric Hobsbawn has called ‘local nationalism’¹⁹⁹, with its ‘attempt to erect barricades and keep at bay the forces of modern world’. While this would overstate the backward-looking nature of freeholding peasants’ nationalism, the case of the ‘Gypsy question’ nevertheless makes it clear that the latter co-existed in an uneasy union with the more liberal bourgeoisie version of the Fennoman ideology.

Despite contested interpretations of ‘the nation’ and of the place of the Roma in it, various groups were in any case able to articulate very different kinds of anxieties and aspirations through the ‘Gypsy question’. In the context of a nationalist movement without external counterpoints, the tiny but highly visible Roma population offered one of the few clear ‘Others’ for the Fennoman movement, as it struggled to define the boundaries of the national in-group. This might at least partly explain the sudden attention the tiny group of Roma started to receive from 1860 onwards, at times appearing little short from an obsession.

¹⁹⁹ Hobsbawn 1999, 363-364.

3.2 Swedish nation-state and the ‘*tattare* burden’

The ‘Tattare question’ or ‘-burden’, ie., the public and political problematization of the Travellers and vagrancy more generally in 19th-20th century Sweden, resembled the rise of the Finnish ‘Gypsy question’ in many key respects. As with the Finnish Roma, there were centuries-old moral and social worries and condemnations concerning the mobile people labelled as *tattare*, (*Z*)*zigenare*, *skojare*, *krämmare*, etc., and attempts to curb the ‘tattare burden’ by repressive policies (dealt above in Chapter 2.1). Existing worries were then intensified along the 19th century. This coincided with the ending of the Travellers’ recruitment in the Swedish military, abolishing of targeted repressive legislation, and a general liberalization of laws concerning mobility, work and poor relief. Later, there was attention on the ‘tattare’ as a negative ‘other’ in the contexts of modernization and nation-state building; and from the turn of the 20th century onwards, this ‘other’ became to be increasingly viewed as a ‘race problem’.

However, there were also significant differences in comparison to Finland. One obvious was timing: the ‘tattare question’ begun to emerge as a public issue roughly from 1890 onwards, but the most intensive period of problematization took place in 1920-1940s, almost half century later than what was the case with the Finnish Roma. In fact, it took until the end of the 19th century before there was even a clearly established notion of one group, ‘tattare’, whose position could be debated and politicized.

As said in Chapter 2.1, the dismantling of ethnically targeted legislation by the central state on the category ‘*Zigenare or Tattare*’ took place in Sweden in 1819, in the wake of liberal reforms connected to Sweden’s loss of great power status in the Napoleonic wars. After centuries of special legislation in the context of vagrancy, the Gypsy issue was now on the surface subsumed by a wider ‘social question’. However, there was a series of political backlashes against the liberalization of rural order, particularly after the reforms of labour- and internal migration law (1845) and vagrancy law (1885). In the ensuing debates, the Travellers resurfaced from time to time, appearing under a multitude of appellations and mixed in various degrees with other categories of ‘vagrants’. Public anxieties about poverty, vagrancy and the loosening of ‘*folksmoralet*’ were all conjoined in an image, repeatedly appearing in the press, of

‘skojare’ or ‘kältringarna’ (‘hustlers’, ‘scroungers’) wandering across the country in dangerous and unruly mobs, untouched by the new, overly liberal vagrancy laws.²⁰⁰

The debate was not black and white, as reform-minded social liberals also had a strong foothold in the Swedish debates. Literary descriptions of the ‘tattare’ often mixed moral worries with some sympathy or even moderate praises, as below in pastor Arwid August Afzelius’ (1781-1871) account written in 1853:

They [‘tattare’] are lazy and unwilling for any work that demands time and effort, but have a great love for animals, especially horses, with whom they live as if these were members of their family, and whose illnesses and diseases they are therefore more familiar with; they are often good animal doctors, and have in this respect been very useful to our people.²⁰¹

While the public attention on the ‘tattare burden’ did not reach national politics before 1890s, there was a gradually accelerating trickle of newspaper articles concerning the Travellers and other itinerant people throughout the 19th century. The diversity of texts included folklorist accounts,²⁰² fictional stories,²⁰³ social reportages²⁰⁴ as well as jokes and anecdotes²⁰⁵ (the latter of which could be historical²⁰⁶). However, as was the case with the Finnish Roma, crime reporting, complaints and moral condemnations clearly dominated the writing. Grievances regarding vagrancy in general and ‘tattare’ in particular were never completely absent, and were every now and then accompanied by complaints about sloppy bailiffs and careless peasants doing harm for themselves by accommodating- and doing business with such ‘weed’, ‘scum’ or ‘landplague’²⁰⁷. Particularly in the South- and West-Swedish newspapers, crimes allegedly committed by ‘tattare’ were singled out, as in 1890, when the *Nya Wermlands-Tidningen* reported on the ‘latest tattar-murder’ in the province of Halland.²⁰⁸

Despite its overwhelmingly negative character, the newspaper writing on ‘tattare’, ‘skojare’, ‘rackare’, ‘kältringar’ etc. remained largely a-political, in the sense that very few of the texts in my sample demanded or argued for targeted interventions

²⁰⁰ Svensson 1993, 128-134.

²⁰¹ Afzelius cited by Svensson 1993, 132.

²⁰² E.g. *Tidning för Wenersborgs stad och län*, 27 Oct 1873.

²⁰³ E.g. *Kalmar* 31 Dec 1890; *Dalpilen* 10 Dec 1897; *Kalmar* 28 May 1904; *Dalpilen* 1 Sep 1922.

²⁰⁴ E.g. Svensson 1993, 133.

²⁰⁵ E.g. *Kalmar* 27 Feb 1897.

²⁰⁶ E.g. *Kalmar* 5 Apr 1909.

²⁰⁷ *Nya Wermlands-Tidningen* 10/3 1885 & 17/7 1886; cited in Lindholm 1995, 68.

²⁰⁸ *Nya Wermlands-Tidningen* 11/11 1890; cited in Lindholm 1995, 68.

before 1890s. In contrast to this relative lull, on the level of rural communities, the position of the Travellers – and of ‘vagrants’, ‘pedlars’, ‘beggars’ etc. – was throughout the latter half of the 19th highly politicized. This was particularly so after the harvest failures of 1866 and 1867, which had set off a waves of beggars in the countryside, straining the resources of local poor-relief, and hardening the attitudes of land-owners and authorities. In 1871, the vicar of Rolfstorp, C.E.A. d’Angotte (1823-1899), made an initiative to the municipalities in the province of Göteborg och Bohuslän to join in efforts to ‘eradicate (*utrota*) the begging of the so-called “hustlers and pedlars”’.²⁰⁹ The initiative received cautious support; however, as far as the municipal boards of the province of Göteborg and Bohus were concerned, it was rendered unnecessary by a new poor law decreed in the same year.²¹⁰

The significance of the 1871 poor-law seems to have been largely overlooked in previous research concerning the Travellers. The law gave municipalities new means to restrict the mobility of the vagrants and ‘tattare’ by setting up a local network of village watchmen, and by enabling fines on those either hosting- or giving food to persons without residence permit in the municipality. The law provided a basis for subsequent flourishing of local anti-vagrancy statutes. At least in Southern Sweden, the new municipal regulations also almost invariably took particular aim at the Travellers. Protocol of the municipal meeting in 1877 in Stamnared, province of Halland, offers a typical example of what kind of measures the 1871 legislation gave rise to on the local level:

§5. On grounds of the Royal Majesty’s Gracious Order of 9 June 1871 concerning poor-relief in the kingdom with the order that with 39§ a sufficient amount of watchmen within each municipality should be tasked to keep the municipality clean of beggars and so-called tattare and to arrest such; and to see that no other inappropriate persons stay within the municipality; as well as to oversee that no disorder in any house can take place which leads to indecent life disturbing general security [...], the community has decided to impose a fine of 10 crowns per night for a house-owner, 5 for a tenant farmer and cottager [*backstugosettare*] who hosts the above-mentioned persons [...].²¹¹

²⁰⁹ E.g. Svensk Lokalhistorisk Databas (SLD), Protokoll hållet vid I laga ordning utlyst kommunalstämma i Qvibille den 8 Aug 1871; *ibid*, Krogsered socken den 13 aug 1871.

²¹⁰ SLD, Protokoll hållet vid [...] Kommunalstämma med Getinge socken [...] den 27 aug 1871; Prottekoll Hållet i kommunal stämma med Swarträ församling i kyrkan den 27 aug 1871.

²¹¹ SLD, Protokoll hollit vid utlyst Kommunalstämma i Stamnareds kyrka den 14 Maj 1877, §5.

The protocol continues by listing local individuals – all of them freeholding peasants – authorized as watchmen of particular villages, and names the municipality's organist and schoolteacher as their chief constable.²¹²

'Neighbourhood watches' such as this were increasingly set up in South-Swedish municipalities in 1870s-1890s, almost always with a specifically named aim of helping the bailiff to repress the movements of the Travellers (whatever the ethnonym used). As is clear from the citation above, a central part of this effort was to impose sanctions on the people who provided mobile individuals and families with necessary shelter and food. Here, again, we find the class bias familiar from the Finnish case: majority of those deemed susceptible to fines were of relatively low social standing. I will return to this in Chapter 7.2 ('Settled Travellers and their neighbours').

From 1890s onwards, local concerns and debates on the Travellers and itinerants associated with them begun to finally reach the level of national politics and nationwide public debates. An important first move in this respect was the report of the Governor of Halland which was included in the 1886-1890 five year period report of the provincial governors. In conjunction to criminality in Halland, the governor turned his attention to a 'class of people' which was 'strictly separated from the rest of the population, standing on the lowest level of the society':

Not rarely, one meets in Halland [...] itinerant parties of men, women and children, who are thought to descend from Gypsies [*zigenare*], but differ from these both in terms of outward appearance and lifestyle. The sedentary population calls them "kältringar" ['scroungers'], but they themselves say that they belong to "vandringsfolket" ['wandering folk']. Some of the men are given employment at the farmhouses as 'gelders' [*vallackare*], but this occurs rarely and is in any case highly temporary. Meanwhile, the women and children seem to live completely of begging [...] ²¹³

As is clear from the citation, the nature, origin and even name of what is tentatively referred to as the 'wandering folk' was far from self-evident to the governor, and he did not assume previous knowledge on the group from his readers either. The report, written in somewhat weary tone, saw the itinerant lifestyle of the *vandringsfolk* as a burden to the rural population, insofar as it was told to involve constant begging, drinking, violence and other lawlessness. However, the governor predicted serious problems in any measures undertaken to improve the situation, whether this was

²¹² SLD, Protokoll hollit vid utlyst Kommunalstämma i Stannareds kyrka den 14 Maj 1877, §5.

²¹³ RA, Civildepartement, Länshövdingarnas femårsberättelser 1886-1890 (EII baa vol 39).

through obligatory registration, arrests, taking into custody of children, or trying to emulate the Norwegian ‘model’ of forcing itinerants to settle into labour camps.²¹⁴

One element in the increasing politicization of the Travellers’ position, implicit in the governor of Halland’s report, was that their situation in the countryside had become increasingly vulnerable towards the end of the century, as their traditional local ties with peasant communities had begun to deteriorate. This apparent shift, which will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 7, had the effect of transforming the Travellers’ ‘itineracy’ into ‘homelessness’ and making them appear solely as a ‘burden’ within the rural communities. The tightening local surveillance and restrictions undoubtedly also played a role in this, as the anti-‘tattare’ laws put those accommodating Travellers or giving them food into the risk of being fined and publicly humiliated. The Travellers themselves were naturally the ones to feel their plight most acutely. In 1896, *Norra Skåne* reported of a petition to the queen of Sweden, undersigned by 4 male and 3 female representatives of ‘the wandering folk’:

A petition of the ‘wandering folk’ [Vandringsfolket].

The so-called tattare in Halland have left the queen a petition, in which they ask her to give a thought to the poor wandering folk. They do not have the words to describe their pitiful condition. They are born in this country, for sure, but none of them has ever had a home, and they do not have a parish, school nor a teacher. Their homeless prayers of a place [to stay in] and of work are even in the best case answered with silence [...] they thus dare [...] to plea that Her Majesty would realize a survey and study on the wandering folk, especially in [the province of] Halland, or, if this is seen as unnecessary, to the leave to the Diet a proposal on taking necessary measures to improve the situation of the wandering folk, through such decisions, that they could be given land, on which they could, against a reasonable compensation, build houses and homes and enjoy teaching and religious guidance.²¹⁵

The petition was accompanied by a letter in which vicar Flodén from the parish of Lindberg, province of Halland, made a case for decreeing special legislation on the ‘tattare’. The somewhat paternalistic tone of the petition and especially its focus on ‘religious guidance’ suggest that vicar Flodén had done more than just helped the signators to express their own thoughts – and it is likely that he also had a contact with the governor of the province, whose report was cited above. In any case, the material deprivation referred to in the petition was doubtlessly real. It can be assumed that the

²¹⁴ RA, Civildepartement, Länshövdingarnas femårsberättelser 1886-1890 (EII baa vol 39).

²¹⁵ *Norra Skåne*, 4 Jan 1896.

rise of the ‘tattare issue’ from 1890s onwards thus reflected at least partly genuine socio-economic problems faced by the Travellers.

In the debates of the Diet which followed from 1897 onwards, the social problems and discrimination faced by the Travellers were indeed sometimes acknowledged. For example, A. Norrman and other representatives of Halland in the lower chamber made notice of a vicious cycle of itineracy, unemployment and insecurity in which many ‘tattare’ were caught up in. Elderly and disabled ‘tattare’ were told to be outside poor-relief, as no municipality took responsibility of them; the able-bodied were hindered from settling down, as it was feared that they would eventually become costly for local poor-relief; and children could consequently not attend school, as the adults were forced to move from one place to another. It was suggested that the state would intervene in the cycle by giving short-term compensations to the municipalities to cover the poor-relief costs resulting from the settling down of ‘tattare’, thus reducing the economic motivation to expel them.²¹⁶

This motion was highly exceptional, however. Overwhelmingly, the perspective of the Travellers themselves was missing from various debates; instead, the ‘tattare’ were understood as harmful deviants and criminals, whose treatment would demand heavy-handed interventions and special legislation. Mobility was to be repressed, children to be taken into custody, and adults to be forced into work. As the Finnish Roma at the same time, the ‘tattare’ were described through medical metaphors as a societal illness;²¹⁷ it was argued that intervention was necessary, since the ‘tattare’

form a great burden to the localities in which they wander; that they are dangerously demoralizing [...] and that as such they are a genuine societal injury, for whose healing and prevention one has to work for.²¹⁸

From 1907 onwards, a committee was set up to prepare a reform of the poor-relief laws. The ‘tattare’ were named as a group which the committee should take into special consideration, with the motivation that their ‘wandering lifestyle’ threatened the public order and formed a ‘societal danger’. In 1922, the long-standing committee then ordered the department of social affairs to do a first systematic inventory of the situation of the Travellers and Gypsies in the country. Official surveys were carried out

²¹⁶ SOU 1923:2, 329.

²¹⁷ Montesino 2002, 108.

²¹⁸ RA, Första kammaren protokoll nr4, utskottsutlåtande 1897:10; cited in Montesino 2002, 108.

separately by the clergy and the police, with somewhat ambivalent results. The vicar's office counted 1503 *Tattare* or *Zigenare* from the parish records; besides this, there were 1072 persons who could be *likened* with *Tattare* or *Zigenare*, on the basis of their wandering lifestyle or other characteristics, plus 235 itinerant persons, also *possibly* *Tattare* or *Zigenare*, who were marked as absent from their parishes. The police, for its part, gave smaller but allegedly less ambiguous numbers, finding 1583 *Tattare* and c.250 *Zigenare*.²¹⁹

In a way which once again resembled the pattern seen in the Finnish case, the official 'tattare' surveys and suggestions by the poor-relief committee did not lead to any concrete action, nor to special legislation targeting those labelled as 'tattare'. Also the reasons for this were partly similar: while 'tattare burden' was an issue which evoked strong fears and moralistic condemnations, it was ultimately too marginal and dealing with too small group to motivate serious proactive measures from the state. In a way, it can also be argued that as in Finland, the universalistic framework of the Swedish state, together with sheer bureaucratic inertia, dampened down the most radical impulses for ethno-specific repression arising from the local level. At least in the short term, this in effect sheltered the Travellers from the targeted repression suggested for example in many of the local reports on which the police investigation of 1922 was based on.²²⁰ Only from 1940s onwards, real threat begun to be posed to those labelled as 'tattare' by the aspirations in the state apparatus to target them with a sterilization program.²²¹

Nationalism, race and the crystallization of the 'tattare' -label

As with the Finnish 'Gypsy question', it can be argued that the rise of the Swedish 'tattare question' concerned ultimately the drawing of the mental boundaries of Swedish nationhood. Yet, the role of nationalism in the latter case was perhaps less pronounced and obvious, connecting to the gradual development of the Swedish nation-state.

Modern nationalist ideas started to gain political currency in Sweden roughly in the same decades as in Finland, during the latter part of the 19th century. However,

²¹⁹ SOU 1923:2, 338-340.

²²⁰ Cf. Svensson 1993, 36.

²²¹ E.g. Catomeris 2004, 242-255; Hazell 2002, 96-104.

Swedish version of statist nationalism emerged only very gradually from the centuries-old royal and imperial traditions.²²² Not faced with powerful minorities or the catalysts of foreign rule, threat of repression or war,²²³ Swedish nationalism developed into a moderate direction, with the political and cultural elite re-fashioning the kingdom's old royal symbols, history and institutions and creating some new. Particularly after the declaration of independence by the Norwegian parliament in 1905, the dissemination of the Swedish national ideals was both a comparatively smooth and, in many ways, successful process.²²⁴

Whereas the concept of the nation became relatively uncontested in the Swedish context, a notion of 'race' gained importance from the turn of the 20th century onwards, working as a central subtext of Swedish nationalism up until the ending of the Second World War. The basic idea, expressed in numerous debates connected to migration, lower classes, and especially to the so-called 'Jewish question', was that the Swedes were an exceptionally 'pure' and high-standing racial group, but as such also vulnerable to 'pollution' of their heredity. Foreign 'Gypsies' were explicitly named as a threat in this context, as for example in a popular account *Rasbiologi och rashygien* (1914), which deplored strongly the mixing '*between racially high-standing people (such as the Scandinavians) and folk-elements with worse qualifications, such as the Gypsies, Galizians, some Russian folk-types etc [...]*'²²⁵

Migration thus became an important political field in which the ideas of ethno-specific and racialized citizenship were implicitly confirmed, bearing in this sense resemblance to late 19th century French case, for example.²²⁶ In the Swedish case, however, there was a clear discrepancy between the images of 'immigrant threat' and the relatively small factual numbers of newcomers, particularly seen in the context of mass-emigration before First World War.²²⁷ The reference to the 'Gypsies' in the above citation was prompted by the arrival of a tiny group – according to Arnsberg, eight

²²² The taking into possession of Norway after the Napoleonic wars, given to Sweden as a compensation for Finland, gave Sweden possibilities to linger in such traditions, and what was closest to a nationalist movement actually begun by promoting a 'Nordic' identity. Only as it became increasingly evident during the 1890s that Norway was heading to a separate way, a more purely Swedish version of a nationalist movement started to build up. Frängsmyr 2000, 150-152.

²²³ After the Napoleonic wars, the loss of Finnish territories to Russia in 1808-1809 and the invasion of Norway in 1814, the Swedish state and society has enjoyed a remarkably long uninterrupted peace up until present day.

²²⁴ Frängsmyr 2000 150-161; Svanberg & Tyden 1992, 267.

²²⁵ Herman Lundborg's *Rasbiologi och rashygien* (1914) cited in Svanberg & Tyden 1992, 266.

²²⁶ Cf. Noiriel 1996.

²²⁷ E.g. Ahlberger & Kvarnström 2004, 277-284.

extended families – of East European *Kalderash* Roma into Sweden between 1880 and 1914.²²⁸ These families were a tiny detach from the European-wide westward migration of several East European Roma groups roughly from 1860 onwards.²²⁹ Arrival into Sweden (many families came as a consequence of being expelled there from Denmark) was followed by a new immigration law, put into force at the outbreak of the First World War, which specifically banned the immigration of ‘Zigenare’, along with ‘foreign beggars, itinerant musicians, criminals and prostitutes’.²³⁰

In regards to the Travellers, one significant effect of the arrival of the Rom families was that the terms ‘Zigenare’ and ‘Tattare’, which had been ambiguously connected to each other for centuries in official vocabulary, finally diverged. According to Norma Montesino, the immigration law of 1914 was the first one since the 1637 ‘hanging law’ not to mention ‘tattare’ in conjunction with ‘Zigenare’.²³¹ As the latter were now defined unambiguously as a category of foreigners, the authorities were compelled to consider the former as native Swedish citizens. Whereas the ‘Zigenare’ were thus to be kept out, the ‘tattare’ had to be assimilated, in order to make them productive citizens of modern Swedish society.²³²

As in Finland, anticipation of a new kind of national future thus produced a perspective in which social and cultural assimilation of a group seen as anomalous begun to appear as imperative. Yet, the rise of the racial perspective created also a completely opposite view. If the Swedes were a racially pure group to be protected from ‘pollution’ by inferior races, was assimilation of the ‘tattare’ not a danger rather than a solution? From this perspective, precisely the close connections between the ‘tattare’ and the ‘normal’ Swedish society became to be seen as a problem. Attempts at social integration appeared as naïve and dangerous: the social problems and particularly criminality connected to the ‘tattare’ were, after all, a result of pathological racial qualities, and intermarriages, inevitably following assimilation, would only infect these qualities on to the Swedish race. The logic of racial thinking thus cast serious doubt on ideas of social reform. It also made the relatively high birthrate of many Traveller families seem as especially problematic. Eyes were consequently turned into preventing reproduction, which was seen as a solution both to the racial and social ‘problems’. In

²²⁸ Arnstberg 1988, 485.

²²⁹ On the wider migrations, see for example Frazer 1992, 222-237.

²³⁰ Catomeris 2004, 269-270.

²³¹ Montesino 2002, 95.

²³² Montesino 2002, 95.

1923, it was thus suggested from the province of Malmöhus and Jönköping – the two provinces with the highest amount of registered ‘tattare’ – that the ‘tattare question’ should be solved through targeted sterilizations.²³³ The suggestion was not wholeheartedly accepted in the 1923 poor-relief committee’s memorandum, but the door was left open to indirect ‘solution’ in the future: it was suggested that since the ‘tattare’ included a disproportionately high number of pathological criminals and degenerates, they would automatically be in focus, should an eugenic program be set up by the state.²³⁴

Whether seen as social deviants demanding discipline and assimilation, or as ‘our worst racial problem’²³⁵ to be contained by sterilizations, a notion of the ‘tattare’ as a singular entity, mandating intervention, had been established by the time the poor-relief committee released its memorandum in 1923.²³⁶ As said, various proposals to ‘eradicate’ the ‘tattare problem’ through targeted interventions led to no immediate measures. Nevertheless, the state officials, population and ‘race’ experts, police, folklorists and journalists succeeded collectively in turning ‘the tattare’ into a commonly recognized catch-all category, replacing the previous plurality of ethnonyms concerning the Travellers and the various people associated with them. As said, this was partly also a result of the new, more or less clear-cut division between the terms ‘zigenare’ and ‘tattare.’

The crystallization of the term ‘tattare’ is illustrated in the Table 5, which presents a selection of appellations used by local authorities in referring to Travellers and other mobile people, as they sought to restrict unwanted mobility in their territories in 19th and 20th centuries.

²³³ Catomeris 2004, 235; SOU 1923:2, 86; Svensson 1993, 159.

²³⁴ Catomeris 2004, 235.

²³⁵ Title of Allan Etzler’s interview, published in *Svenska Morgonbladet*, 13 Dec 1941.

²³⁶ Cf. Svensson 1993, 158.

Table 5: appellations of ‘tattare’ in a selection of anti-vagrancy proposals handled by South-Swedish municipal board meetings, 1848-1941. Source: Svensk Lokalhistorisk Databas.

| Municipality | Year | Target group | |
|--------------|------|---|---|
| | | <i>Original appellation (Swedish)</i> | <i>English translation</i> |
| Krogsered | 1848 | så kallade kältringar eller huddragare (nattmän) | so-called scroungers or skimmers (night-men) |
| Gunnarp | 1863 | kringstrykande så kallade skojare | itinerant so-called hustlers |
| Alfshög | 1863 | så kallade kältringar eller skoiare | so-called scroungers or hustlers |
| Spannarp | 1871 | så kallade Krämmare | so-called Pedlars |
| Sjösås | 1872 | kringstrykande gesäller och s.k.skojare | Itinerant journeymen and so-called hustlers |
| Torup | 1875 | Krämare eller så kallade tattare och andra | Pedlars or so-called <i>tattare</i> and others |
| Getinge | 1877 | kringstrykande tiggare eller så kallade tattare | itinerant beggars or so-called <i>tattare</i> |
| Fagered | 1878 | sk. Kältringar eller Kringstrykande tattare | so-called Scroungers or itinerant <i>tattare</i> |
| Gunnarp | 1879 | så kallade "kältringar" från andra orter samt andra för brott straffade försvarslöse personer | so-called "scroungers" from other localities and other illegitimate persons convicted for crime |
| Fagered | 1880 | kringstrykande tattare eller så kallade Kältringar | itinerant <i>tattare</i> or so-called Scroungers |
| Fagered | 1882 | kringstrykande personer eller Så kallade tattare | itinerant persons or so-called <i>tattare</i> |
| Färgaryd | 1886 | så kallade Kringstrykare eller Tattare | so-called vagabonds or <i>Tattare</i> |
| Färgaryd | 1889 | lösdrifvare och bettlare, särskild sk. "tattare" | vagrants and beggars, especially the so-called "tattare" |
| Årstad | 1892 | sk.tattare | so-called <i>tattare</i> |
| Träslöv | 1895 | Tattare eller lösdrivares | <i>Tattare</i> or vagrants |
| Fagered | 1896 | tattare eller kramhandlare | <i>tattare</i> or pedlars |
| Väne-Ryr | 1897 | kringstrykande s.k. Tattare | itinerant so-called <i>Tattare</i> |
| Torup | 1901 | sk.tattare eller lösdrifvare | so-called <i>tattare</i> or vagrants |
| Sundals-Ryr | 1910 | Tattare och med dem jemförliga | <i>Tattare</i> and the likes |
| Sällstorp | 1911 | s.k.vandringsfolket (tattare) | so-called wandering people (<i>tattare</i>) |
| Slättåkra | 1914 | så kalade tattare och med dem likställda personer | so-called <i>tattare</i> or persons comparable with them |
| Färgaryd | 1915 | obehöriga kringströvande personer bettlare och så kallade tattare | inappropriate itinerant people, beggars, and the so-called <i>tattare</i> |
| Torup | 1916 | tattare och annat löst folk | <i>tattare</i> and other loose people |
| Veddige | 1924 | tattare | <i>tattare</i> |
| Gällared | 1941 | tattare | <i>tattare</i> |

As the references to pedlars, journeymen, skimmers, beggars and ‘the likes’ in the above table suggests, the crystallization of the term ‘tattare’ also meant that people who would have been previously categorized otherwise, were now increasingly subsumed under one and the same label. Inevitably, this meant a certain inflation of the word. In Fagered, province of Halland, for example, the municipal board specified in 1895 that with the word “tattare”, it actually referred to any ‘itinerants who fail to show a

certificate of reputation.²³⁷ Similarly, Heymowski has pointed that the dramatic swings in the amount of ‘Zigenare or tattare’ marked by the clergymen in parish records (53 in 1890; 94 in 1900; 488 in 1910; 2575 in 1922; 471 in 1930; etc.) ‘proves clearly how vague and ambiguous the term *tattare* is and how unsure the grounds on which a person could be stigmatized as a *tattare*’.²³⁸ Christian Catomeris’ assessment of the construction of the ‘tattare question’ seems thus justified:

From the turn of the century onwards, one can see how the majority society mobilizes all of the resources of the modern state apparatus: from researchers and state officials to politicians and the mass-media, all of this to set straight a tiny bunch of which one does not – as becomes apparent – actually know who they are.²³⁹

Whether logically consistent or not, the ‘tattare’ had by 1923 in any case been established as a policy object, paving the way for new surveys, studies, memoranda, interventions and restrictions. What the rise of the Swedish ‘tattare burden’ debate thus seems to point to is the classificatory power of the modern regulatory state and the dichotomizing effect of the nationalist framework.

²³⁷ SLD, Protokoll vid ordinarie kommunalstämma med Fagereds församling den 15 okt 1895, §5.

²³⁸ Heymowski 1969, 20.

²³⁹ Catomeris 2004, 235-236.

4. Material survival and Roma-peasant relations

In this chapter, I triangulate diverse sources - primarily, reminiscence-, press- and official survey-material - to look specifically at the material basis of the relationship between the Roma and non-Roma in late 19th – early 20th century Finland.²⁴⁰ At the outset, there is an apparent puzzle. How could itinerant people, most of whom had neither houses nor land, survive from year to year through freezing Nordic winters, in conditions in which even many smallholding peasants had to regularly resort to emergency food?²⁴¹ The puzzle is deepened by what many contemporary newspaper writers and later researchers tell us of the assumed hostility between the Roma and the peasantry. If the Roma were wilfully isolating themselves from the surrounding society, as Nygård, Grönfors and others have assumed²⁴², and if they were, as the contemporary press would have it, in a state of perpetual ‘war’²⁴³ with the only major source of food and housing in the countryside – the peasantry – how could they possibly make ends meet?

One obvious answer is that often they did *not*. In the Great Famine winter of 1868, during the coldest period of the year, there was a small announcement in the Finnish official newspaper (*Suomen Wirallinen Lehti*) from East-Finnish parish of Juva:

“A Gypsy child froze to death here during a long ride on ice. A horse, wife and another child were found barely alive, as the horse had become exhausted in the harness, and the party could not move on.”²⁴⁴

In the end, the exhausted party had finally been brought to a nearby settlement by a local man returning from market trip and were thus saved. In many ways a similar story was much later recalled by a Roma woman, born in 1912, remembering an incident in 1932, also in the conditions of an economic crisis and harsh winter, and also involving exhausted Roma party riding on frozen lakeside. The incident resulted in the death of the narrator’s aunt and brother, whereas the narrator herself and her mother

²⁴⁰ While the focus of this chapter is on the interconnectedness of inter-ethnic relations to the organization of the Roma’s economic life, it is clear that this organization served also – in some respects perhaps even primarily – the social needs of the Roma to forge alliances and marriages, establish hierarchies and exchange information *within* the group. (Gatherings to market fairs are a good example of this.)

²⁴¹ Haatanen 1968, 155; Pitkänen 1991, 38.

²⁴² Grönfors 1981, Nygård 1998, Virkkunen 1982.

²⁴³ Cf. Ch 2.3 and the quote from *Tapio* no 36, 4 Sep 1875, Ch 3 Jan

²⁴⁴ *Suomen Wirallinen Lehti* 14 Mar 1868.

managed in the end to find a peasant house in which to recover from exhaustion and frostbites.²⁴⁵

What is surprising about the two stories, besides their strong resemblances (harsh winter during times of economic crisis; death in the Roma party while riding on a frozen lake; survivors being eventually saved by the peasants) is how *exceptional* they are. Besides some indirect references to difficulties during the winter²⁴⁶, in all my research materials, there is little to none documentary evidence, stories or reminiscent of non-violent perishing of Roma, whether by starvation, diseases or by freezing to death.²⁴⁷ A similar observation was also made by some contemporaries, leading for example to a myth that the Roma would be more resilient towards cold than others. In the eyes of some, the apparent perseverance of the Roma in the face of the great economic difficulties in late 19th century could even turn into a basis for irritation and moral condemnation. In 1900, a correspondent of *Tampereen Uutiset* noted disapprovingly that “*they (Gypsies) do not sow, reap, nor harvest, but move from one place to another without worrying about tomorrow. And yet I have never heard of a gypsy starving.*”²⁴⁸

Of course, we can assume that most of the hardships of the Roma simply went unnoticed and –reported by the majority population and the press. But even so, the overall picture seems to suggest a striking perseverance at the face of extreme material deprivation, harsh climate and repeated economic crises. As Panu Pulma has noted, *doubling* of the number of *Zigenare* found by the 1895 Gypsy survey (1551) in comparison with that of the 1863-65 survey (roughly 700) is unlikely to be merely a reflection of improvements in census registering – it also seems to be a strong indication that the Roma were as a rule successful in making ends meet, even through a period punctuated by deep economic crisis.²⁴⁹ So the problem remains: how did the Roma manage?

²⁴⁵ SKS, ROM-SF, Interview 58.

²⁴⁶ E.g. *Folkvännen* (no 8, 23 Feb 1870) which wrote two years after the great famine years, in an article dealing with the Roma, that ‘during wintertimes, they [‘Gypsies’] suffer much want and have difficulties to bear through the hunger and coldness.

²⁴⁷ I have come across only a few indirect references to the disappearance or ‘extinction’ of the Roma in particular regions after the 1867-68 famine winters, and later, of ‘Gypsies starting to appear again’, apparently after a local drop in the number of Roma as a consequence of the famine.

²⁴⁸ *Tampereen Uutiset* no 24, 3 Feb 1900.

²⁴⁹ Beyond this, tax- and parish records, government surveys, and the mere fact that many old Roma lineages still exist today give tangible evidence that at least a significant majority of the Roma could somehow scrape up a living, from one generation to the next.

The question of the Roma's economic survival links directly into their intensive and ambivalent relationship with the sedentary population. In the following, I will thus outline some of the daily risks facing them in late 19th and early 20th century Finland, some of the main coping strategies, and the consequences that these strategies had on the Roma's relationship with the mainstream peasant population.

4.1 Basic challenges: habitation and food

As the 1863-65 and 1895 Gypsy surveys omitted an unknown but certainly significant number of Roma not registered in any parish/municipality, it has been estimated that there were between 1500 and 2000 Roma circulating in the Finnish countryside at the latter half of the 19th century²⁵⁰. Something of the economic scarcity faced by this scattered population is perhaps hinted by the fact that after more than four centuries of habitation in Finland, their population density was extremely low - almost ten times lower per square kilometre than that of Inuit core habitation areas in Grönland and Northmost Canada, for example (c.0,005 as against 0,04²⁵¹). Of course, it can be questioned whether it makes sense to make a separate population density measure on national level covering only a minority group – but nevertheless this already suggests that the economic niches which the Roma were inhabiting could only support strictly limited number of people.

The 1863-65 and 1895 surveys found this tiny population divided into extended family groups dispersed all across the Finnish countryside, with a few larger concentrations in Viipuri, Oulu and Kuopio provinces. Map 1 illustrates their remarkably spread-out geographical division in 1895:

²⁵⁰ Komiteamietintö 3/1900.

²⁵¹ Jochim 1981, 35.

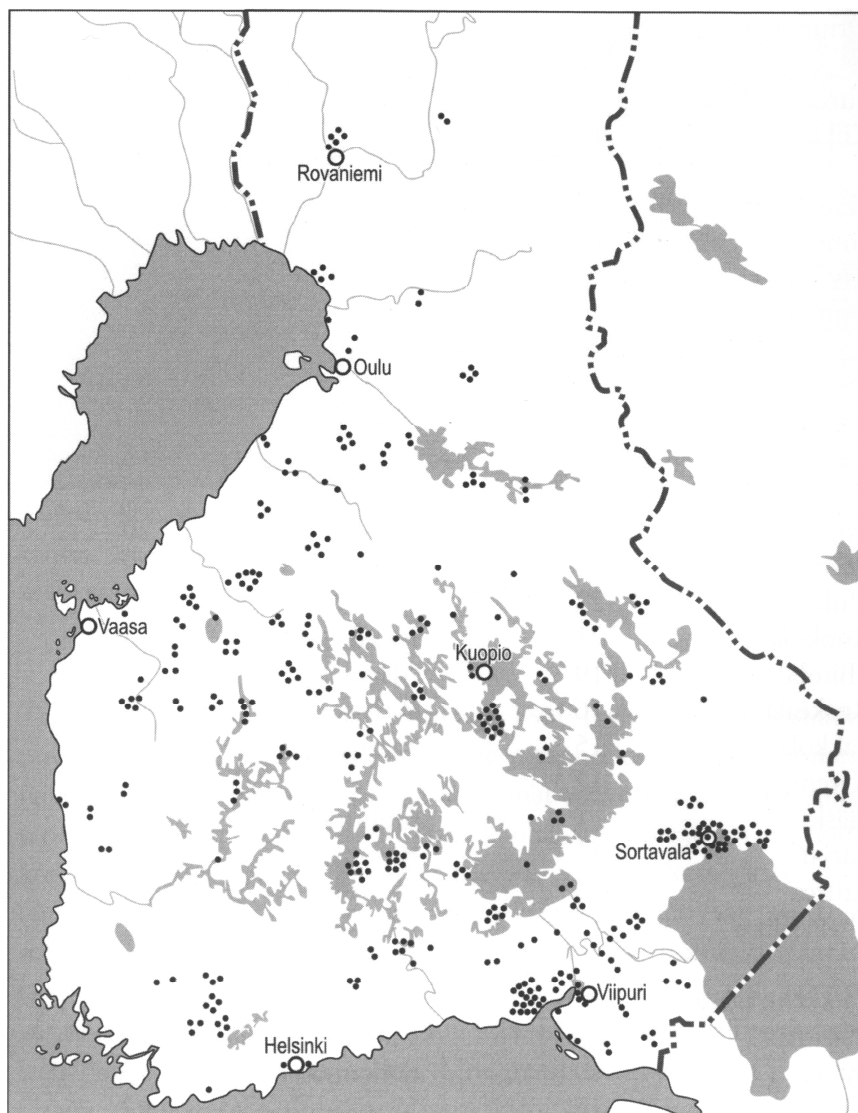


Figure 3. Habitation of the Finnish Roma according to the 1895 survey. Each dot represents 5 persons. Map originally published in Pulma 2006, source: 1900 Gypsy Survey.

Following Arthur Thesleff, several authors have emphasized the avoidance of hostile authorities as a factor explaining the geographical spread of the Roma settlements in Finland. According to this argument, official control was a crucial force in splintering Roma travel parties – assumed to have been much larger in previous centuries – and pushing them to far-out backwoods, out of reach from administrative urban centres and tightly regimented core areas such as the southern provinces of Uusimaa and Varsinais-Suomi.²⁵²

Undoubtedly, avoidance of vagrancy control has been a factor in diminishing the size of the Roma bands travelling together and increasing their geographical spread, as

²⁵² E.g. Pulma 2006, 69, 72; Vehmas 1961, 151-152, 168.

large conspicuous bands or illegitimate settlements of Roma would have drawn attention of the authorities. The positioning of the few settlements in South-western Finland seems to offer an example of the internationally known tendency of many Roma and Traveller groups to live near administrative- or state borders, pointing to the importance of avoiding the authorities in the Romas' habitation patterns. From 1863 to 1895, there was a string of Roma families lined along the woody borderland between the provinces of Häme, Uusimaa and Varsinais-Suomi. If vagrancy control was a threat to the Roma in this area, their geographical positioning would have given a possibility to move quickly from one jurisdiction to another, and to benefit from the lack of cooperation between the bailiffs in different municipalities and the governors of the different provinces. This would assumedly have given the few Roma families in this area (known as glass- and rag-gatherers and later as musicians) some safety from vagrancy control, despite being situated in a triangular space between three of the most important towns in western Finland (Helsinki, Turku and Tampere)²⁵³.

Similarly, the Russian border could have had a protective effect, as long as Finland's attachment to the Russian empire made it highly porous. Until 1917, and still for some years to follow, there were plenty of possibilities to cross it unnoticed, which gave the opportunity to temporarily avoid the authorities on either side (although crossing it without a valid passport occasionally also led to arrests of Roma coming from the Finnish side). Together with the possibilities for cross-border trade, this could partly explain the large concentrations of Roma living in the province of Karelia.²⁵⁴

Also the fact that there were very few individuals recognizable as Roma living in towns in the late 19th century²⁵⁵ would seem to confirm the strong impact of vagrancy control on people labelled as *Zigenare* – most towns adhered a strict policy for much of the 19th century in sending any unwanted wanderers from the countryside immediately back to where they came from.

²⁵³ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51; TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista.

²⁵⁴ Other historical factors which might explain the relatively large Roma settlement in the province of Karelia could include drafted Roma soldiers being posted in the area during the 18th century as part of the border regiments of the Swedish military; dealing horses for the army units; or contacts with groups of Russian Roma, with incoming migration from the east.

²⁵⁵ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51; TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista. Earlier, however, the Roma have apparently had a strong presence in some market towns such as Naantali (Vehmas, 1961). In a preindustrial and pre-urban society, habituating in the countryside instead of the towns could of course be a rational economic choice as much as a forced flight from the authorities.

However, the earlier assumptions of the Roma's isolation seem to have diverted attention²⁵⁶ from the fact that the largest concentrations of Roma were actually situated in some of the most densely populated rural parishes of Eastern Finland and Pohjanmaa province. In 1895, the largest Roma settlements were found in the parishes of Sortavala, Säkkijärvi, Viipuri and Leppävirta, all relatively densely populated, and close to important administrative and commercial centres (Viipuri, Sortavala and Kuopio). Moreover, most Roma regularly visited seasonal fairs in towns, displaying scant fear of the authorities in their open and notoriously rowdy appearances.

In fact, the functioning of the Roma's peripatetic livelihood strategy was dependent precisely on the 'host' population being large and dense enough to support them, even at the face of repeated rejections and regularly unsubstantial economic gains made at individual peasant houses. There were also Roma living in sparsely populated northern and eastern peripheries; but as they also depended on exchange with numerous peasant houses, they had to make geographically much wider rounds than Roma in more populous areas, which inevitably led to more energy being wasted simply on covering distances.

Despite an impact which has in all likelihood been significant, then, vagrancy control was only one factor affecting the Roma's geographical division. This division has to be set against the background of mobile livelihood strategies, which could only support limited numbers in any particular area, and were vulnerable to competition.²⁵⁷ The necessity to limit competition in any particular area also helps to understand the well-documented practice among the Finnish Roma as well as the Nordic Travellers of dividing the economic use of territory between different lineages²⁵⁸.

Whether living in densely populated agricultural heartlands or in isolated backwoods, a basic fact structuring the life of vast majority of the Roma was the lack of housing. Only a fraction of the people identified as *Zigenare* Gypsy surveys owned or rented a homestead. In 1863-5, the parish priests found 45 *Zigenare* heads of

²⁵⁶ With the exception of Pulma, who nevertheless also assumes a connection between the Romanies' supposed avoidance of the provinces of Uusimaa and Varsinais-Suomi, and the effectiveness of the administration in these areas. Pulma 2006, 69, 72.

²⁵⁷ There are other reasons as well to be cautious about a straightforward theory of effective state power automatically pushing the Roma into the peripheries. In areas such as Karelia, the role of the state as an internal pacifier and guarantor of functioning network of roads and bridges benefited the Roma as well; also, as comparative research on peripatetic minorities has shown, the livelihood strategy of such groups is dependent on a relatively firm monopoly of violence held by the state, sheltering them to at least some degree from violence by 'host' populations, who are always more populous. For an argument along these lines, see Rao 1987.

²⁵⁸ E.g. Barth 1955, 130-131 for Norway, Pulma 2006, 72-73, 100, 103-104 for Finland.

households categorized as landowners or tenant farmers, comprising about 9% of the adult population found by the survey. This probably overestimated their proportion, since settled Roma were much more prone to be registered at particular parishes, and thus visible to the authorities, than their more mobile and illegitimate kinsmen²⁵⁹. Moreover, of the former, majority actually used the homestead which they nominally controlled only to achieve a legal status which enabled them to avoid vagrancy arrests, while actually subletting the homestead to a sharecropper and spending most of their time travelling around the countryside. By 1895, this kind of legal façade had become less necessary as the vagrancy statutes no longer obliged the rural population to acquire legal protection through holding land or working for the ones who did. Probably partly as a consequence of this, the number of Roma land-owners and crofters actually fell from 45 to only 16 persons – less than 2 percents – by 1895.²⁶⁰

Besides the landowners and -lenders, both the 1863-5 and 1895 surveys found a handful of Roma farmhands, maids and labourers lodged at peasant houses, as well as a few sedentary artisans. It is probable that also a proportion of the Roma who were not given any specific occupational status were periodically employed and accommodated by the peasants.

Still, the vast majority – at least 80-90% – of the Roma had no permanent access to housing throughout the late 19th – early 20th century. Like the Swedish Travellers, the Finnish Roma did not live in habitable caravan wagons either, and only used tents and camp-sites occasionally during the summertime. For greater part of the year, then, most Roma were completely dependent on accommodation provided by the sedentary rural inhabitants. To make matters worse, the need for accommodation was at its most acute in the winter, when even a single night spent outside could be deadly. However, during this time, most peasant households had already harvested their fields, were living off stockpiles and bought grain, and besides occasional felling of timber had little need for extra manpower. At the time when the Roma needed accommodation the most, the peasants had the least economic incentive to offer it.

In terms of food supply, the Roma's situation was equally difficult. Geographically, Finland and large parts of Sweden lie at the extreme northern periphery

²⁵⁹ On the other hand, the opposite might also be true to some degree – having ‘passed’ successfully to the ranks of settled peasantry, it can be assumed that families of Roma origins could have been bypassed by the parish priests reporting on the *Zigenare* in their parishes.

²⁶⁰ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51; TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista; Pulma 2006, 59, 104.

of the arable land zone in Europe. In both countries, much of agricultural production was in the hands of smallholders and tenant farmers, whose average farm sizes were very small. In Finland, they were further diminished in the 19th century by land divisions as the population was rapidly growing; thus in 1901, farms with less than 5 hectares of arable land made up 50% of the total (271,154); in 1910, the corresponding figure was 64%.²⁶¹ Before the arrival of modern farming methods, chemical fertilizers etc., food surpluses produced in individual homesteads tended to be minimal, and even on a good year, large segments of the rural population could live close to the lowest subsistence level. The 1867-68 hunger years served as a grim illustration of the vulnerability of Finnish agriculture; particularly in the East-Finnish areas of slash-and-burn cultivation, it was far from self-evident that the peasant population could even always feed itself. In fact, Finland was throughout latter part of the 19th century not self-sufficient in grain, and imported wheat was widely bought even by the peasants at the countryside.²⁶²

All in all, turn-of-the-century Finland could be described as a ‘developing country’ with a knife-edge economy, high population growth and a chronic scarcity of surplus resources. In regards to the Roma – overwhelmingly non-propertied and outside direct agricultural production – one would thus expect great difficulties simply in accessing enough food to survive. Of course, the Roma, like other landless people, had some possibilities to augment their diet independently through hunting, fishing, picking wild berries and mushrooms, breeding pigs etc. But while there are indications that such activities did take place, particularly during the summertime²⁶³, their scale was clearly so modest that it could offer only a slight relief from the ever-pressing dependency on the primary producers of food – the peasants.

In terms of food supply and housing, then, vast majority of the Roma were heavily tied to the landed population of the countryside, sharing in this respect the situation of the growing landless population. As to the puzzle of how the Roma dealt with this situation, three interrelated features stand out relatively clearly from various oral-, reminiscence- and archival materials:

²⁶¹ Statistics Finland III.

²⁶² Soikkanen 1991, 14.

²⁶³ E.g. Vehmas 1961, 114, KM., keruuarkisto 1971 A 17:1-17 Kiertavat mustalaiset (henceforth, KM, A17),

- 1) Combining various forms of long- and short-distance, cyclical and linear geographical mobility to locate and access surplus resources
- 2) Involving extended families as a whole in what Fontaine and Schlumbohm have described as the ‘makeshift economy’²⁶⁴, combining a wide variety of low-capital economic activities, differentiated according to age and gender, flexibly adjusted to seasonal changes and to shifting economic possibilities

Together, the two first features resemble what has been called the peripatetic niche. Besides this, however, one more feature was crucially important to the functionality of this mode of livelihood:

- 3) Creating and maintaining local trust and networks of ‘friendly houses’ through long-term exchange with a limited number of clients/hosts along regular routes, and by following different logic of interaction with the non-Roma according to social and physical proximity.

²⁶⁴ Fontaine & Schlumbohm 2000.

4.2 Economic activities

Table 2 illustrates main occupational categories found by the 1863-65 and 1895 Gypsy surveys, presented here in a somewhat simplified form:

Table 3: Occupational titles in the 1863-65 and 1895 surveys

| Occupation | 1863 | 1895 |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|
| Horse-trader | 7 | 95 |
| Trader | - | 2 |
| horse-shoer | 14 | - |
| Gelder | 13 | 70 |
| Ex-soldier, conscript | 1 | 1 |
| Whipper | 15 | 4 |
| Artisan | 10 | 23 |
| Fortune-teller | 0 | 1 |
| Healer | 2 | 1 |
| Cleaner | | 1 |
| Musician | | 2 |
| House-owner | 10 | 14 |
| Tenant farmer | 35 | 2 |
| Farmhand/maid | 20 | 9 |
| Labourer | 16 | 47 |
| Fisher | 1 | 1 |
| Rag-gatherer | 1 | |
| Glass-gatherer/dealer | 1 | |
| Print-worker | | 1 |
| Builder | | 1 |
| Student | 3 | 1 |
| Total | 149 | 274 |

Sources: KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51; TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista; Pulma 2006, 70.

In many ways, it is obvious that table 2 is not very informative; they are not differentiated according to gender, and, above all, leave the ‘occupation’ of most of the Roma unspecified. The basic reason for this was the authorities’ inability (or unwillingness) to make sense of the Roma’s complex livelihood strategies. Mobile Roma were often not easily categorizable as having any single employment; consequently, beyond the ethnonym *Zigenare*, and vague and disapproving references

to ‘itinerant life’ and ‘idleness’, majority of the adult Roma were in official records not given any occupational titles.

Even the 1863-65 and 1895 surveys which were carried out with the explicit intention of gaining information about the Roma’s social standing could only specify occupation for a clear minority of the adults. Table 3 indicates the numbers of those whose occupation was specified in the two surveys as opposed to those simply marked down as ‘itinerants’, or left completely unspecified. The former are further divided into those with occupations which could be considered as ‘legitimate’ by the authorities (agricultural occupations, sedentary artisans, municipal whippers, -gelders and -horse-shoers), those whose status was more or less accepted (specialized artisans, ex-soldiers, non-institutionalized gelders, horse-shoers, etc.), and those who were generally dismissed as having an illegitimate ‘gypsy’ occupation (horse-dealers, fortune-tellers, healers, travelling gelders etc.):

Table 4: Occupational status of adults in the 1863-5 and 1895 surveys.

| | 1863 | | 1895 | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| | n | % | n | % |
| Occupation specified | 149 | 30,7 | 274 | 26,7 |
| ‘Legitimate’ occupations | 147 | 31,9 | 163 | 15,9 |
| Of which: | | | | |
| Formally ‘legitimate’ | 86 | 18,7 | 92 | 9,0 |
| ‘Accepted’ | 61 | 13,2 | 71 | 6,9 |
| ‘Gypsy’ occupations | 32 | 6,9 | 169 | 16,5 |
| Occupation unspecified | 282 | 61,2 | 693 | 67,6 |
| Total, adults | 486 | 100,0 | 1025 | 100,0 |

Sources: KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51; TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista.

As can be seen, the relative number of those with a specified occupation dropped slightly between 1863 and 1895, from 30,7 to 26,7. Within this category, the official records can be assumed to be most reliable in regards to the ‘legitimate’ occupations. Of course, it is impossible to say to what extent the surveys excluded legitimate farmers, workers and professionals who were ‘assimilated’ to a degree which made them not

conspicuous as *Zigenare* / *mustalainen* any longer. But it is unlikely that there would have been many more ethnically distinctive Roma house-owners, tenant farmers etc., than what the survey data indicates.

In respect to these occupations, there seems to have been a clear historical shift: a relative drop in the number of those with formally legitimate or accepted position, from 31,9% into 15,9% of all adults. In effect, what the surveys seem to point to was a decreasing of occupational diversity, coupled with increasing illegitimacy and ‘ethnification’ of the Roma’s occupational structure. This change, which will be dealt with below, was connected especially to the disappearance of various institutionalized occupations (soldier, whipper, municipal horse-shoer and –gelder), decreasing of land-owning and –renting, and, on the flipside, the rising economic centrality of horse-trading.

Despite problems in the 1863-5 and 1895 survey data, table 2 already points to certain interlinked spheres of economic activities. Most important were trade and services, crafts, agricultural work, and various manual service work. As much as ‘peripatetic’, the Roma’s economic niches could be described as ‘complementary’ or ‘leftover’: basically, majority of the Roma were self-employed in activities in which there was little competition from the rest of the population, either because they required constant mobility and a degree of specialization (e.g. horse-trade, horse-shoeing, lace making), or because they were regarded as socially stigmatizing by the majority (e.g. castrating and skinning horses, whipping prisoners etc.). Already the occurrence of the latter points to a certain social stigma attached to the Roma in the rural society. But despite the low status of some of the Roma’s economic activities, they also had a steady demand which made the Roma economically functional for sedentary rural communities.

Besides the fact that holding land or a house was rare, possessing a homestead did often not necessarily mean giving up mobility and mixed economy either, as already mentioned. In mid-Finnish Leppävirta parish, for example, one Roma lineage owned- and another rented a homestead between 1863 and 1895, but their members were still regularly on the move, with the men shoeing and castrating horses, doing veterinarian work and trading horses, while the women weaved, knitted, made lace and worked for peasant houses²⁶⁵. One of the men acted as a *risare*, whipping prisoners after the bi-

²⁶⁵ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Leppävirta; TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista, Leppävirta.

annual district court sessions, and there were also two women written down as *fattigrota*, customers of the municipality's poor relief. There were still other ways of finding an income: in 1867, district court of Leppävirta imposed minor fines on Hedvig C., the 'matriarch' of the house-owning E. family, for reading the palms of a local peasant woman against compensation.²⁶⁶

The complex and fluctuating nature of this kind of mobile makeshift economy (actually characteristic of the family survival strategies in much of preindustrial and developing economies²⁶⁷) intrigued contemporaries and arose suspicions. In 1876, a correspondent of *Östra Finland* reported asking from a Roma man, upon his return from travels

[...] what have you been doing all this time with your family; to which he answered bluntly: making a living. To the question of what it was he made his living with, he gave an ambiguous answer, while assuring that he never stole or murdered.²⁶⁸

Like *Östra Finland*'s correspondent, also some later researchers have had difficulties in grasping what the Roma's 'making of living' actually meant. One problem have been the ethnocentric (or pay-labour derived) notions of *an* 'occupation' or of *a* 'work'. The default assumption implicit in the use of these terms has been that of atomistic individuals, practicing one main occupation at a time. As will be seen, this fits ill to the factual economic strategies practiced by most Roma –and Swedish Traveller–families during the research period. To have a more flexible framework, I will thus in the following speak specifically of *economic activities*, not of occupations or work. 'Economic activity' can basically refer to any action through which individual actors, families, kin groups etc. gain access to resources which they see as necessary, useful or meaningful; it can thus include activities such as begging or fortune-telling which fall out of the conventional definitions of 'work'. In this, I am also following research on survival strategies, which has similarly found occupational categories insufficient in understanding the complex ways in which people have actually made up their living in societies not pervaded by contractual labour relations.²⁶⁹

In various sources varying from reminiscences and oral histories of Roma and non-Roma alike, official records, newspaper reports and so on, it is clear that the

²⁶⁶ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Kuopion lääni, §20/1867.

²⁶⁷ Fontaine & Schlumbohm 2000.

²⁶⁸ *Östra Finland* no 67, 12 Jun 1876.

²⁶⁹ E.g. Fontaine & Schlumbohm 2000, Saaritsa 2008.

Roma's economic activities were, besides diversified, also highly gendered and patterned in certain recurring combinations. Economic activities were strictly divided between women and men – as was the norm also in the surrounding peasant society.²⁷⁰ Within this gendered division, certain activities usually appeared in conjunction with a limited number of others. Accordingly, I deal with the economic activities in the following as kinds of gendered clusters. This should not be read as implying homogeneity or rigidity; on the contrary, a central characteristic in the Roma's individual- and family livelihood strategies seems to have been flexibility in the face of shifting possibilities and external conditions. Also, the 'clusters' presented below should not be understood as independent blocks: rather, they were interconnected parts of a wider socio-economic system, with its own internal logic and synergies, which was tightly bound to the structures of the surrounding rural society.

Female economic sphere: 'walking' and 'asking'

Overwhelmingly, direct acquisition of food and other daily necessities was the responsibility of the Roma women. While the men's economic activities were often money-based and bound up with horses in one way or the other, the women were constantly doing rounds in rural houses, trying to access the peasants' surplus products through exchange, services and begging, rarely using any money. Diverse descriptions point to a limited set of activities connected to food acquisition. Most common was the bartering of self-woven lace- or knitted fabrics in combination with various forms of begging (dubbed by the Roma as *'pyytäminen'*, literally, 'asking'). For example, the 'Gypsette' (*Ziguenarinnan*) Fredrika was written in 1864 down in the Western Finnish parish of Lavia as an inmate (*inhysninge*) of a peasant house. Whether this meant anything else than a status formal legibility is a matter of guesswork; in any case, she was told by the parish priest to be in her fifties, calm, chaste and with 'limited understanding', maintaining herself through spinning, weaving and begging.²⁷¹

Besides lace and fabrics, a few other handicrafts were exchanged for food and clothes. There are also casual references to activities such as healing, skinning, washing laundry and doing various household works. Besides this, there was 'entertainment':

²⁷⁰ E.g. Peltonen 1992, 209-211; Peltonen 1999, 33-50; Östman 2004, 59-74.

²⁷¹ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Lavia.

most importantly, fortune-telling, which was more a money-earning- than food-acquiring activity; but also the telling of news, stories, rumours and jokes, as well as singing. The Roma could have an established middle-man position in the passing of local information, particularly between members of sedentary family-lineages which had spread into different parts of a particular region.²⁷² But also world-news was passed, sometimes through the ‘media’ of singing, as remembered by Mid-Finnish bricklayer, born in 1899:

Gypsy-Ida, wife of Oskari, was a good singer. I remember well when in 1912 Titanic sank and there was a hymn written about it, and so when Gypsy-Iita sang it [...], it stayed in my mind and I doubt I will ever forget it [...]²⁷³

Together, the various activities related to the acquisition of food and other essentials were commonly referred to by the Roma women simply as ‘walking’ (*kävellä*). The wording is easy enough to understand, as exchanging and begging of food was done mainly on foot in each village, usually after the Roma band had first arrived there with a horse-cart and had been promised a place to sleep in one of the houses. Such a pattern was described for example by a former colonel from eastern Finland (Tuusniemi), born in 1905:

The horses were taken via the county roads by a smaller group, while majority of the band walked the [village] path. It was not straightforward wandering for they called by each house near their route. [...] they spread into small groups of about 3-4 persons, covering thus a multitude of houses and joining up again in specific lodging houses [...] The women carried with them a packed lunch wrapped in scarf, lace, weaving equipment and decks of cards for fortune-telling.²⁷⁴

‘Walking’ was not only gendered in the sense of being mainly the responsibility of the Roma women (often accompanied with their children); it was also overwhelmingly directed towards non-Roma women, who were usually also the prime responsables for food economy in their respective households. ‘Walking’, then, was at its core based on women-to-women exchange networks. Whether the flow of goods, favours and services in this exchange was balanced or not, it normally enabled the Roma women to sustain themselves and their families while resorting primarily to

²⁷² KM, A17, 546 (M1907).

²⁷³ KM, A17, 165 (M1899).

²⁷⁴ KM, A17, 606 (M1905).

‘human capital’ – social, verbal and musical skills, craftsmanship - rather than to money, unimportant physical labour, or mere begging.

Lace-trading, the most commonly mentioned activity in regards to the Roma women’s food acquisition besides begging, is a case in point. Weaving lace did not require much initial capital, as threads were relatively inexpensive, but was highly labour- and skill-intensive, and demanded constant mobility to facilitate trade with the rural houses. Once in the houses, lace was exchanged for food, clothes and sometimes money. For their part, the sedentary women of various social standings clearly valued well-made lace, commonly using it to adorn dresses, sheets, tablecloths, curtains, underwear etc.²⁷⁵

For the Roma the importance of lace was, beyond its direct exchange value, in serving as an ‘ice-breaker’ in establishing a familial relationship with the peasant women, which could subsequently work as a basis for other kind of exchange, including begging and asking for accommodation. Lace was sometimes also given to the daughters of the houses as a present, forming future clientele and establishing a connection with the household.²⁷⁶ In the more professionally artisan end of the scale, there were Roma women like ‘Pösö-Kaisa’ (nicknamed because of thick curly hair), who was at the beginning of 20th century taken into peasant houses in the Western Finnish parish of Lappajärvi for months at a time, during which she did handicrafts for the household which accommodated her. After a while, she was then transported into the next house-, and gradually the next village, returning perhaps half a year later.²⁷⁷

Like lace-trading, fortune-telling had a double function in the Roma women’s exchange with the sedentary population. As said, it was first and foremost a way of earning money and presents (rings, scarves, clothes, ‘objects of affection’) by resorting purely to human skills – while also turning the majority populations’ stereotypes and curiosity into an economic asset. At the same time, the practice of fortune-telling formed a personal social channel through which the Roma women could connect to their sedentary customer’s lives. Whether done by cards or by palm-reading, fortune-telling typically concerned highly intimate and emotionally charged life-situations of the Roma’s sedentary customers: the marital future of unmarried maids and farm-hands,

²⁷⁵ Eg. KM, A17, 627 (F1897)

²⁷⁶ KM, A17, 733 (F1884).

²⁷⁷ KM, A17, 292 (M1911).

childbearing of the houses mistress, good or ill health, etc (“*marriage, happiness and joys, or enemies, hate and sorrow*”²⁷⁸).

The success of the Roma women in reading the everyday-life situations, psychology and desires of their customers is visible in reminiscences of ‘correct’ predictions, particularly concerning childbearing. In such cases, the fortune-teller was often implied to have not simply ‘foreseen’ the future, but also having had a beneficial effect, ‘good luck’, on the course of events.²⁷⁹ An intimate relationship tinged with magical beliefs could thus be established between fortune-tellers and their customers, facilitating also purely material exchanges and assistance.

Belief in effectual yet conditional magic can be seen in descriptions of unmarried maids giving as much money or presents to fortune-telling Roma women as they could afford, so as to maximally improve their future marriage prospects.²⁸⁰ (Visiting Hungarian Roma band was in 1900 even reported to ‘promise husbands’ against a fixed compensation of ten marks.²⁸¹) However, this kind of cases could invoke strong moral condemnations. A recurring theme in the press throughout the research period were accusations and warnings of hoaxes, typically of cases in which poor maids, farm-hands or widowed crofters gave away valuable belongings – sometimes borrowed from their mistresses or neighbours – to enhance their chances of finding a good spouse. There were also stories of Roma women claiming to bless new houses with good fortune if let to hold the houses’ valuables for some days, and subsequently disappearing with them.²⁸²

Cases such as these were not the only reason why fortune-telling and claims to magical capabilities could turn against the Roma. In the eyes of the sedentary population, fortune-telling was conspicuous because of the way in which it made claims on transgressing and potentially re-shaping everyday life, but also because it was seen by many as unchristian, a-moral and making a mockery out of the efforts to ‘enlighten

²⁷⁸ KM, A17, 40 (M1892).

²⁷⁹ E.g. KM, A17, 714 (M1922); KM, A17, 739 (Male, year of birth unknown).

²⁸⁰ E.g. KM, A17, 44; *Hämäläinen* 67/21 Aug 1886.

²⁸¹ *Uusi Savo* 19 Jun 1900.

²⁸² E.g. *Sanomia Tampereelta* no 25, 18 Jun 1866; *Tampereen Sanomat* no 15, 13 Apr 1869; *Sanomia Turusta* no 44, 4 Jun 1879. How much moralistic exaggeration the newspaper reports carried is impossible to say from the available sources - at least such cases do not appear in the sample of court cases dealt in chapter 6. But it is likely that the popular beliefs in the magical potency of Roma fortune-tellers could indeed be exploited by the latter at times, particularly in large gatherings such as rural festivities and town fairs, in which the customers and the fortune-tellers were usually unknown to each other.

the people', an effort driven at the time by the Fennoman movement and the rising public schooling.

The assumed magical potency of the Roma women was also a source of fear. As anthropological studies on peripatetic groups and 'infamous occupations' have suggested, 'liminal' or 'anomalous' groups seen as transgressing social boundaries have almost universally been associated with magical capabilities in 'traditional' societies.²⁸³ As the livelihood of the rural population was highly vulnerable to what were perceived as instances of 'bad fortune' (crop failures, livestock diseases, fires, etc.), the assumed capability of the Roma, to affect such fortunes could invoke strong fears. Such fears were attached particularly to the Roma women, and could of course be useful for them; they worked as a weapon of the weak²⁸⁴ in the sense that they gave them bargaining power over those who would have been inclined to turn them away or treat them badly, if not for fear of magical retribution, the 'curse of the gypsy'. For example, it was believed in Hartola (region of Savo, mid-Eastern Finland) that "*if you don't give [food] to a gypsy, then the cows might milk blood, hurt their leg, or die in dysentery*"²⁸⁵; whereas Suomen Wirallinen Lehti claimed that gypsy women, if denied help, would "*bend their finger and curse the housewife's flax [a crop used to weave linen] to be as crooked in the following fall*".²⁸⁶

But taking advantage of the peasantry's fear of harmful magic, particularly in conjunction with begging, could easily backfire. There are recurring indications in the reminiscences and newspaper material that one of the greatest sources of generalized resentment towards the Roma was derived of their alleged willingness to resort to curses and 'bewitching' when they were denied food, housing or other necessities.²⁸⁷

If utilizing popular beliefs in the Roma's magical capabilities was at the same time highly visible and potentially stigmatizing, it was the act of begging which received the most negative attention in connection to the Roma women's food acquisition. Begging was itself a highly contested and politicized issue in 19th – early 20th century Finland, particularly after the great famine of 1867-1868, which had driven tens of thousands on the roads, breaking in many areas traditional bonds of communal

²⁸³ E.g. Blok 2001, 44-68; Douglas 1966; Rao 1987.

²⁸⁴ Scott 1985.

²⁸⁵ '*Jos mustalaeselle ei annah, ninni lehemät vissiinki kesällä lyps verta, loukkas jalakaa, taeh kuol punatautii.*' KM, A17, 725 (F1910).

²⁸⁶ Suomen Wirallinen Lehti no 144, 4 Dec 1875.

²⁸⁷ E.g. Suometar no 42, 19 Oct 1855; Tampereen Sanomat no 35, 28 Aug 1866; KM, A17, 366 (F1912); 549 (F1911); 622 (F1899); etc.

solidarity between the rural poor and the wealthier peasantry.²⁸⁸ Complaints of begging were a focal point in the debates on ‘Gypsy question’ throughout the research period. A lament by a local correspondent of *Suometar* in 1855 was typical in its portrayal of begging of the Roma as economically burdensome non-work, which gave its practitioners unearned prosperity (while also referring to cursing as a way of exerting pressure on potential benefactors):

When others have to try to survive through sweat, worries and work, they [the gypsies] live through pestering (asking), by doing rounds to every house and through trading horses. [...] Gypsy women stick, like burrs, into the mistressess of the houses, “drawing, frying” [begging], and if they get one thing, then they already ask for the next one. There are blessings, the consoling lullabies; but quickly a curse, when they are not pleased. That is how shameless they are.

Their ways also seem to work well for them: many peasants, who toil diligently throughout their lifetime, so that they end up into grave as cripples, do not possess the wealth that they [gypsies] do.²⁸⁹

While the value of complaints such as this as evidence on the social phenomenon of begging itself seems often limited, also other types of sources, including oral testimonies of the Roma themselves, in any case attest to the centrality of begging in the livelihood strategies of most itinerant Roma up until the post-World War II period.

In various descriptions, the begging of the Roma was exclusively a female activity, with the exception of men asking for fodder for the horses. It was aimed overwhelmingly for getting food, while clothes and other necessities could also be asked for. There are descriptions of Roma begging for money only in urban settings, in which the commodity-based bartering predominant in the countryside was usually secondary to money-based transactions. For example, in the town of Sortavala, Eastern province of Viipuri,

begging was done through pleading on behalf of the children: “please give some money, so that I can buy some milk for the child.” –This did indeed appeal to the people’s minds, and sure enough there was always a dime to give, for in fact we are all God’s children.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Häkkinen 1991.

²⁸⁹ *Suometar* no 42, 19 Oct 1855.

²⁹⁰ KM, A17, 622 (F1899).

Besides asking for money and the religious motivation cited for giving it, the quotation brings out the important role which the children had in ‘asking’. As the children were commonly seen as more ‘deserving’ and legitimate recipients of help than adults (particularly able-bodied ones), pleading was often done either by- or on the behalf of- the children. This was not in any way peculiar to the Roma: the rural poor commonly sought to minimize the element of humiliation and mutual embarrassment involved in their frequent resorting for neighbourly help by sending their children to ask for food, firewood etc.²⁹¹

For the Roma, there are indications in later oral sources that begging was felt as a more or less natural and ‘honest’ part of providing livelihood. This was reflected in the term ‘asking’ (‘pyytäminen’), which did not have the same moralistic and humiliating connotations as ‘begging’ (‘kerjuu’). Implicitly, the same can be inferred from the fact that in the discourses concerning the Roma’s begging, the theme of physical handicaps is almost completely missing. The ‘globally widespread customs according to which the presentation of a physical handicap or deformity by a beggar confers entitlement’²⁹² had seemingly little relevance in the case of the itinerant Roma. Mostly, they seem to have taken dependency on at least occasional one-directional transfers from the peasants as a matter of fact which did not necessitate emphasizing (or faking) of physical ailments. On the contrary, there were a number of foundational myths, often with references to biblical imagery, which clearly had an effect of legitimizing and naturalizing the frequent need to resort to informal assistance. For example, there were recurring references to a ‘*mark of Cain*’, a curse of God carried by the Roma which forced them to move around, hindering them from stopping anywhere or engaging in permanent agriculture. This could be used to legitimize itinerant – and as is suggested in the reminiscence below, also non-reciprocal – livelihood strategy:

That they [the Roma] also begged from whites [*valkolaisilta*] who could be very poor, living through unskilled labour, made a very negative impression on these poor people. They asked [from the Roma]: why don’t you work and get your livelihood like everyone else. The answer was: the mark of Cain keeps us itinerant.²⁹³

Many Roma seem to have considered ‘asking’ as not only unavoidable but also as natural, even God-sanctioned activity. Psychologically, this can be thought of as an

²⁹¹ Virkkunen 2010.

²⁹² Saaritsa 2008, 276, footnote 802.

²⁹³ KM, A17, 554 (M1906).

understandable naturalization of a recurring state of economic dependency. As Gia Virkkunen has noted, the commonness of receiving formal or informal assistance in rural communities did normally not absolve the recipient from an element of humiliation;²⁹⁴ assuming a ‘proud’ attitude could thus be the only way to maintain personal dignity if the necessity to resort to such help was a constant fact of life. Nevertheless, perception of not being humble enough in the act of begging was also regularly cited as a basis for moral disapproval against them, both in contemporary press and later reminiscences²⁹⁵ - a theme which also recurred in relation to the Swedish Travellers, as we will see.

Begging in itself was a common practice in the countryside and not automatically seen as a stigmatizing by the sedentary population. Attitudes towards begging varied according to gender, class, religious beliefs, region – and simply personalities. Most common attitude seems to have been a mix of annoyance and understanding. In later oral histories, some of the Roma emphasize the greater solidarity and understanding of those who were themselves closer to poverty.²⁹⁶ An element of solidarity amongst- or at least towards the poor, regardless of ethnicity, is in fact visible, at least in the non-Roma’s posthumous rationalizations for giving food. The poverty of the Roma could be presented as understandable, since *”at that time [...] there were no social benefits, and the population was generally poor”*²⁹⁷. There were also experiences of shared hardships; for example, a non-Roma female informant had lived as a lodger [*loinen*, literally ‘parasite’] in a peasant house together with a Roma family, becoming friends with the latter.²⁹⁸ The structurally dependent relation of the Roma towards the landholders was shared by a large share of the landless population; from this background, it is understandable that this was accepted as a normal state of affairs in numerous reminiscences, as it was recognized that many Roma had *“no other possibility than to earn their living through begging.”*²⁹⁹

Yet, no simple class pattern emerges in terms of the background of those giving food to Roma, and begging from poor working-class people also awoke negative sentiments, as already seen. Moreover, what might appear as expressions of ‘solidarity’ could also contain a strong element of fear of supernatural ‘bad luck’ or ‘misfortunes’

²⁹⁴ Virkkunen 2010.

²⁹⁵ E.g. KM, A17, 96 (M1891); 549 (F1911).

²⁹⁶ Tervonen 2004.

²⁹⁷ KM, A17, 522 (M1902).

²⁹⁸ KM, A17, 155 (F1907).

²⁹⁹ KM, A17, 558 (M1894).

hitting those acting brashly towards the Roma, as in the reasons given by a woman, born in 1899, for giving food to the Roma:

People had a certain feeling, that if you are harsh towards those worse off than yourself, then it will hit you back in one way or the other – that one gets to experience the same ‘harshness of the world’.³⁰⁰

Whatever the motivations in each case, there are numerous indications in various sources that more or less direct begging could work surprisingly well for the Roma. Particularly in harvesting times, the Roma women could be very successful in acquiring foodstuffs, as is brought out in the description given by an East-Finnish woman born in 1896:

As they went in the autumn from village to village [begging], visiting those with drying barns [*riihelliset*], of course it [harvested wheat] accumulated. This work was not done by men, but by the pestering womenfolks. Every now and then they emptied their bags on carts. [Another] begging time was the cattle letting time, when they went to the mistresses, getting buttered salties, wool, soap, pieces of cloth.³⁰¹

Why, then, was food given, also in cases in which there appears to be little compensation from the side of the Roma? Some of the immediate motives touched upon above – religion-motivated goodwill, solidarity, fear of curses or bad luck and simple annoyance with repetitive asking undoubtedly played a role. There were also others, such as concern for the local reputation of the house (the Roma were sometimes suspected of badmouthing houses which did not give them anything).

However, it seems evident that the key element in ‘successful’ begging was familiarity, established relations and trust with the benefactors. In this respect, the double role of other economic activities in ‘walking’ becomes apparent: they were parts of a wider strategy in which what mattered most was establishing and maintaining familial and trustful relations, making also entitlement to informal assistance possible. Moreover, ‘walking’ in familiar houses was also regularly complemented with various household work. When the strategy worked, when there was an element of reciprocity and the Roma were perceived as local, ‘honest poor’, ‘asking’ could be matched by ‘giving’, and the stigma of begging be neutralized to a degree. When the Roma were known and trusted, skills in convincing their benefactors to help them could be not just

³⁰⁰ KM, A17, 622 (F1899).

³⁰¹ KM, A17, 725 (F1896).

accepted but even admired; for example, Roosa, wife of a locally renowned Roma musician in Kiikala, was renowned for being ‘good in begging’. Together, the members of the Roosa’s lineage were

[...] considered to be the gypsies of Kiikala. And yes, they were given 1-2 breads. [...] I never heard any badmouthing of these old Kiikala gypsies. And people always tried to give [something] to them, at least my mother did.³⁰²

In the citation, being entitled to assistance is presented as a natural outcome of good reputation (‘...never heard any badmouthing’) and established local position (‘gypsies of Kiikala’). But of course, not all ‘local’ Roma were treated similarly either. Besides familiarity and trust, the capacity for reciprocity in some form – economic usefulness or other ‘surplus value’ – made a crucial difference to the relation. Paradoxically, it seems that ‘asking’ worked the best for those who had the least immediate urgency in it – those able to compensate food with tradable goods and services, if not on the short, then on the long term. Roosa’s background, for example, is illustrative of the conditions in which frequent informal assistance to the Roma became possible. Roosa’s husband, together with the latter’s brother, were renowned musicians, who owned their own house in Kiikala; their daughters were also popular as dancers and musicians, their son an artisan making tinpans.

Aside from locally established lineages such as this, best reception was often given for the likes of above-mentioned Pösö-Kaisa, who were either alone and working or elderly couples, preferably expressing humbleness whether they were given food or not. Such Roma were not felt as threatening or as economically burdensome, and were preferred to groups with many children and adolescents. In Ii, Northern Finland, for example, an old couple, travelling with a horse and cart,

begged and brought to the housefolks greetings from their relatives [...]. Everyone was genuinely sorry when Heta and Oskari [died and] left the ranks of beggars, for they knew how to beg in the right way. [...] They understood that there is not always the possibility to give something, even when there is the desire to do so, and always wished good health to the housefolks as they left for the next house. Other gypsies were sometimes angry that only Heta and Oskari were given [food], when they themselves were left without.³⁰³

³⁰² KM, A17, 259 (F1899).

³⁰³ KM, A17, 193 (M1922).

Besides this kind of differences in the 'popularity' of certain Roma 'bunches', there were also clear class differences within the Roma population in terms of wealth. Having to resort constantly to direct uncompensated begging could tarnish the reputation of even well-known local families - and in any case, meant a lean diet. Wealthier Roma bands which were nevertheless itinerant were told to have bought what they needed, eating better than others and often sleeping their nights at inns when on market trips.³⁰⁴

In the outside perceptions of the Roma's food strategies, signs of wealth differences were however overshadowed by the strict gender divide between women who had to walk around begging, and men who did not. The position of the women in general could appear cruel to outside observers, with the women visibly bearing the heaviest brunt of feeding large families in harsh conditions, with little economic security and sometimes under violent subordination of their husbands. That the everyday experience of the Roma indeed was deeply divided along gender lines is also brought out by the splitting of discourses in later Rom-SF oral history interviews: whereas men's recollections of the 'old times' (usually c.1920-1940s) emphasized freedom and adventurous trading trips, the women's discourses took often a much more critical, even bitter view on the toughness of everyday-life survival.³⁰⁵

But whatever could be said of the power-relations between sexes in the late 19th – early 20th century Finnish Roma culture, in terms of the relations with non-Roma, the gendered division of work had a clear social and economic functionality to it. Roma men asking routinely for food from non-Roma women – who were often alone in the houses while the men were out in field- or forestry work – would certainly have been interpreted by the non-Roma as threatening or even sexually intimidating, and would have been a constant source of potential conflicts. And whatever protests close interaction between Roma women and non-Roma men would have provoked from the side of the Roma men, active role of the Roma women in reaching to the non-Roma men, outside limited areas such as fortune-telling, would also have transgressed the relatively rigid gender boundaries of the Finnish rural society. Delimiting most intimate forms of exchange with the houses largely into female-to-female exchange thus directly meant delimiting potential tensions with the non-Roma population.

³⁰⁴ KM, A17, 817 (F1905).

³⁰⁵ Tervonen 2003a, 51-52.

In the end, a plurality of sources make it clear that it was the seemingly insignificant activities of ‘walking’ and ‘asking’ which provided the backbone of the Roma’s everyday survival. However, this required constant labouring from the Roma women, fitting ill with commonplace accusations of ‘laziness’. A mistress of a peasant house, born in 1910, gives an emphatic view on this:

These women had no time to be idle. First there was the begging of food, carrying the children in their hemline all day long, cooking of food, washing children and doing laundry. If there was even a short moment to sit down, they immediately took up the weaving hooks.³⁰⁶

To emphasize the role of the women in the everyday survival of the Roma is not to downplay the importance of the men’s role in family economies, which provided a necessary logistic and material basis for the mobile makeshift economy. This is the subject of the following section.

Men and horses

From 19th century Gypsy songs to oral histories and other reminiscences³⁰⁷, it is clear that the horses were a centrepiece of the itinerant Roma’s mental and physical world. Horse-ownership was a source of masculine honour and prestige, compensating for the frequent lack of house and land. Horses were also ‘the field of the Gypsy’, having crucial and multiple roles in the Roma’s economic strategies. Firstly, and most obviously, it was horses which made the Roma families mobile, enabling them to include hundreds of farms and numerous market towns within their sphere of economic activities. The ‘bread’ (livelihood) of the Roma might have been proverbially ‘spread across the world in such small pieces’³⁰⁸, but with a horse and a cart, they were able to reach out to a multitude of such pieces.

Secondly, constant demand for horses and their high market value, which at the same time was difficult to estimate accurately, made them ideal objects of trade, and expertise on horses an important commercial asset. As the flood of cheap exported grain forced Finnish farmers to increase their productivity during the late 19th century, the

³⁰⁶ KM, A17, 725 (F1910).

³⁰⁷ E.g. Tervonen 2003a, 58-59.

³⁰⁸ The citation is from a traditional song “*Juokse sinä humma*”, made famous by Tapio Rautavaara in 1950s.

demand and significance of the horses was actually significantly growing. Despite the slow arrival of motorized transport, trains and tractors, the number of horses almost doubled between 1880 and 1925, going from 240 000 to 400 000.³⁰⁹

Thirdly, the peasants' ability to take advantages of their horses in agriculture and transportation was dependent on various maintenance activities (horse-shoing, gelding, healing deceases etc.) and accessories (harnesses, saddles, bridles etc.), which offered the Roma further possibilities for specialized services and trade. And even after the horse was dead, there remained the socially stigmatizing but economically useful activity of skinning it.

These factors, together with the gradual disappearance of the institutionalized positions of soldier and whipper (more of this in the following section) meant that the Roma men's economic strategies were in the late 19th century increasingly entwined around horses. From making a mere 6,7% of the listed Roma 'occupations' in 1865, horse-trading went up to 31,0% by 1895. A similar although somewhat less radical development took place with the other principal horse-related activity, gelding, which went up from 12,2 to 30,2% of the Roma's listed occupations by 1895.

The crucial value of the horses both for the Roma and for the peasants – for whom the horse was regularly the single most valuable means of production in the household – meant that economic activities connected to horses were one of the key interfaces in the relations between the Roma and non-Roma men.

However, external sources point to serious frictions and hostility towards the Roma in this respect. As with begging compared to more reciprocal forms of food acquisition, perception of 'swindling' tended to divert attention from all other forms of gaining profit from horse-trading. In contemporary debates in the press and in the Diet, as well as in posthumous reminiscences, horse-trading of the Roma men was often straightforwardly equated with 'cheating the countryfolks'. Insinuations, accusations and reports of horse-thefts were also a commonplace, and suspicions in cases of thefts were routinely directed towards the Roma. In typical insinuation, *Hämäläinen* wrote in 1872 that

Thievery has been heard to be practiced in our town [Hämeenlinna] and nearby[:]
particularly, there has been a high incidence of horse-thefts; but so it has also been said
that plenty of gypsies have been moving about. [...] ³¹⁰

³⁰⁹ Östman 2004, 25; SVT II & III. Cf. Lucassen 1998c, 159-161.

³¹⁰ *Hämäläinen* no 43, 24 Oct 1872.

Newspaper writing on the Roma, increasing both in its quantity and in its focus on crime during the late 19th century (chapter 2.1) was itself probably a factor in fixing the outsider view on the stereotypical image of the Roma as horse swindlers and –thiefs. This image was accepted and reproduced by contemporary ‘gypsologists’ such as Arthur Thesleff and Oskari Jalkio (Johansson), and found itself into committee reports as well as the accounts of later researchers such as Vehmas and Nygård.³¹¹

Yet, a wider array of historical voices (including here also the Rom-SF interviews, although these describe mainly the period from late 1920 onwards) points to a diversity of ways in gaining economic profits in horse-trade, many of these by default benefiting also the customers of the Roma. One of the most important was to buy weakened horses from the peasants after harvesting time, when the houses’ need for horses lowered; then feeding and tending for the horses and selling them again to the peasant households in the springtime, as the demand for ‘horsepower’ returned³¹². Another way was to buy horses in agricultural heartlands and sell them in peripheries with lesser stocks. Horses were bought, for example, from the North-Western coastal market towns in the province of Pohjanmaa, taken north and sold in Lapland, a northern hinterland where both the quantity of available horses and the local knowledge on them was limited.³¹³ Cross-border trade could follow more or less similar logic, and also the same routes. Roma living close to border zones (in Northern Pohjanmaa or in Karelia, where the Roma populations were particularly large) bought horses on either side of the border and sold them either in Finland, Sweden or Russia, depending on demand and prices.³¹⁴

But despite constant trading and undoubtable expertise³¹⁵, horse-trading seems for a vast majority of Roma have been a peculiarly non-accumulative business in terms of the profits and the scale of commerce. Popular memories of both Roma and non-Roma refer almost exclusively to horse-*swapping*, i.e., one-to one exchanges of individual horses, often accompanied by small cash compensations for the party assumably giving away better horse. For the Roma, exchanges concerned mostly the

³¹¹ Nygård 1998, Thesleff 1911, Vehmas 1961.

³¹² Tervonen 2003a, 58-60.

³¹³ E.g. *Raahen Lehti* 79, 10 Oct 1900.

³¹⁴ It can be further assumed that the presence of Swedish and Russian armies in border zones such as Karelia have earlier offered opportunities for large-scale horse-trading.

³¹⁵ There are many descriptions in the Rom-SF material of the centrality of ‘natural’ passing of horse-related knowledge in the upbringing of Roma, particularly of boys, from very young age. Tervonen 2003a, 60.

same horse on which their family currently moved around with, and on which their mobile economic activities were dependent on. There were some exceptions to this: most notably, a few wealthy ‘Gypsy Kings’ were able to build famed wealth through extensive horse trading on both sides of the Swedish and Russian borders. More modest but still succesful horse-dealers could also move around with one- or two extra horses, which could be sold rather than swapped.³¹⁶ But for most Roma, horse-trading did not evolve into whole-sale trade or institutionalized family enterprises, which would have brought in significant and steady profits. This was noticed, for example, by the magazine *Eteenpäin*, which reported from the market fairs of Hamina in 1910 that of the two most eager horse-dealers of the fairs, the Russians and the Gypsies, the former bought large quantities of horses and exported them to St. Petersburg, while the latter ‘made a lot of noise, but mostly just swapped horses’.³¹⁷

There are many possible ways to understand the small scale of the Roma’s horse-trading, perhaps pointing to lack of possibilities to invest profits in the absence of residence rights, other interference from the authorities, or possibly even equalitarian social norms hindering the employment of Roma by other Roma, which would have made large-scale trading difficult to organize.³¹⁸ In any case, since the prices of horses could change rapidly, especially with harvest failures, and since the Roma’s livelihood were profoundly dependent on the mobility provided by the horses, one-to-one swapping had the important advantage of guaranteeing that the Roma families had always at least one horse at their disposal. Also, profits *could* be made even with small-scale horse-swapping, and skill in horse-trading (together with a much-talked about element of luck) seems to have been one of the principal sources of wealth differentiation among the Roma. This is attested to in accounts of Roma and non-Roma alike describing ‘rich’ itinerant Roma using money made in horse-trading to buy houses or to compensate food and accommodation.³¹⁹

While ‘swindling’ was not the only logic of the Roma’s horse-trading, it was certainly not uncommon either. (horse-thefts, more serious incidences of ‘negative reciprocity’, will be dealt in more detail in Chapter 6.3.) In ‘swindling’, profit was based on superior knowledge of horses, salesmanship and/or various trics giving one’s horse the appearance of greater exchange value. After closing a deal, the ‘swindler’ then

³¹⁶ E.g. KM, A17, 292 (M1911).

³¹⁷ *Eteenpäin* 1910.

³¹⁸ Grönfors 1981.

³¹⁹ E.g. KM, A17, 292 (M1911).

moved on quickly, ‘so that the master would not cancel the deal in case he got a worse horse’.³²⁰

Opportunism in horse-trade was far from being a monopoly of the Roma, however. It connected to a widespread culture of aggressive bartering, particularly one-to-one exchanges with cash payment for balance. In the reminiscences of the non-Roma, this resembled a kind of a masculine game, semi-institutionalized popular form of gambling, in which one’s wit and expertise were tested against those of the trading partner. It was not uncommon that the deals done in the ‘game’ (which was often accompanied by drinking) later became subjects of prolonged disputes. Nor did this kind of disputes, if they involved Roma, necessarily present these on the accused side. In the winter 1888, for example, *mustalainen* Wilhelm D. from Iitti won his long-standing court case against the freeholding peasant Sylvester Kauppi from Valkeala, who had not paid a promised exchange money of 10,75 Finnish marks after a swapping of horses earlier that spring.³²¹

A central trait missed by the simplistic accounts of the Roma as horse-swindlers, besides diversity in ways of making profits, was the differentiation of trading logic according to *whom* the Roma were dealing with. Social and physical proximity of the customers – which often amounted to the same thing – as well as the place in which trading took place seem to have heavily affected the way in which the Roma traded. This differentiation of trading logic can be read directly in some of the Rom-SF interviews, as in a description below, given by a Karelian Roma man born in 1920. The citation begins with the respondent describing exchanges amongst the Roma:

I(interviewer): Did the Kaale [*Roma*] exchange horses with each other or..?

R(espondent): Yes.

I: Well what about if the, if Kaale exchanged amongst each other, and the other Kaalo got a much worse horse, what happened then?

R: The gypsies told their horses’ faults to each other, it was told beforehand how they are, and so in that way there was no quarrelling about it later on...³²²

³²⁰ KM, A17, 169 (M1869).

³²¹ Kauppi claimed that there was a clause in the deal that the exchange money would not be payable if the horse was older than seven years, and provided a doctor’s certificate to argue that the horse was ten years, whereas Cirtron denied any such clause and countered that the doctor’s certificate could refer to another horse than the one that had been swapped. MMA, Valkealan käräköikeus, syyskäräjät 1888, §210; talvikäräjät 1889, §168.

³²² SKS, ROM-SF, 12.

The respondent then identifies three different logics in the horse-trading with the non-Roma, depending on the closeness of the relationship:

...well for the Kaaje [non-Roma], I used to be like that that when we were out at the local places [*paikkakunnalla*], I did not give faulty horses to familiar places at the locality at all, well, if there was such a small fault that it did not matter, I told about it to the people, and trust in my honesty only improved[.] [A]nd when there was a big fault, I took them [the horses] to unknown places, I took them further, [...] We lived honestly in our own localities... At market fairs, well, we made business there, we were not that honest there, that was the trade just with the whites [*valakolaisten*].³²³

In effect, the pattern described brings into mind Marcel Mauss's classical tripartite model of reciprocity, with 'generalized', 'balanced' and 'negative' reciprocity varying according to the social and physical proximity of the trading partner.³²⁴ This seems to have been more general pattern. Of course, not all Roma were always concerned with keeping exchange balanced when trading horses at 'their' localities, and not all were opportunistic when 'out' either. But there were factors which tended to push the Roma into this direction. Differentiating the logic of trade along such lines served multiple social and economic motives at the same time: the need to co-operate and avoid conflicts with other Roma; the necessity to stay in good terms with familiar and local 'peasants', on whose hospitality and co-operation the Roma's livelihood depended; and the need to make economic profit, while diminishing the social costs of this by restricting opportunism to anonymous marketplaces and to contacts with 'strangers or enemies'.

Differentiation of trading strategy according to the social and physical proximity to the customers helps to solve a puzzle implicit in the texts of Vehmas and Nygård, for example: if the Roma were 'known' to be swindlers, why were horses nevertheless routinely traded with them? It also helps to explain the sharply divided experiences of the non-Roma trading partners. On one hand, majority of the non-Roma's descriptions of horse-exchanges with the Roma are related to second-hand stories or (much less often) to personal experiences of being cheated in one way or the other. These accounts paint a picture in which the Roma appear self-evidently and exclusively as opportunistic and dishonest cheaters. Such bad reputation, worsened by constant hostile press coverage, obviously hindered the Roma's ability to trade horses with previously

³²³ SKS, ROM-SF, 12.

³²⁴ Mauss 1990.

unknown peasants. As a Karelian chief of office, born in 1894, puts it, ‘as there was always the talk of the gypsies cheating and exchanging horses with concealed faults, people were cautious in dealing with them’.³²⁵

On the other hand, there are fundamentally different accounts of well-established Roma-non-Roma relations, of which repeated bartering and exchanging of horses formed a central part. When the Roma and the land-holders and –renters were familiar with each other, horse-trading could be not just beneficial for both, but also a basis for relationship which repeatedly gave the Roma access to short-term accommodation. As described by a peasant land-holder born in 1894:

There were a lot of masters of houses who did horse-trading with them [the Roma]. I too have traded horses many times with them [...], and have also given them a place to sleep when they have asked, up until these days [1971]. They had a habit of always coming to the same houses where they had been earlier let to spend a night.³²⁶

There are numerous accounts in the written reminiscence material making a similar link between repeated accommodation and horse-swapping between the Roma and the farmers. According to female teacher, born in 1884,

[...] each village had at least one house, into which the gypsies were allowed to come as they would have been entering into their own homes[.] [I]n these houses, the masters did horse-trading with them, and it was said that they [the gypsies] did not dare to cheat them either.³²⁷

Another horse-related activity, which was closely linked to getting accommodation was gelding. Gelding, or the castrating of domestic animals, is counted among the stigmatizing ‘impure’ or ‘infamous’ occupations by Anton Blok, and there are signs in research material of Gia Virkkunen and Antti Häkkinen, for example, that castrating animals did carry with it a collective infamy, similar to that attached to horse-skinners, for example.³²⁸ However, in regards to the Roma, there is quite the opposite impression from various sources: gelding seems to have actually been a source of relatively good reputation, often connected to well-established local position.

³²⁵ KM, A17, 748 (M1894)

³²⁶ KM, A17, 558 (M1894).

³²⁷ KM, A17, 733 (F1884).

³²⁸ Häkkinen 2005; Virkkunen 1982.

Considering the nature of the work, this is not hard to understand. Gelding was difficult, even dangerous work, which at the same time had high economic importance for the farmers. Stallions, the most powerful and valuable horses, were aggressive and difficult to ride with if not castrated, so as most horses were meant for work and riding, not breeding, gelding was necessary. However, without modern anesthesia and sterilizers, the job was very difficult and risky both for the gelder and the horse, the latter of whom might end up being permanently ailing, even dying, if the operation was not done skillfully. Also other male domestic animals not meant for breeding were often castrated; this might be physically less demanding for the gelder (unless the animal was an ox!), but had equally big risks for the animal concerned. As trained veterinarians were still very rare, this made skilled gelders highly valued and welcome visitors to almost any rural house. A mistress of a peasant house from Hartola region, for example, writes in her reminiscences a number of tales from 1910s about a renowned local figure, Veeru, who was a famed gelder. The respondent repeatedly stresses Veeru's skills and the consequential good reputation the latter enjoyed:

In the old times, this gypsy Veeru that old Veeru was very good gelder [kuohar], all pigs and especially stallions they operated with him. They [animals] were never sick, as the old people still alive can tell you. [...] That gypsy-Veeru practiced animal-healing, that's why he was so eagerly welcomed [into houses]. Veeru himself had straps with him, with which he fell the stallion for the gelding.

Veeru's skills were connected to good relations with his clientele, the local peasant masters, which Veeru himself also sought to actively maintain: for example, '[...] At Christmas time, Veeru paid to have ale made in his lodging house, after which he hosted the village's masters there as his guests.'³²⁹

Even local authorities could show a surprising respect for successful gelders such as Veeru. For example, the parish priest of Iisalmi, Johannes Lagus, wrote in his answer to the 1863-65 Gypsy survey of Carl Adolf E. or F. (given, as in many cases, two optional surnames), registered as a tenant farmer, that the latter supported his family through gelding with such reliability that he was 'very much trusted in his own municipality as well as [...] in other parts of the country'.³³⁰ In fact, the practicing of gelding was in many municipalities a way of institutionalizing the position of the local

³²⁹ KM, A17, 725 (F1910).

³³⁰ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Iisalmi. '[...] sig och sin familj har han lifnärt såsom gällare, i hvilket hantvärk han varit mycket omlitad såväl inom egna socken såsom och enligt widhafde betyg annarstädes i landet.'

Roma. In effect, this meant one worry less for the municipal bailiff charged with the upkeeping of the vagrancy statutes, and gave the inhabitants of the municipality easy access to a skilled gelder.

Despite such institutionalization, gelding was not always seen as ‘real’, legitimate work by outsiders. Also, it did not offer work around the year, but was concentrated on late spring, when most domestic animals had their mating season. Before this, gelders were going around houses, making sure they would have customers later, as brought out in the written reminiscence of a bricklayer, born in 1899:

Oskari was a gelder, he castrated pigs and horses [...] The gelding time was in the Spring, at the end of April and the beginning of May [...] That’s when Oskari left his family and left to go around for the gelding [...] The customers had been already chosen at winter-time travels³³¹

Success in gelding required a certain trust between the gelder and the customer – as the bricklayer’s reminiscence continues, it becomes clear that Oskari (the husband of ‘Gypsy-Ida’, whose song of Titanic had made such an impact on the same bricklayer) also enhanced his contracts with ‘magical’ threats to make sure his customers would not break the deal:

Oskari threatened that the one who lets someone else do the gelding job which had already been promised to him would die, there was such magic.³³²

Closely related to gelding, many Roma seem to have practiced animal healing with vernacular methods, although this does not come out from the Gypsy survey materials very clearly. Comparing the different materials³³³ it appears that while never very common, the number of Roma animal healers gradually diminished from the last decades of the 19th century onwards, until, by the inter-war period, there are no traces of healing practiced professionally. It is evident that healing animals was particularly susceptible to the competition from the increasingly numerous licenced veterinarians.

As far as animal healing was still practiced by the Roma, it was described in the different materials in quite similar terms as gelding. It was often connected to relatively good local reputation: the same respondent who told extensively about Veeru the gelder,

³³¹ KM, A17, 165 (M1899).

³³² KM, A17, 165 (M1899).

³³³ There are references to animal healing in the two surveys, written reminiscences of non-Roma collected in 1971, and the interviews of Roma conducted in 1998.

also writes of another 'popular' Roma band, whose head practiced various maintenance of domestic animals:

“Valla's” family was popular. Valla shod horses while visiting houses. He was also a surgeon, self-taught in healing domestic animals. He was taken into whichever house he went to.³³⁴

The nature of the work (and the reasons for popularity enjoyed by Valla, for example) also resembled gelding: this was maintenance work, mainly concerning horses, which had potentially important economic benefits for the customers – provided that the healer could genuinely help sick or ailing domestic animals. There were also cases in which this was not the case, and stories and accusations of Roma cheating money through quackery were sometimes published in the press.³³⁵

But as said, most of the scarce references to animal healing in the sources are connected to positive reputation. Also similar to gelding, certain recognition for the animal healers' skills could find its way even to official descriptions. Thus, the parish priests of Perho described in his answer to the 1863-5 Gypsy survey the activities of Karl G., a former vagrancy convict and a current tenant farmer, was told to

[...] support himself mainly with horse-trading, and has gotten, by the way, at least harmless, but when employed in certain operations, even a rather positive reputation as an animal doctor. He has also paid his crown- and municipal taxes properly [...] ³³⁶

As the above example of 'Valla' brings out, healing animals could be connected to yet another trade related to the maintenance of horses: horse-shoeing. This seems to have been a relatively important activity at the time of the 1863-65 survey, not only as the 14 horse-shoers (*hofslagare*) accounted for 9,5% of those with an explicitly named occupations, but also as many of them had the title of *sockne hofslagare*, that is, were authorized by the municipality to practice horse-shoeing exclusively within its bounds. However, as a part of wider tendency of de-institutionalization, this relatively secure position disappeared completely by the 1895 survey. Whatever the reasons for this³³⁷,

³³⁴ KM, A17, 725 (F1910).

³³⁵ *Savo* no 101, 29 Aug 1889.

³³⁶ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Perho.

³³⁷ Besides a colder official atmosphere towards the Roma on a municipal level, there might have been other reasons to the disappearance of the horse-shoer, such as better availability of horse-shoeing technology to the farmers, competition from veterinarians, concentration on trading horses as their demand was growing, etc.

the near disappearance of horse-shoeing from the Roma's trades by the turn of the century meant a lessening of occupational diversity and removed one earlier pathway to relatively well-established local position.

Finally, besides horse-trading and various maintenance activities, many Roma were involved in importing, trading and making the various accessories necessary for harnessing and utilizing horses. There was a number of Roma blacksmiths making or repairing saddles, harnesses and other riding accessories³³⁸; the latter were also imported from Russia and sold from house to house. There was also general trading and bartering with all kinds of horse-related artefacts, whenever a band of Roma stopped for the night in a farmer's house.³³⁹ Making or trading accessories seems to have been in no cases a primary source of livelihood, but a side business practiced alongside horse-trading, -shoeing and -gelding. In fact, all of the Roma's horse-related activities mentioned in the various sources could be practiced by the same persons. In turn-of the century Sakkola (Karelia, eastern Finland), for example, there were

two gypsy families written down in the books in Sakkola, who circulated from village to village, not much outside their home parishes, did horse-trading, gelder pigs, and there were even some good harness-smiths among them³⁴⁰

As with the women's food acquisition, then, the men's horse-related activities were a cluster of interrelated activities, geographically focussed on certain core areas. However, all of these activities demanded also constant seeking of new customers, as 'trading horses did not work for long at the same village [...]'.³⁴¹ The consequent mobility, together with the high exchange value and more or less constant demand of horses enabled the practicing of more wide-scale and anonymous commerce than what seems to have been the case with the women's food acquisition activities. Still, as we have seen, also the horse-related activities were ultimately structured by an effort to build functioning social relations with key peasant clients/hosts/providers.

³³⁸ TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista.

³³⁹ E.g. KM, A17, 26 (M1909), 44 (M1906), 546 (M1907).

³⁴⁰ KM, A17, 546 (M1907).

³⁴¹ '[...] mutta ei käynyt hevoskaupat samalla kylällä kovin kauan, piti siirtyä toisille kylille.' KM, A17 733 (F1884).

Other economic activities

Besides the womens' food- and mens' horse-related activities, diverse sources point to a multitude of others, touching practically all fields of the rural economic life. Among others, these included various forms of long- and short-term agricultural work, domestic work and artisanship, entertainment and healing, paid labour in industries and mining, farming, hunting, gathering and animal husbandry, and all kinds of bartering and peddling. None of these were 'ethnic' activities as such (even fortune-telling was practiced also by a number of more or less itinerant non-Roma). Still, some activities were clearly connected to what was a distinctively 'Roma' mode of peripatetic family economy, while others were either more specialized occupations, or 'non-ethnic' altogether in the sense that they were seen as legitimate by non-Roma, linked to sedentary lifestyle, and could lead to a loosening of ethnic distinctiveness. Although this kind of division between 'ethnic' niche- and mainstream activities is in many cases far from clear-cut, I will nevertheless use it as a rough outliner in the following.

In the most clearly peripatetic end of the spectrum, there were the various forms of bartering and hawking, performing of music, folk healing, shoe-repairing, washing laundry, kettle-mending, knife-grinding, etc. A 'cupper' (blood-letter) and a couple peddling religious books written by the folk preacher Pietari Kurvinen, marked down in the 1895 survey, illustrate the diversity of this kind of mobile activities. All of these appear in the sources as complementary to- or 'spinoffs' of the food- and horse-related activities dealt with in the previous two chapters. Besides this, mobile livelihood was routinely supplemented with subsistence food acquiring: fishing, berry- and mushroom-picking and pig-keeping. There is little in the sources to suggest that any of the above-mentioned activities would have been practiced as self-sufficient, specialized trades.³⁴²

They also usually followed a similar logic to the trading and services dealt with in the previous sections, in that they were carried out from house to house (or at markets) on a clearly gendered basis. An example of this was the Roma mens' trading of various small merchandice with the peasant men, as described below by a former customs officer from Lapland (border of Sweden), born in 1896:

³⁴² Aside from six fishers and a retired ex-county whipper and his wife practicing 'healing in the gypsy way' in the 1863-5 survey material, as well as the couple acting as booksellers, two washers, two musicians and a 'cupper' (blood-letter) in the 1895 Gypsy survey. KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Orimattila; TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista.

The Gypsies did also other bartering than the exchanging of horses. Right away after arriving to a house, the men sought contact with the master of the house and the adult sons. There was exchanging of watches, boots, hats and other things, even money-purses.³⁴³

Another mobile, self-employing trade practiced exclusively by men was the mending of kettles and pots, knife-grinding as well as the making and selling of tin pans. These were instances of 'light', portable artisanship, which did not demand much initial capital, tools or high level of specialization. But whereas tinning and knife-grinding were highly important for many Central European groups of Roma (and also to Swedish Travellers, as we will see), in Finland, there are only scant references to these activities,³⁴⁴ and they do not appear to have been significant in their own right.

Much more common was the field-, domestic- and forestry work in houses, which were apparently practiced by significant part of mobile Roma families, at least from time to time, to complement their incomes. This kind of work is an example of the fact that there was often no clear line between 'peripatetic' and 'mainstream' economic activities. In effect, the mobile Roma's economic strategy was not always very far from 'normal' seasonal or migrant labour strategy, which was also based on a combination of short-term work relations, high mobility and combining various 'makeshift' sources of livelihood. Moreover, the step from doing seasonal field work or working with the domestic animals into being employed (formally or informally) as a farmhand or maid was not necessarily a long one.

Still, there does also seem to have existed both an external stereotype and an internal social norm, according to which many Roma preferred to avoid 'work' – meaning here specifically un-independent agricultural labour. This is particularly noticeable in the reminiscences/oral accounts of Roma and non-Roma alike, when compared with other types of sources. There are clear indications of the Roma's involvement in agricultural work in the two Gypsy surveys, press material and even court records,³⁴⁵ at the same time, in the sample of 90 written reminiscence accounts of

³⁴³ KM, A17, 169 (M1896). Besides the borderline in Lapland, this kind of bartering seems to have been common in the North-Western province of Pohjanmaa, where also trading with knives and harnesses were mentioned. Petty bartering is mentioned in reminiscences concerning Alajärvi (KM, A17, 166 (F1915) and 285 (F1897)) and Lammi (ibid, 449 (F1887)).

³⁴⁴ E.g. KM, A17, 40 (M1892), 540 (F1899), 778 (F1896).

³⁴⁵ E.g. Sanomia Turusta no:194, 24 Aug 1885.

non-Roma, there are only two references to Roma families working as unindendent paid labour³⁴⁶; the other of these describing a family which

stopped every now and then if they got an apartment, and also worked[.] For example, the father and the eldest son stayed at the railway bridge of the Kiviniemi rapids throughout its construction [...]³⁴⁷

The attitudes of the Roma towards agricultural labouring seem also split in the Rom-SF oral history interviews (referring mostly to somewhat later period). Particularly, the importance of womens' household- and domestic animal-related work comes out clearly and repeatedly. There are also numerous references to seasonal/short-term agricultural labouring, but these usually describe what *other* Roma have done, often coupled with denials of having personally engaged in this kind of work.³⁴⁸ This hints to a mechanism of internal boundary-drawing: activities seen as the most legitimate by the non-Roma could be socially stigmatized amongst the Roma, who could interpret involvement in agricultural labour as undignifying and unloyal to the group.³⁴⁹

A second category of activities included a number of more specialized trades and occupations in their own rights, which were nevertheless still connected to- or based on the mobile livelihood strategies. These included glass- and rag-gatherers, whippers, gelders and horse-shoers (the last two of which have already been dealt with in the previous section).³⁵⁰ Most of these lost their significance or disappeared completely from the Roma's occupations between the 1863-65 and 1895 surveys. The reminiscence- and oral history-materials do not mention most of these occupations at all, which is an indication of the fast and complete disappearance of these positions by the beginning of the 20th century.

The only references to rag- and glass-gathering in my sources concern three heads of Roma families in the 1863-5 survey, of whom Karl-Gustaf H., the rather well-integrated municipal horse-shoer of Pāmark, practiced rag-gathering. As for glass-gathering, a few Roma families seem to have been co-operating with the Kiikala glass

³⁴⁶ KM, A17, 165 (M1899), KM, A17, 546 (M1907).

³⁴⁷ KM, A17, 546 (M1907).

³⁴⁸ Tervonen 2003, 65-71; see also for example SKS RN 78/69 (M1896).

³⁴⁹ E.g. SKS RN 62/69 (M1914).

³⁵⁰ Also 'institutionalized', yet marginal and usually involving poverty-related mobility was the position of former soldier – former, as there were no active Roma soldiers in the research period any more.

factory in south-western Finland for over a century³⁵¹, collecting second-hand glasswares from rural houses to be melted and reused at the factory in Kiikala as well as selling the products of the factory. Other of the two heads of household involved in this, Carl Gustaf I., also practiced another rare occupation, the making of violins – a skill which he had perhaps learned while serving a nine-year prison term after confessing a murder in 1855. Carl Gustaf I.'s involvement in instrument-building was could well have been linked to the later musical careers of his relatives in Kiikala, two of whom achieved local fame as musicians around the turn of the century.³⁵²

Compared to rag- and glass-gathering, the position of municipal whipper had much wider relevance for the Roma's societal position in the mid-nineteenth century. Still, there is very little qualitative information on the district whippers in my sources. The 1863-65 survey shows Roma employed as whippers in 15 different parishes all over the Southern half of Finland. The *HISKI* database, which gives access to church records primarily before 1850, has references to a total of 25 whippers in different municipalities between 1800 and 1900; of these, 7 persons, or a rough third, are recognizable as Roma by their surnames (or explicitly named as such).³⁵³ While Pulma relates the hiring of Roma as municipal whippers to the 1852 vagrancy law,³⁵⁴ the position seems to have been occupied by Roma already earlier, possibly already in the 18th century.

In the absence of qualitative information, some insights into the practical content of the profession of whipper can be gained by comparing it to the Swedish position of *rackare*, who was in principle the hangman's assistant. This position was occupied overgenerationally in many southern provinces by families labelled as 'Tattare'. Lindholm (1995) describes the occupation of *rackaren* in 19th century in the following terms:

³⁵¹ Kristiina Heinonen has done genealogical research on the I. family and found connections to local glass factories (in Kiikala, and earlier in Ävik, Somero), reaching back to the 18th century. References to 18th century Roma glass-gatherers/sellers in the area have similarly been found by Tuula Rekola, who is preparing a dissertation on the 18th century history of the Finnish Roma.

³⁵² KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista. Nummi, Kiikala; several reminiscences in the KM A17 material; communication with Kristiina Heinonen.

³⁵³ As the database stood in 12.2.2010.

³⁵⁴ Pulma 2006, 74.

Rackaren's main occupations consisted of being a horse-butcher and skinner; his other tasks were to kill and skin dogs and cats, skin and to bury dead animals, to castrate domestic animals, sweep chimneys, heal animals, take down persons who had hanged themselves, to bury those who had committed a suicide as well as criminals, whip thieves and help with executions.³⁵⁵

The tasks of the Swedish *rackare* thus read as a near-complete list of the 'infamous' occupations in pre-industrial societies.³⁵⁶ Besides the execution of corporal punishments, the various tasks were a collection of works considered as low-status and 'unclean', but which were nevertheless necessary. This occupational profile both reflected- and was a cause for a marginal position on the fringes of the local peasant society – a position which was often inherited from one generation to the other. The heavy social stigma imposed on such lineages could, according to folk memories, verge on a status of symbolically impure 'untouchables', with plates and utensils thrown out after they had been used by the rackare, of hand-shaking and other physical contact with them being avoided, etc.³⁵⁷

Also in Finland, the position of municipal whipper, as occupied by the Roma around- and after the mid 19th century, seems in most cases better described as institutionalized marginality rather than as 'integration' into the mainstream society. Although some of the families headed by municipal whippers were tenant farmers³⁵⁸, at least on paper, many were also without any permanent residence. Outside the court days³⁵⁹, they were consequently mobile like other itinerant Roma, sometimes also begging to make their living.³⁶⁰

As the description of the tasks of *rackaren* might lead to expect, the district whipper could also in Finland be practicing gelding,³⁶¹ and involved in the skinning and disposal of dead domestic animals³⁶². Likewise similar to the Swedish case, there are indications that the position of whipper could be passed from father to the son; this was

³⁵⁵ Lindholm 1995, 74-75.

³⁵⁶ Cf. Blok 2001.

³⁵⁷ Lindholm 1995, 74-75.

³⁵⁸ E.g. KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Iitti.

³⁵⁹ The regular court days were held twice a year; besides this, there were extra court meetings if serious crimes were committed within the district.

³⁶⁰ In Hirvensalmi, the whipper family was told to beg for their living; in Impilahti, the widow of the ex-county whipper (and sister of the current one) had to complement her incomes with begging despite being sedentary and working at times for the farmers. KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Hirvensalmi; Impilahti.

³⁶¹ E.g. KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Iitti.

³⁶² As can be read from a newspaper report of cats and dogs being accidentally buried to the church grounds by the district whipper of Viipuri, who was a Roma. *Uusi Suometar* no 28, 8 March 1875.

the case in Orimattila, for example, where we find the second son of the former county whipper following his father's trade, described in the 1863-5 Gypsy survey as follows:

Karl Gustaf J., the district whipper. Is also a son to the aforementioned Alexander J. [former county whipper]. Born in 1839, married since last year with a freeholding peasant's daughter here who is not from a gypsy family. He has, with [...] ordinary skills in the Christian knowledge, orderly attended the Holy Communion, taken part into the mass and the [Bible] Reading meetings, has properly fulfilled his obligations to the municipality, but also has, in regards to his residence and sphere of influence, an unstable nature, and visits the yearly markets diligently.³⁶³

In fact, J.'s case illustrates that the Finnish whippers belonging to families classified as *Zigenare* did not necessarily share the heavily stigmatized status in which Lindholm posits the Swedish *rackaren*. On the contrary, it seems that a number of *risare* were among the most socially mobile and 'integrated' Roma found by the Gypsy surveys. Nor did the inheritability of the occupation necessarily imply overgenerational 'dead end' in terms of social position. In J.'s case, his parents, together with his older brother, sister and the latter's children, were mostly itinerant and doing rounds in the neighbouring parishes (with the ex-whipper and his wife practicing 'healing in the Gypsy way'). Karl Gustaf J. himself, however, had a relatively good reputation and was legitimately married to a peasant woman, signalling a degree of local recognition.³⁶⁴ By 1895, there are more indications of overgenerational integration: while Karl Gustaf was engaged in agricultural work, his two sons were among the rare Roma with a clearly specified occupation, marked down as a cobbler and a blacksmith.³⁶⁵

Specialized artisanry, as practiced by Karl Gustaf J.'s sons around the turn of the century, lead in some cases to a more or less sedentary life and accepted position within peasant communities while still retaining the economic status of self-employment. To make a living primarily through artisanry, as opposed to the more usual 'light' artisanship dealt with above, demanded human-, economic- and social capital – in other words, skills, tools and a clientele – which most Roma lacked. Thus at any time, there was only a handful of individuals, usually men, involved in specialized artisanry. Their crafts were also highly divergent: Carl Gustaf I., the violin-maker and glass-gatherer has already been mentioned; besides this, in 1865 there was a maker of fish-tackles, a tailor,

³⁶³ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Orimattila.

³⁶⁴ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Orimattila.

³⁶⁵ TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista.

a cobbler and a cloth-maker³⁶⁶; in 1895, there were several rope-makers, a municipal tailor, a print-worker, a carpenter and a clocksmith (who was suspected by the local bailiff of supplementing his incomes through the selling of illegal alcohol³⁶⁷). Besides Karl Gustaf J.'s sons, there were just two more cobblers and one blacksmith found by the 1895 Gypsy survey.³⁶⁸ All in all, it seems that involvement in specialized artisanship was the business of few industrious, self-taught individuals.

In the most clearly 'non-ethnic' end of the spectrum of the Roma's economic activities, there was farming either on self-owned- or borrowed land and working as a maid or a farmhand with long-term contracts. However, as already stated in the beginning of this chapter, being marked down as a farmer or agricultural labourer in official records did not necessarily mean 'settling down' or engaging into agriculture as a primary source of livelihood. Various forms of subletting nominally owned- or rented homesteads were common among the Roma even after the liberalization of the vagrancy laws in 1865. There were signs of a practice common among Roma and Travellers in various parts of Europe³⁶⁹, with the Roma using their homesteads as rented-out bases for mobile livelihood strategy, returning there to pass the wintertime, as well as to renew their status of tenant farmer, in order to avoid vagrancy laws.³⁷⁰ Still, there were also genuinely sedentary families and individuals. Relatively high level of mobility did not necessarily preclude the practicing of agriculture either, even though this kind of combination sparked at times accusations of lacklustre attitude towards agricultural work. For example in Mouhijärvi, Western Finland, the parish priest described the life of Gustaf K., a 70-year old tenant farmer with a non-Roma wife:

Gustaf K. has behaved himself peacefully within this parish, has been in the possession of a tenant farm [*torplägenhet*] at least from 1849 onwards, through which he should be able to support himself and his family; but he lacks the tendency for thrift in work, as can be seen in his seeking up of his tribe-brothers [*stambröder*], as a consequence of which he is from time to time, and even now, wandering around with his older children [...]³⁷¹

³⁶⁶ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51.

³⁶⁷ TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista.

³⁶⁸ TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista.

³⁶⁹ E.g. Lucassen 1998c, 155.

³⁷⁰ E.g. KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Lappajärvi.

³⁷¹ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Mouhijärvi.

In a later example, a worker's wife, born in 1907, describes two Roma cottages situated next to each other in Impilahti, Karjala during the First World War, which were engaged in mutual cooperation while once again combining mobility and agriculture:

They grew hay and a even a bit of grain. [...] I heard that the gypsies toiled the land together. On those times, others [Roma] gathered there too. When the work was done, the whole group went travelling. And came back again for times of work.³⁷²

As for Roma farmhands, tenant- and farm labourers (*'jyvätorppari'*, *'muonamies'*), also they were often accused of being only nominal members of the households supposedly employing and accommodating them.³⁷³ But yet again, there were also genuine agricultural workers, who served rural houses as farmhands and -maids, often with yearly contracts in rural houses. While agricultural work in general was the only class of 'legitimate' work in the rural society which increased in its relative importance between the 1863-65 and 1895 surveys, there was a significant increase in the precariousness of the employment: the proportion of farmhands and maids with a proper yearly contract plunged from 20 to 9, while more temporary agricultural work became somewhat more common.³⁷⁴

Sometimes the yearly work-service in houses was connected to ruptures in the life-course of itinerant Roma families. Particularly, youth and children were sometimes left into the custody of familiar rural houses when the parents could not support of all their children for one reason or another.³⁷⁵ From a more 'voluntary' basis, involvement in local agricultural labour sometimes worked as a genuine pathway to local integration, as for example in the case of Karl A., who was described by the parish priest of Ruskeala in exceptionally positive terms in 1864:

Karl A., b.1825, labourer. Has a basic understanding of the Christian teachings. Has behaved himself impeccably [*klanderfritt*]. Works as a timberman and a dayworker within the bounds of the parish. Has not left from the parish. Differs completely from his tribesmen [*stamförvanten*]. Is married with a finnish woman [*finska*].³⁷⁶

³⁷² KM, A17, 155 (F1907).

³⁷³ E.g. KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Lappajärvi. The available sources – recurrent accusations against those inscribing itinerant Roma as members of their households – remain completely silent as to the motives of why the protection of legitimate status was given.

³⁷⁴ See also Ch 5.2.

³⁷⁵ Some such cases are dealt in chapter 5, in the section dealing with foster children.

³⁷⁶ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Ruskeala.

While Karl A.'s son later became a freeholding peasant, neither Karl nor his children lost their distinctiveness as a 'gypsies' in the eyes of the authorities (as is visible in their inclusion into the 1895 Gypsy survey data).³⁷⁷ For others, overcoming anti-Roma prejudices could prove difficult, such as for Johan M., who had been raised as a foster child at a peasants' household in Kuopio.³⁷⁸ In Viipuri in 1899, Johan L. appears in an early example of publicized labour market discrimination, as noted by pseudonym 'Jäkkäniska' in his letter to the readers of *Wiipurin Sanomat*:

Contempt of gypsies. [...] There has been a lot of activities for the benefit of the gypsies and attempts to get them into settled living conditions, but usually with little success. Yet there are also those, who try through honest labour to earn their bread, but these usually receive the same ill-treatment as their lesser brothers. As an example of this, I want to tell how a certain gypsy Johan M., who has since childhood laboured to earn his living, asked in vain for work from a certain land steward of a mansion in Wiipuri municipality. In my opinion, even a gypsy should not be despised, if he, as rarely as he does it, wants to start earning his bread through work [...].³⁷⁹

Although are not given the specifics of why the writer considers the steward's refusal to hire Johan L. as an example of contempt towards Gypsies, the citation hints at a recognizably 'modern' cycle of marginalization and prejudice, in which a condemnation of the Roma as work-shy co-exists with their routine exclusion from the labour market. In another account, published in the Gypsy Mission's magazine *Kiertolainen* in 1909, Helmi Johansson similarly recounts the vain attempts to find agricultural work for a sedentary Roma man who is systematically rejected by employers despite his good working skills and calm character. In the case prompting the writing of the story, an already made work contract was scrapped by an owner of a mansion, who was forced to do so because of the outrage and resistance which the news of a hiring of a Roma had awoked in the other workers.³⁸⁰

Regardless of such popular resentment, a handful of Roma were throughout the late 19th century engaged not just in agriculture but also in other 'non-ethnic' trades, from iron- and print-working to teaching and preaching. There were cases such as Sofia B. (1887-1932), who, with the aid of the Gypsy Mission, became a primary-school teacher; Kustaa Fredrik C. (b.1855) who attended agricultural school and became a

³⁷⁷ TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista, Sortavala.

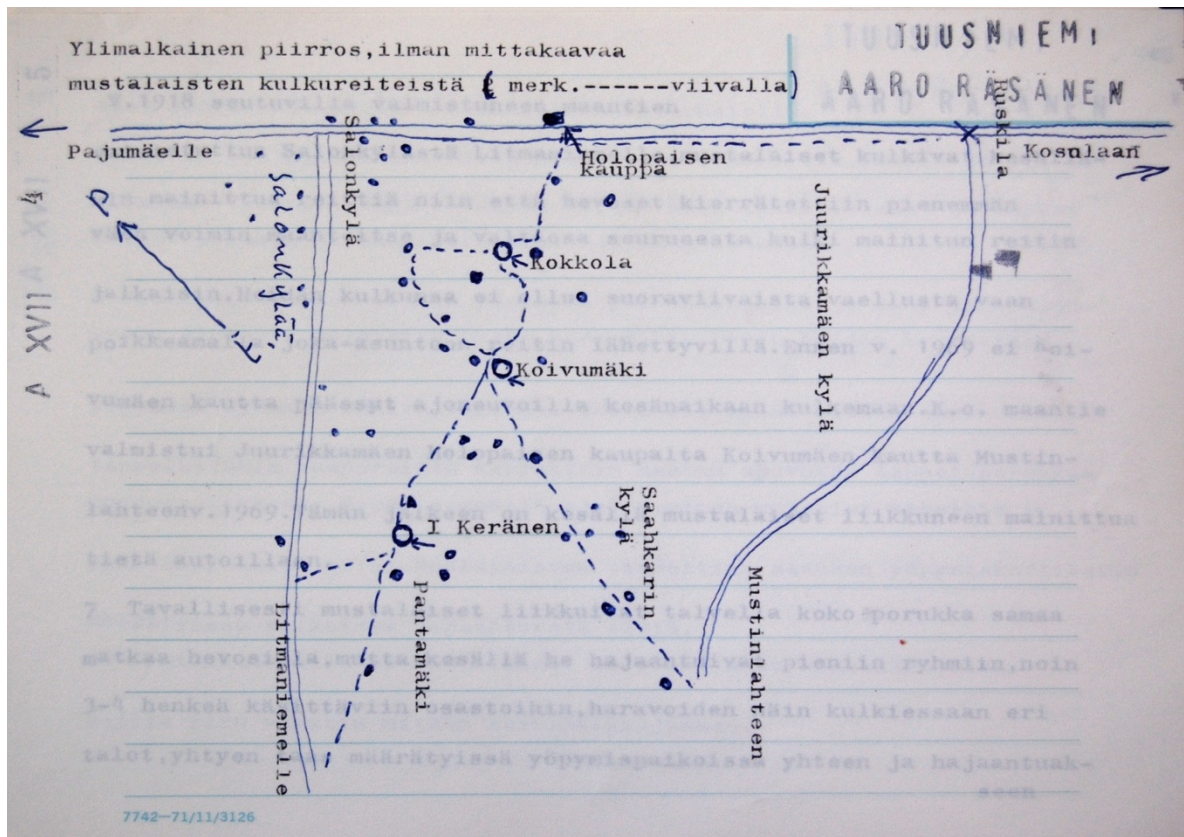
³⁷⁸ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Kuopio Moderkyrko landförsamling.

³⁷⁹ *Wiipurin Sanomat* no 239, 4 Oct 1899.

³⁸⁰ *Kiertolainen* no 10, 11, 12, 1909 ('Kiertolaisen Joulu').

teacher and verger; and Kalle M. (1898-1918), originally N., a journalist, writer, fighter pilot etc., whose remarkable life story will be dealt in more detail in chapter 5. Besides such individual cases, the nature of ethnic categorization in the Gypsy surveys and official records sets a limit on what we can say on occupations and lifestyles which did not match contemporary ideas about 'gypsy life'. It can be assumed that a number of individuals with 'non-ethnic' occupations have been prone to escape attention as *zigenare* / *mustalainen* – inadvertently reproducing a stereotypical picture of the 'gypsiness' of those more easily recognizable as Roma as a consequence of their lifestyle.

4.3 In friendly houses: getting accommodation



Picture 2. regular routes and lodging houses of the Roma in Tuusniemi (province of Kuopio) around the turn of the century, as remembered in 1971 by a retired lieutenant, born in 1905. Museovirasto, keruuarkisto 1971 A17: 1-17 Kiertavat mustalaiset, 606.

Particularly in regards to securing accommodation at the houses of the sedentary population, the mobile majority of the Roma faced an unavoidable necessity of establishing relations of exchange with parts of the sedentary population. In this they seem to have done remarkably well. The written reminiscence material collected by the Finnish National Board of Antiquities in 1971 offers a highly consistent pattern throughout the country in this respect. Typically, most villages within a particular municipality had a number of clearly established lodging houses, which admitted bands of travelling Roma and gave them shelter for one or more nights. These local friendly houses could usually be explicitly named by the non-Roma respondents (some of whom had lived in such houses themselves), as here by a man born in 1894 in Jaakkima (Eastern province of Karelia):

In our neighbourhood, most houses kept gypsies. Jaakko Kaksonen, Juho Kokkonen, Sippo Nukarinen, Jaakko Orpana, Juho Sinkkonen, Juho Roininen, Juho Kormano, Sippo Immonen, Juho Kekarainen, Jaakko Kuismanen. All of these country houses [*maalaistaloja*] were close neighbours in the village.³⁸¹

A clear division usually emerged between those who sheltered the Roma, and those who did not, as described by a man born in 1906 (Leppävirta):

they [the Roma] had their own regular circles [*piirinsä*], in which they went around. In this way, they became familiar with the whites [*valkolaiset*]. [...] They slept in the houses of freeholders, tenant farmers and –labourers. There were houses in the village, in which the gypsies could spend the night, and others, in which they could not. Usually they did not go to the latter either. In this way, regular hounds were formed for them, in which they could go as long as the owner of the house did not change.³⁸²

Same houses could host local Roma intermittently for decades, forming a network whose participants were generally known both by the Roma and the non-Roma within a particular locality. The ties in such networks could be very durable. When the inhabitants of a particular ‘familiar house’ moved, the Roma could follow them to the new location and continue the lodgings and bartering as before. Social ties with particular houses could even be ‘inherited’ by the members of a particular Roma lineage as a kind of social capital, as they visited the same ‘familiar houses’ from generation to generation. On the peasants’ side, the tendency to accommodate the Roma was in many cases also told to be an ‘inherited habit’, taken over from parents or grandparents who had also accommodated Roma, as described, for example, by a farmer born in 1894 (Jaakkima):

[...] they came to ask for a place to sleep every year, and when my father died, I was left with the same tendency to help a poor traveller and give them a shelter [...]³⁸³

Within the bounds of such long-term networks, close familiarity with ‘own’ Roma was reflected in the detailed information many of the non-Roma informants could give of the names, fortunes and family-relations of the former. For example, a mistress of a house, born in Alajärvi in 1915, gives details on dozens of Roma in the reminiscence she gives of her childhood, while also claiming that the houses admitting the Roma were a majority in the area:

³⁸¹ KM, A17, 558 (M1894).

³⁸² KM, A17, 554 (M1906).

³⁸³ KM, A17, 558 (M1894).

In these parts, there have been the so-called Hemmo's bunch (*sakki*), Walle's bunch, Kassu's bunch, and the surname of the last-mentioned was C.. The C. brothers were Erkki, Oskari and Jalamari. Their parents were Kassu and Fiija. Erkki's wife's name was Hulta, Jalmari's Maija, and Otto's wife was called Ruusa, I guess. [...etc., mentions 15 more names.] These above-mentioned families [...] were known and more or less familiar in almost each house of our village. [...] With few exceptions, the gypsies were given a place to sleep in the houses of our village.³⁸⁴

Once the Roma arrived into a familiar house, a recurring scheme took place. In most houses, the Roma stayed only for one night, unless the weather was very bad in the following day. In some localities, however, stays of several days, even weeks, were not considered as unusual. After being admitted into a house, the Roma usually cooked coffee for the master and the mistress; there was often petty bartering and trading with the housefolk, as well as fortune-telling; there could be some socializing together, singing or playing music, sometimes also drinking of alcohol. Socializing connected seamlessly with commercial interaction, as described by the previous respondent:

Yes, we discussed the daily topics and the weather with the gypsies, and they told of their latest comings and goings. The men were eager to barter, whether with horses, watches, knives, or whatever tradeable goods they happened to have. The women sold lace and told fortunes, and the children sang for money.³⁸⁵

When let to stay in the house as opposed to sauna or other outhouses, the Roma made their beds practically always on the floor of the common hall (*tupa* or *pirtti*), usually using hay and their own linen for this. The common hall was a multi-purpose, semi-public area, and as such a common ground for the various inhabitants and guests of a house, including servants, temporary workers, relatives, neighbours and various visitors. The hall was apparently favoured by the Roma even in the rare occasions when they were offered the possibility of having their own chamber (*kamari*, usually reserved for the master and mistress as well as for the more prestigious guests). In some areas, close relations between the Roma and their hosts were visible in that the former could bathe in the sauna with the latter, with men, women and youth taking separate shifts.

According to majority of the non-Roma respondents, the Roma were not expected to compensate accommodation directly (although there are recurring stories of

³⁸⁴ KM, A17, 166 (F1915).

³⁸⁵ KM, A17, 166 (F1915).

‘rich gypsies’ compensating expenses with money). In regards to the inter-war period, a roughly similar picture can be formed on the basis of the Rom-SF oral history interviews of the Roma.³⁸⁶ However, there are also references to both direct and indirect compensations. Besides offering coffee, fortune-telling, tinning of pots, etc., the Roma were told to be generous in giving presents to the housefolks, and, as they often had to do a round of begging in the village, did usually not beg from the houses they were staying at. More importantly, as already said, the Roma women did household work and helped in animal husbandry while staying at a house. The Roma men could also do animal castrating free of charge,³⁸⁷ and traded horses with the men, apparently with relatively favourable exchange terms. According to a teacher, born in Anttola in 1909, visiting Roma

rarely stayed for more than one night, and when they did they had to have horse-trading relations [with the men of the house]. They compensated for their lodging by fortune-telling, cutting [castrating] animals, tinning coffee-pots and by asking.³⁸⁸

In fact, most of the economic activities discussed with in the previous sections could be turned into forms of compensating accommodation. The ‘entertainment factor’ should also not be underestimated, as this came out regularly in the accounts of the non-Roma respondents. This was connected not just to fortune-telling, singing, story- and news-telling, but also to the thrill of bargaining.

All in all, the accommodation of the Roma took regularly place in a social setting in which the Roma were no strangers - nor even ‘customary strangers’.³⁸⁹ Not only were they usually well-known in the houses receiving them, but also well embedded into the local web of social relations. As a telltale sign of this, many Roma bands seem to have been both spreading local gossips and being gossiped about.

Despite images of random ‘wandering’, then, a Roma family’s exchange networks were most of the time confined to established routes, connecting networks of familiar houses within an area of two-three adjacent parishes. This was true particularly in the wintertimes, when the area covered in the Roma’s circulation could be very small, often – with the exception of market-trips – confined to the villages of a single parish.

³⁸⁶ Tervonen 2003a; 2003b.

³⁸⁷ E.g. KM, A17, 127 (M1899).

³⁸⁸ KM, A17, 457 (M1909).

³⁸⁹ Phrase used to describe peripatetic groups in Bernand & Rao 2004.

In regards to the later inter-war period, this can be read directly from the interviews of the Roma, as told below by a man, born in 1920:

I[interviewer]: Now, when the *kaale* [Roma] went around in former times, and there's this talk about own places...

R[espondent]: yes?

I: ...did they usually just go around in their own villages and own..?

R: Well, mostly they just went around in their own villages, I too grew up mostly in our own places, it was very rare that we went to unfamiliar localities, as [...] one tended not to get a place to sleep in. Whereas in familiar places there were always places ready for us, one just needed to go, and so we only went around in our own localities [...]³⁹⁰

While most Roma families had a more or less established geographical core or 'base' areas, market-trips, visiting relatives and summertime travelling meant that their networks tended to be fluid and open-ended outside these areas. In fact, houses sheltering Roma were remarkably widely spread across the country, appearing in localities far removed from the Roma's core habitation areas – from Swedish-speaking coastal areas in South-western tip of Finland to the Northernmost peripheries in Lapland.

In terms of the social position of the 'familiar houses', the same thing is apparent as with food-giving: no absolute class- or political party-based line can be drawn. As we have seen (chapter 3.1, '*Gypsy question and local power*'), there was a constellation in many municipalities in which powerful freeholding peasants were the ones aggressively seeking to banish Roma, while majority of the accommodating houses were smallholders, tenant farmers, cottagers and workers. Still, those sheltering the Roma also involved some wealthy and locally respected freeholders, such as the village elder in Nuijamaa, who was publicly reproached in *Wiipurin Sanomat* for regularly 'feasting' (*kestittää*) Roma in his house.³⁹¹ In Kemiö, one of the few households offering shelter for the Roma was a wealthy Swedish-speaking aristocratic family which traced its lineage to 15th century Northern German aristocracy. The eldest son of the family became the local chief of the White Guard (*Suojeluskunta*), a right-wing nationalist militia which later took part in the Finnish civil war; nevertheless, he continued to shelter Roma in a chamber room of the estate's sauna.³⁹²

Once again, established relations and at least a degree of trust between the Roma and those giving them shelter appear more crucial than class-based divisions or

³⁹⁰ SKS, ROM-SF, 12.

³⁹¹ *Wiipurin Sanomat* nro 206, 1900.

³⁹² KM, A17, 809 (M1902).

‘solidarity of the poor’, even though the latter also played a role. From the side of the Roma, being able to rely on individual sedentary houses thus demanded constant and active network-building and -maintenance. These efforts were visible in all areas of the mobile Roma’s everyday activities in their ‘own’ localities, from the logic of lace-trading and horse-trading to the disciplining of children, keeping ‘rogue’ Roma out and avoiding conflicts with the non-Roma.³⁹³

Successful networking could result in local systems, which really seem in many cases to have worked well. It was such local ties of reciprocity and trust, which prompted the peasant delegates’ complaints in the debates of the Diet in 1877 that

The Gypsies are considered as better as the municipality’s bailiff, and perhaps even the priest, and that has given them an easy livelihood, as they are given food, even clothes, not to mention bed for the night. [...]’³⁹⁴

In regards specifically to getting accommodation, the functionality of the system of ‘familiar houses’ can also be read indirectly from the 19th century Gypsy surveys, Diet- and press debates. In the face of otherwise total public problematization, the central-appearing fact that most Roma did not have any permanent housing received surprisingly little direct attention in itself. Conceptualizing itineracy as *homelessness*, i.e. as an intrinsic problem, did not really emerge in public debates until the second rise of the Gypsy problem in the new conditions of post World War II, in which the Roma were increasingly cut out from old networks of ‘familiar houses’.

Yet, as will be seen in the following (and in chapter 6), the Roma’s system of acquiring livelihood through inter-ethnic exchange with the sedentary population was far from faultless, and certainly not symmetrical in terms of economic- and power-relations. Whenever there were breakdowns in the scheme of mutual familiarity and functionality, the Roma’s dependency on housing provided by the ‘peasants’ could turn into a serious source of uncertainty, distrust and conflicts.

³⁹³ For economic activities in this regards, cf. Ch 4.2; for disciplining children, cf. Tervonen 2003a, 80; for keeping non-local Roma out, cf. Ch 2.1 and 6.4; for avoiding conflicts with non-Roma, cf. 6.4 and Tervonen 2003, 83-88.

³⁹⁴ Cited by Pulma 2006, 79; Vehmas 1961, 61.

4.4 Distrust and conflicts



Picture 3. A Roma band of two families in front of a peasant house in 1908. The photograph was taken in Kurikka, c.10 km south from Ilmajoki where Oskari Jalkio hosted his private sermon in the previous year. Picture: National Board of Antiquities / Samuli Paulaharju.

In the winter 1909, Oskari Jalkio, a young idealist priest seeking to establish missionary activities with the Finnish Roma, invited a group of Roma to a religious meeting in Ilmajoki, Western Finland. The meeting was moderately successful in religious terms, but for reasons which Jalkio left unspecified, he did not offer the Roma a place to sleep after the sermon, despite the latter being far from their home area. Regretting his decision after the Roma party had departed, Jalkio later described his vain attempt to call the Roma back to his house amidst the freezing winter night:

By nightfall the weather worsened into a heavy blizzard [...] Through the snowdrifts of the village roads we drove from house to house, asking, to the villager's surprise, for the 'Gypsies'. 'Have they done something bad to you?', 'what have they done this time?' was the reply everywhere. We drove to the next village and still kept hearing the same: that they had, without getting shelter, moved on. In the last house of the village they had almost half-forcibly tried to enter, but the sharp refusal of the housefolks forced them to the outskirts of Isokyrö and Laihia, out on a vast stretch of countless miles. We could not follow them further. My heart felt heavy, as in the darkness of the night I gazed to

the vast exposure where the storm howled and snow whirled. – For the first time in my life, I felt respect for the Gypsies. I would not have wondered at all if they had used violence, for I believe that many others would have already resorted to it.³⁹⁵

Jalkio's description of the winter-night ride brings chillingly out the distrust and rejection which mobile Roma were prone to face whenever they ventured outside their familiar areas. In winter-time, being denied accommodation could be a life-threateningly serious problem, as Jalkio's reflection on violence at the end of the quote implies.

The strong connection of trust and exchange between locally established Roma and their peasant hosts/clients meant inversely great difficulties to the former in places where such a connection did *not* exist. A song collected from Karelian Roma at the turn of the 20th century by Artur Thesleff captures the resulting social isolation and insecurity felt by the Roma outside their 'own' places:

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Voi kun olen ikävissä</i> | Oh how I am sad |
| <i>Näissä vieraisissa paikoissa</i> | In these unfamiliar places |
| <i>Lähetään meille pois</i> | Lets go away, back to our own |
| <i>Näistä vieraista paikoista</i> | out of these unfamiliar places |
| <i>Ei meillä ole mitään oloa</i> | Here we have no staying |
| <i>Eikä mitään pitoa</i> | And no upkeeping |
| [...] | |
| <i>Pois ollaan käsketty</i> | We have been told to go away |
| <i>Kotia ollaan laitettu</i> | We have been sent back home |
| <i>Näistä vieraista paikoista</i> | Out of these unfamiliar places |
| <i>Ei saa rauhaa</i> | Here one gets no peace |
| <i>Ei saa lepoa</i> | one gets no rest |
| [...] | |
| <i>Ei minulla ole ei turva eikä apua</i> | I've got no safety nor help |
| <i>Näissä vieraisissa paikoissa" [...]</i> | In these unfamiliar places |
| <i>Lähetään meille pois</i> | Lets go away, back to our own [places] ³⁹⁶ |
| [...] | |

In many areas there was simply no guarantee that *any* household would be willing to accommodate groups of Roma without previous acquaintance, no matter what conditions the Roma were facing. Particularly in the wintertime, this had an effect of keeping the Roma strictly centred on familiar routes. But even within the 'familiar places', getting accommodation could not be taken for granted. There were no absolute

³⁹⁵ Kiertolainen 1/1907.

³⁹⁶ KB, Arthur Thesleffs papper, L11:4, Anteckningar om Zigenare, 5: Zigenares sånger och visor upptecknade i Finland. The cited Finnish text is Thesleff's translation from the original poem in Romani language.

guarantees of the hospitality of the scattered friendly houses, and in any case, the goodwill towards the Roma had strict temporal limits: only short stays were usually tolerated, and the Roma were obliged to keep long enough breaks between each visit. To have a number of friendly houses was thus essential, since ‘all the itinerants tried to avoid staying often for the night in the same family’³⁹⁷.

Previously friendly houses could also categorically stop admitting Roma, and often did so if the owners changed, or if a new, less hospitable generation took over. For example, in Alatornio (Western Lapland on the Swedish border), the parents of a midwife, born in 1899, ended a previously existing habit of accommodating Roma in a peasant house upon moving in, winning with this the favour of many of their neighbours. Still, with close reading, the respondent’s parents’ reluctance to host Roma appears not to have been based on absolute categorization of all ‘*mustalaiset*’ as unwanted visitors, but on specific aversion of *unknown* Roma. For example, as the respondent was in her childhood left alone to the house with her sister, the children were told to lock the doors and stay quietly inside if they saw any gypsies. The reason given for this, rather than generalized mistrust, was that the children could not know ‘*which Gypsies are on the move*’, the known locals, or the itinerant bands from South.

The example brings us to the peasants’ highly ambivalent relationship towards the Roma, and the strict division made in the written reminiscences between trusted/local/useful Roma on one hand, suspicious/outsider/harmful on the other. This division followed often a straightforward logic in which geographical and social distance co-incided. With a generalized suspicion towards unknown Roma as a ‘default’ norm, the neighbourhood’s ‘own’ Roma were often considered as positive exceptions to an overall rule of moral degradation, poverty and vices. In the Southern Finland, the respondents contrasted ‘their’ ‘good’ Roma with the no-goods from North, while in Northern Finland, the ‘bad’ Roma were seen to be the travelling bands from South.³⁹⁸

Yet the division into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ was not just about local status. An account of an Ostrobothnian day-labourer, born in 1911, gives an example of other factors in such a hierarchical division. At first, the respondent refers to several trusted and accepted Roma characters who frequented his village in the North-Western province of Pohjanmaa in 1910s and 20s, all of whom were able to back up social familiarity with economic reciprocity. Beginning with already-mentioned ‘Pösö-Kaisa’,

³⁹⁷ ‘*Kaikki kiertolaiset yrittivät välttää usein samassa perheessä yöpymistä*’. KM, A17, 457 (M1909).

³⁹⁸ E.g. KM, A17, 358 (F1899).

who weaved lace for one household at a time, the respondent goes on to describe a couple, '*handsome and beautiful gypsies, beyond comparison with others*', who '*didn't ask for anything, but bought what they needed*'; moving into describing a 'popular' horse-shoer and self-taught animal doctor, whose bunch was '*taken into whichever house he went to*'.³⁹⁹ The tone changes sharply as the description turns into 'unpopular' or unknown Roma. Some of these were local, some not – what was common to all was their lack of a specified economic niche, and a perception of threatening behaviour:

[...] Pitkä-Mikki [*Tall-Mikki*] was of the ruffian bunch. They were not gladly let into a house; instead, the doors were locked. Also the Tolffi's bunch was less popular. Many gypsy bunches were such, that they were feared, if there were no men present at the house. Their names were not always known. Unknown gypsies were forbidden of entering the parlour, and the doors were locked. Bad Gypsies [...] were very forward and high-handed, if they got into the parlour [house] and the menfolks were out.⁴⁰⁰

Besides unknown or 'unpopular' bands, also families too large to be easily lodged were let into houses only reluctantly. The basic problem, besides concerns for safety and inconvenience, was a rather straightforward material conflict of interest. On one hand, there were the Roma, who needed housing and food, regardless of whether they were on well-established routes or not (and whether they had tradable goods or not). On the other, there were the peasant housefolks, who had few economic incentives to shelter- and provide food for the various travellers moving in the countryside, even when these were old acquaintances, if they could not use these as extra manpower and if the expected compensation for visit was not significant.

Concerns for the reputation of the house were also important. As already seen in relation to the 'gypsy question' as a local level issue (Chapter 3.1), the presence of the Roma highlighted differences between members of the peasant communities, with the wealthiest landowners generally taking the toughest posture on local or visiting Roma. Often with an underlying class element, the division between the households which hosted the Roma and those which did not could amount into a bitter and aggressive sorting. On the other side, those who refused to shelter passing Roma could be accused of being heartless, timid, and selfish people, who broke the unwritten rules of solidarity and christian decency by sending poor homeless people 'out in the cold winter

³⁹⁹ KM, A17, 292 (M1911).

⁴⁰⁰ KM, A17, 292 (M1911).

night'. This kind of critiques could be expressed in an anti-elitistic tone, as in the accusations made by a mistress of a house, born in 1915:

[...] there were such brazen and remorseless people that they would not take a gypsy in for a night, not for the world. They even bragged with not putting up with gypsies. Supposedly, they were somehow better people, finer and more civilized, the more brashly they acted towards the gypsies.⁴⁰¹

However, the stigmatization working the other way around seems to have been generally more prevalent, and particularly amongst the wealthier land-owners, being seen as 'favouring' Roma could be very damaging to a household's reputation. The houses hosting the Roma were labelled as 'Gypsies nests', accused of inviting harmful vagrants to the locality, and held responsible for real and imagined misdemeanours associated with the Roma. As seen in Chapter 3.1, the stigmatization of the Roma's hosts was also a recurring theme in the local newspapers. Moreover, this was not just a question of abstract reputation: in many areas, the municipal councils tried to pass ordinances forbidding the hosting of travelling Roma and sanctioning this with what could be relatively heavy fines.

With the stigmatization of those accommodating the Roma, it is not surprising that some of the non-Roma respondents were eager to downplay their family's involvement with the Roma.⁴⁰² Also, even respondents who had themselves had close interaction with Roma could present moralistic views on the alleged bad upkeep of the houses offering accommodation; the latter were dismissed as keeping "all the pets smaller than a squirrel: lice, bugs and cockroaches"⁴⁰³,

Since the division into 'friendly' and 'unfriendly' houses was usually clearly established in particular localities, even incidental accommodation offered to the Roma by the latter could result in a permanent change in the household's standing, both vis-à-vis passing Roma and other villagers. The first-mentioned could seek to visit the house again and pass the word of a new quarters ('*kortteeripaikka*') to other Roma, if the treatment was even tolerably good.⁴⁰⁴ The neighbouring peasant households, for their side, could start routinely redirecting passing Roma to nearby houses which had showed leniency towards them.

⁴⁰¹ KM, A17, 166 (F1915).

⁴⁰² E.g. KM, A17, 449 (F1887).

⁴⁰³ KM, A17, 115 (F1903).

⁴⁰⁴ KM, A17, 40 (M1892).

The resulting zeal in protecting the reputation of a house, as well as the underlying material conflict of interest are both sharply present in a case reported by the *Wiipurin Sanomat* in the winter 1899. The newspiece describes the events which led to an old Roma man being mortally shot by a peasant's neighbour who had come to help in driving away passing Roma:

[...] A large group of gypsies had on the same night arrived to Alapelto house and asked for a place to sleep. But since the house did not favour [*suosittu*] gypsies, and as there was a large group of them, the farm owner asked them to leave. However, the gypsies would not agree with the request, but threatened to stay for the night, for there was a harsh frost outside and their children were stiff with cold. The housewife thus went to the neighbours to get help. She returned with a large group of armed men to drive away the violent intruders [*wäkiwallantekijöitä*]. A dispute between the villagers and the gypsies arose, and as a consequence one of the farmers unloaded his gun towards an elderly gypsy [...].⁴⁰⁵

Despite the writer's clear sympathies towards the peasants, the motives for the Roma's insistence – above all, the fear of being left out to a freezing winter night – are brought out exceptionally clearly. Nevertheless, it was taken for granted that the inhabitants of the house wanted the Roma to leave, simply as they 'did not favour gypsies'.

In later oral accounts of the Roma, memories of finding accommodation were split in two very different narratives, even within the accounts of same respondents. On one hand, there was a strong emphasis on the hospitality of 'good people' in 'own' localities, and on the easy and self-evident nature of finding accommodation. On the other, there was a radically different discourse in which the necessity to find accommodation each night was described as a source of profound and recurring uncertainty, and the relation with the peasants as a forced adaptation and submission in a situation of no-choice.⁴⁰⁶

The primary sources of the current research give credit to both of these narratives. All through the research period, Roma seem to have been regularly taken into peasant houses, with which there was as regularly a previously established social and economic relationship. At the same time, many factors still worked, from Autumn to Spring, to make finding accommodation a source of severe and recurring risks in the lives of the mobile Roma.

⁴⁰⁵ *Wiipurin Sanomat* no 74, 7 March 1899.

⁴⁰⁶ Tervonen 2003a, 80-83.

A history of violence?

The above-dealt conflict, resulting in the shooting of an old Roma man, brings us to an issue which has dominated some earlier interpretations of the Roma- non-Roma relations: violent conflicts. Also in this respect, two different pictures emerge which are difficult to reconcile. On the one hand, as we have seen, there are descriptions by both Roma and non-Roma on what appears as strikingly close and well-established local inter-ethnic relations; there are also indications of practices of ‘settling things’ and avoiding inter-ethnic conflicts. On the other hand, contemporary writers and politicians, as well as later researchers and many of the non-Roma reminiscence respondents represent the relations between Roma and non-Roma essentially as a kind of a history of violence, echoing Tapio’s coinage of ‘war – or worse’ allegedly going on in the countryside. Particularly conflicts in conjunction to house-intrusions and forcible accommodation received wide attention, both from contemporary- and later writers. According to Nygård, this kind of conflicts arose when the Roma’s aggressive behaviour was countered by the peasants:

A large “gypsy bunch” frightened the inhabitants of solitary rural houses in the latter 19th century. The aggressive side of the Gypsies’ behaviour – as seen through the norms of the whites – came to the fore as they met solitary houses with few inhabitants. If in this situation there were persons who were willing to question their “rights”, conflicts resulted.⁴⁰⁷

The problem is to get beyond vague impressions such as this. How important was physical violence in the relations between the Roma and the non-Roma?

At the outset, it is clear that Finnish Roma and non-Roma alike lived in a society in which physical violence formed a central part of the masculine popular culture, and in which the loosening of social order together with the spread of firearms was making inter-personal violence increasingly deadly.⁴⁰⁸ It is also clear that mobile groups of Roma were both feared of- and had legitimate fears for themselves, particularly outside their ‘own’ areas. From the peasants’ side, the good intentions of unknown travelling Roma bands could not be assumed *per se*. As the bands were sometimes large and well-armed, precaution was understandable. In the winter 1872, *Uusi Suometar* reported on

⁴⁰⁷ Nygård 2001, 143.

⁴⁰⁸ Lehti 2001, Rajala 2004.

the arrest of a group of Roma, travelling far from their home parish (Viipuri), with the following description:

That this flock of gypsies, whose violent ways the common people have complained about and who have been said to be suspected of church- and horse-thefts, did not have peaceful intentions, can be seen from the fact that they, upon the arrest, had, except for large knives, also firearms, powder and bullets [(?) *tulihattuja*] as well as a certain leather-padded whip, with a shank made out of a barrel of a rifle weighting about three *naulaa*⁴⁰⁹, with led casted into both ends.⁴¹⁰

On the other hand, the need to carry weapons is a telltale sign of the insecurity felt by the Roma, who were most of the time physically outnumbered and could not rely on the authorities for their protection. This insecurity led the Roma sometimes to travel during the nighttime to avoid confrontations,⁴¹¹ and, according to a mistress of a house born in 1912, was also one of the reasons why they sought shelter in the peasant houses even at summertimes:

The gypsies were afraid to stay outside for the night, since the whites harassed them [*valkolaiset tekivät ilkivaltaa*]. When they stayed in a house, they could at least keep an eye on the housefolks. And the locals rarely came to do their tricks in their neighbours' corners.⁴¹²

Yet there were even cases in which drunken youth groups invaded their neighbour's house to attack the Roma staying there.⁴¹³ The youth were particularly prone to harass Roma, sometimes attacking the latters' wedding- or funeral parties in large drunken mobs.⁴¹⁴ There were stories such as the one of Adolf 'Tolffi' B.'s, who had been stabbed by an unknown drunken peasant; the aggressor had been set free by the bailiff, while Adolf B.'s horse had been confiscated to cover the doctor's fee.⁴¹⁵ In some areas, there were also echoes of wider outbreaks of inter-ethnic violence. For example in Tuusniemi, according to a former army lieutenant born in 1905,

Elder people told that they [the Roma] had formerly passed in groups which were even five horse-carts strong [ie., c.20-40 persons]. This they thought was because there had

⁴⁰⁹ 1 naula = 425,6g.

⁴¹⁰ *Uusi Suometar* no 11, 26 Jan 1872.

⁴¹¹ *Kiertolainen* no 1, 1907.

⁴¹² KM, A17, 366 (F1912).

⁴¹³ Kojonen 1899, 229.

⁴¹⁴ E.g. *Wuoksi* no 113, 2 Oct 1900; *Kiertolainen* no 3, 15 March 1908.

⁴¹⁵ *Kiertolainen* no 1, 1907.

been fierce fights between the local inhabitants and the gypsies, so the gypsies passed through in large groups because of safety reasons.⁴¹⁶

In 1910, *Karjalatar* published a winding story on the lives of gypsies in Finland, which concluded with a suggestion of a long-concealed mass-murder, which, according to persistent local rumours, took place in Nepola, north-east Finland, in 1860s:

The Gypsies at the Nepola backwoods lived in [...] huts, robbing and killing cows from the surrounding area and stealing other property. [...] On one clear summer night, the locals saw smoke arising from the Gypsies' camp and could from that make out the location of the bandits on that distant woodland. They went out to the Cossack prison guards at the Luosta Castle, and asked if they could borrow weapons. Did they reveal their purpose or not, we do not know. In any case, they got hold of weapons, and went into the direction betrayed by the smoke, found the Gypsies resting on the ground, and killed them all, according to some witnesses up to forty persons. They buried the corpses to the swamp or in the Nepola lake. [...]

There was no trial, as no-one chattered about the incident. The talks about this are still quite secretive, so that no certainty can be reached of the number of those killed. But it is assured that the massacre really took place. It has been the original justice of the backwoods' inhabitants on a grand scale, if not quite recommendable as an example.⁴¹⁷

Nothing can be said here about the truthfulness of the story, although the proximity of the Luosto work camp, into which many Roma caught as vagrants were sent along the 19th century – and from where many of them also escaped – gives the setting of the story historical credibility. In any case, the mere existence of such rumours, as well as the casual tone of the description⁴¹⁸ suggest that at least in 1910, a mass-murder of Roma would not have been unimaginable, and not even particularly shocking news.

In less unclear cases, the press keenly reported incidents of violent conflicts which involved the Roma in one way or the other. In my sample of 385 newspaper articles, there are 59 such separate cases reported between 1859 and 1909 (counting out reports of incidents abroad).⁴¹⁹ Of these, 15 – roughly one fourth – deal with conflicts between two or more Roma, with 9 of the conflicts taking place at market fairs. According to the context of the reported incidences, the rest break up into

⁴¹⁶ KM, A17, 606 (M1905).

⁴¹⁷ *Karjalatar* no 105, 17 Sept 1910.

⁴¹⁸ The story of the mass-murder is part of a rather convivial story of the Roma in Finland, and is interrupted by a technical description of their temporary huts; after suggesting a massacre of up to 40 Roma victims, the writer goes on to describe the geographical position of the murder scene, mentioning that one of the rivers close-by is known for log rafting; etc.

⁴¹⁹ Not all of these involved actualized physical violence, but could also be incidences of threats.

- 18 cases connected to disputed accommodation or ‘house intrusions’
- 10 “ attempts to imprison Roma / capture fugitive prisoners
- 8 “ attempted robberies
- 8 other disputes (2 of which fights during market fairs)

The composition of the reported cases can be assumed to reflect first and foremost the selective focus of the press rather than the social reality of inter-ethnic conflicts as such. Still, besides confrontations with law-enforcement officials and a number of robberies, the reported cases seem to point to the centrality of accommodation as a source of Roma-non-Roma conflicts.

Recurring elements come out in the latter cases: firstly, the Roma’s clinging for accommodation, against the backdrop of long-distance travel, often during winter-time; secondly, a rapid escalation of the situation, with both sides fast to take up arms; and thirdly, the strikingly swift appearance of neighbours in the help of the peasants.

For example, in Hämeenkyrö in 1908, a group reported to consist of 24 Roma tried to forcibly overnight in a peasant house on their way back home from a winter-market in Hämeenlinna. Refusal of the Roma to leave led to a skirmish in which axes and revolvers were displayed. No severe wounds were inflicted, and finally the Roma fled as the neighbouring villagers were arriving to help the peasants.⁴²⁰

Another time of confrontations was late summer, when the peasants were mostly occupied in fieldwork, with only women and children staying in the houses. It was regularly alleged in the press and later reminiscences that the resulting temporary physical superiority made the Roma brash and aggressive in remote houses,⁴²¹ and indeed there are some such reported cases in the sample. For example, in Keuruu in 1900, a group of 12 Roma was reported to have insisted on staying in a house where only the mistress was home. As the Roma refused to leave, the latter went to get help from the neighbours; meanwhile, the Roma allegedly stole money and coffee from the house, and were about to leave, as the mistress of the house, together with her neighbours, came to confront the Roma. Weapons were taken up, but finally the Roma

⁴²⁰ *Kiertolainen* no 2, 15 Feb 1908.

⁴²¹ E.g. *Haminan Sanomat* no 58A, 28 Aug 1893.

gave up without a fight, apparently returning what they had taken from the house, and moved on to what was disapprovingly described as ‘their sanctuary, a certain house where they usually are always humbly received, and in which they could now also spend their night [...]’.⁴²²

While in majority of the reported cases the confrontation remained restrained, there were also incidences of very brutal violence. Aside from a few unclear cases, there were 5 incidences in the 18 reported cases of house intrusions, which ended in the death of one of the partakers in the fighting; in three cases, this was a peasant; in two, a Roma. As can be expected, it was the former which received the most public attention. One of these three cases was a manslaughter taking place in October 1863, already mentioned in chapter 3.1, which was cited by the Governor General of Finland among the reasons to commission the first gypsy survey. In another case, a fight broke out in February 1895 between a large group of Roma, once again on a trip to a winter market, and a tenant farmer, backed up by three workers, after the former had tried to forcibly overnight in the tenant farmer’s house. The fight ended in the mortal stabbing of one of the workers, and the arrest of five Roma.⁴²³

The third case has been dealt with in length by Nygård, whose own ancestors were involved in a deadly fight with a group of five Roma men and four women in September 1888. In the case, the Roma rode into the Nygård’s estate, apparently drunk after a market trip, and allegedly provoked a fight with the master and the two sons of the house, fought out with scythes, steelyards, hay poles, and other striking weapons at hand. The master of the house and both of his sons were severely injured, one of them subsequently dying in his wounds. The Roma were arrested, and after lengthy legal process, received relatively lenient prison sentences (factual imprisonment of c.2-4,5 years).⁴²⁴ Also this case provoked great fury in the press, and was also described in detail in a popular song, ‘*Surulaulu murhasta, joka tapahtui Alajärven pitäjässä maustalaisilta 14. päivänä syyskuuta v.1888*’.⁴²⁵

Does the occurrence of cases such as these confirm Nygård’s emphasis on the Roma as aggressive and unwanted visitors, who brought uncertainty and fear into the

⁴²² *Tampereen Sanomat* no 199, 29 Oct 1900.

⁴²³ *Wiipurin Sanomat* no 28, 3 Feb 1895.

⁴²⁴ Although the case was dealt both by the court and by the press as an unprovoked attack of the Gypsies, there was apparently also a historical background to the case, in which the Nygård’s house had formerly accommodated Roma, but the custom had come to an end during the possession of the present generation. There had also been other minor tensions between the Nygård and the Lindgren families prior to the fight. Nygård 2001, 142-143.

⁴²⁵ Nygård 2001, 146.

lives of the sedentary population? In the fight on Nygård's family estate, for example, this kind of description would indeed seem to be justified. But it also appears that while this kind of cases received much attention, they were clearly highly exceptional. In Nygård's case, this can be seen in that among the 1310 criminal cases submitted to the Appeal Court of Waasa from the province of Waasa between 1885 and 1895, Nygård's was the only one involving one or more Roma accused of violence against non-Roma.⁴²⁶ In Eastern Finland, the situation was similar: within the 6940 cases dealt by the Appeal Court of Viipuri between 1865 and 1901, there were no cases of violent house-intrusions presented besides the 1863 case discussed above.⁴²⁷

Court records will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 6, but already at this point also another qualification of the 'history of violence' can be made: whereas the inter-ethnic conflicts and particularly cases of house-intrusions are emphasized in the press material, the court records give a picture in which violence between two or more Roma is clearly more common – and more deadly – than the conflicts between Roma and non-Roma. In terms of lethal violence, the former outweighed the latter in my sample by a ratio of 3:1.⁴²⁸

Of course, cases ending in appeal courts are only the tip of the iceberg in that mostly, only the most serious cases would have ended there; but still, the rarity of such cases in the provinces of Waasa and Viipuri⁴²⁹ – two areas with the largest Roma populations – is suggestive. While there is no certainty on how common less serious cases of house-intrusions were during the research period, at least I have not found indications of deadly house-intrusions during the research period besides the cases already presented.

What the rare but at times brutal cases of inter-ethnic violence seem to point to, then, is not a 'history of violence' or an unrestrained 'war' between Roma and non-Roma. Rather, they point to a latent tension with the peasants as an unavoidable part of the Roma's livelihood strategy, as it was based on daily personalized interaction, taking place within the physical boundaries of the peasants' households. To function, this interaction between mobile Roma and sedentary rural inhabitants demanded goodwill from both sides. When there was a breakdown of such balance, the inherent

⁴²⁶ VMA, Vaasan Hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Vaasan lääni, 1885-1895.

⁴²⁷ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, 1865-1901. See Ch 6.

⁴²⁸ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, 1865-1901. See Ch 6.

⁴²⁹ All serious cases within the provinces of Viipuri, Mikkeli and Kuopio were subjugated to the Viipuri Appeal Court.

material conflict of interest, together with ethnic stereotyping and violent tendencies in the rural Finnish culture, produced a high potential for violent confrontations.

That such conflicts were rare, can be seen as pointing to the normally well-working networks of ‘familiar houses’, as well as to the Roma’s active avoidance of conflicts with non-Roma, at least within their ‘own’ localities. But conflicts nevertheless *did* take place, and when they did, they automatically struck at the very heart of the peasants’ world, as they took place *inside* their homes. Despite the commonness of the practice of accommodating visitors, the fear of mobile, irregular and hence unpredictable intruders was at the same time widely shared by sedentary rural inhabitants, particularly in remote areas. This explains at least partly why the clashes between Roma and non-Roma – a tiny fraction of the overall violence in the increasingly turbulent countryside – sent such shock waves throughout the provincial press. It also helps to explain the frequently remarkable speed with which the peasants were able to mobilize neighbours into helping them in case a group of Roma would try to forcibly overnight. Although an aggressive visit of a group of unknown Roma was extremely rare, even improbable event in any particular peasant community, the possibility of such external threat seems to have nevertheless been commonly acknowledged.

4.5 The Roma’s survival: strength of the weak ties?

Despite multiplicity of economic activities and livelihood strategies oscillating between ‘peripatetic’ and ‘settled’, it is clear that there was simply not enough resources in most Roma’s in-group and family networks to accommodate for their survival. In this situation, their ability to reach out to the sedentary non-Roma population through what Mark Granovetter has called the ‘weak ties’⁴³⁰, that is, to build relations of exchange and trust outside the sphere of family and kin, became literally a matter of life and death. The picture which has emerged in this chapter contrasts thus sharply with earlier assumptions of the Roma as an isolated group: instead of isolation, the logic of mobile livelihood tied the Roma tightly into constant interaction with the peasants.

In terms of the occupational structure, there seems to have been a certain ‘ethnification’ and decreasing of diversity during the late 19th century. Still, there was a

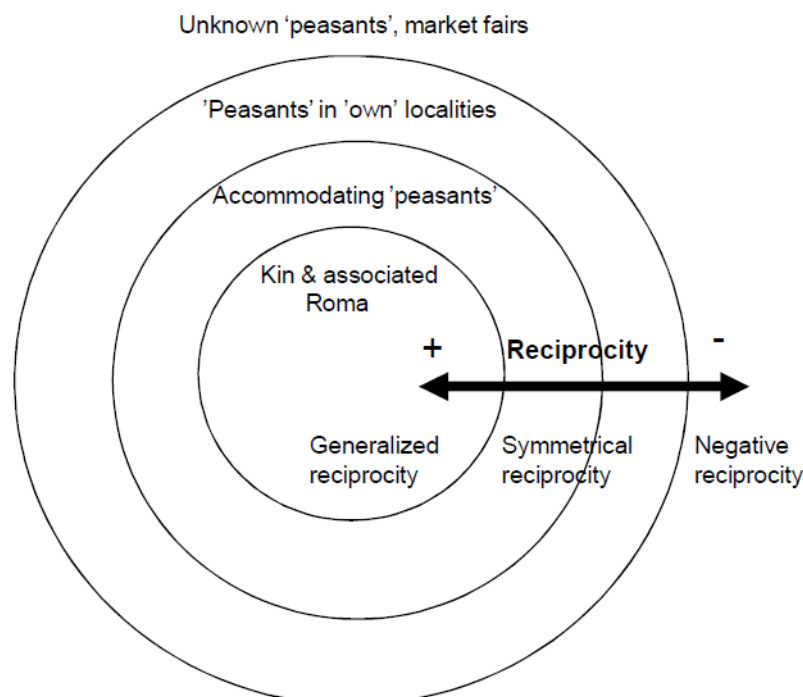
⁴³⁰ Granovetter 1973.

continuing versatility with a variety of low-capital activities flexibly adapted to seasonal changes and economic fluctuations.

All of the mobile economic activities, from lace-trading and fortune-telling to castrating animals and short-term fieldwork, were more or less clearly structured by an effort to build functioning social relations with key peasant clients/hosts/providers. This was visible particularly clearly in the way in which the logic of economic interaction was differentiated according to social proximity of the customers. In one extreme of the scale, there was personalized long-term exchange and carefully balanced reciprocity with key hosts/clients along regular routes; in the other, negative reciprocity (aggressive begging backed with magical threats, horse-swindling, etc.) in far-off areas, epitomized by profit-seeking horse-trade at market fairs.

On the basis of this, Figure 4 presents Mauss's scheme on the varying logics of social interaction, adapted to the above-dealt descriptions of the Roma's economic activities:

Figure 4: Reciprocity and social proximity in the economic activities of Roma



The differentiated logic of economic interaction helps to explain the surprisingly strong local Roma-non-Roma networks, functioning sometimes from

generation to generation, which existed *despite* a generalized mistrust towards the Roma, and the condemnations of the peasants accommodating them. While the networks of 'familiar houses' did not give the Roma outright influence or wealth, they nevertheless embedded the Roma into local social settings, and usually gave access to at least a minimum livelihood.

At the same time, the recurrent need of many Roma to make 'something out of nothing' in economic terms, and their constant dependency on the food and shelter provided by the sedentary population made the relation unavoidably a-symmetrical, even within familiar localities. Especially in wintertime and particularly after harvest failures, there was little that the Roma could offer to the peasants to compensate for food and shelter. Moreover, the physical intimacy which the necessity to lodge inside the peasant households imposed into the Roma-non-Roma relations, made not just positive interaction but also conflicts highly personal, and sometimes also dangerous for both parties involved.

5. On the borderline between 'Gypsies' and 'peasants'

On the level of outspoken norms and discourses, a strong mutual separation between the Roma and non-Roma, 'Gypsies' and 'peasants', has been emphasized by a number of writers.⁴³¹ Oral histories and written reminiscences seem to also mostly validate such emphasis.⁴³² Beneath the level of what is *said*, however, there has also constantly existed a more complex and largely overlooked reality in which the seemingly rock-solid barrier between the Roma and non-Roma worlds has been renegotiated and passed over.

In this chapter, I will thus probe into the nature of the ethnic boundary drawing by focussing on social actors who transgressed the line between Roma- and non-Roma communities in one way or the other, whether through intermarriage, vocational and social mobility, religious conversion, changing of name, education, or – as was sometimes the case in the 'successful' passing of Roma into the mainstream society – all of these.

But while the focus is on actors rather than discourses and categorizations, the first-mentioned were of course not free from the latter two. In particular, one of the features which has been found in widely different historical contexts to drastically decrease the flexibility of ethnic boundaries is a 'racial' difference. Conspicuous phenotypical differences, particularly in skin- and hair colour, regularly become boundary markers which perpetuate dichotomization between ethnic groups and make it difficult for families and individuals to transgress it.⁴³³

This has clearly been the case in regards to the Finnish Roma and non-Roma. On both sides of the ethnic divide, there has been a keen awareness and signification of phenotypical differences. This is evident already from the vernacular terminology: the Finnish word *mustalainen*, literally a 'blackling', or 'one who is black', was unparalleled with most external appellations in Europe denoting a 'Gypsy' in its strong emphasis on absolute physical difference. In contrast with the case of the Swedish Travellers, the naming of the Roma also had a clear consistency: the words *mustalainen* and its Swedish version *Zigenare* superceded the term *Tattare* already in the 18th century, and

⁴³¹ E.g. Grönfors 1984, Nygård 1998, Vehmas 1961.

⁴³² KM, A17; SKS, Rom SF interviews; SKS, RNinterviews.

⁴³³ E.g. Verdery 1996.

were systematically used by outsiders throughout the research period. With every utterance, *mustalainen* suggests an unambiguous barrier marked with what was seen as the ‘black’ complexion and hair-colour of the Roma.

Reinforced by selective perception, the skin colour of the Roma has been seen by the non-Roma as marking the boundary between not just cultural but also moral communities; between what the folk poet Paavo Korhonen called in 1835 ‘the nation’ and the ‘black family of blacklings’ (ie. Gypsies) ‘eating their bread like lazy dogs’.⁴³⁴ (the complete poem is cited in Chapter 3.1).

Oskari Jalkio’s light-hearted anecdote in *Kiertolainen* in 1907 perhaps gives some idea of the signification of colour on the other side of the ethnic divide:

”Why was I born white?”

“Oh why was I born so dark, as I was not born blond”, the Roma often sing. But last winter, this was disputed by a young Roma boy, who often had – and still has – to bear that appellation, so bothersome in the minds of the Roma, of “parno” (parno means white). One day he begins to wonder, how he could change himself into black. At last he finds a way and decides to tar his head. But the poor boy had barely begun to do this, when his mother rushed in to stop him. Thus he had no choice but to remain white.⁴³⁵

As the Roma and the rest of the Finnish rural population had little if any contacts with scientific racism before the 20th century, what can be observed from various sources can be seen as expressions of ‘vernacular’ racial and cultural categorizations. It is clear from a wide range of sources that these categorizations had in fact an anchoring in ‘real’ differences. Besides photographs, physical descriptions and the recurring talk of the ‘blackness’ of the Roma, this can be inversely inferred from the scattered references to ‘white gypsies’, or Roma called *Walkeapää*, (literally, ‘whitehead’), *parno*, etc.⁴³⁶ Reality was not black and white: individuals ascribed by their contemporaries as being Roma but without the phenotypical features usually associated with this *did* exist. But they were also recognized as exceptional by Roma and non-Roma alike. Although phenotypical differences did not coincide with the ethnic boundary completely, the overlapping was complete enough to make exceptions appear as confirming the rule.

The theme of ‘white Gypsies’ hints implicitly at another complex issue: the passing of non-Roma into the Roma communities through liaisons, marriages, adoptions

⁴³⁴ *Sanan saattaja Wiipurista* no 7, 14 Feb 1835.

⁴³⁵ *Kiertolainen* no 4, 1907.

⁴³⁶ E.g. *Mikkelin Sanomat* no 89, 4 Aug 1900.

and alliances, but also through a process of social labelling, what has been called 'tattarization'. In the Swedish context, the latter has been dealt extensively by Heymowski, who saw the category of *Tattare* as an external social label which could be extended over people with 'ordinary' peasant background if their occupation, outward appearance, surname or criminal behaviour made them match the stereotype of *Tattare* in the eyes of their social surroundings.⁴³⁷ There are some indications that this kind of labelling might at times have taken place also in Finland, with people appearing in the sources as non-Roma being persistently equated with- or labelled as 'Gypsies'. In the province of Mikkeli in 1855, for example, it was told that

the number of the gypsies cannot be said exactly, as they on their travels are mixed with peasant badness [...]⁴³⁸

Scattered support for a social labelling thesis can be detected elsewhere; in Keuruu, in 1864, for example, there was a family of poor-relief recipients, who were told by the parish priest to be *Zigenare*, but appear more likely to have been a 'drop-out' branch of a local peasant lineage⁴³⁹; throughout the research period, there are also numerous other families said to be *Zigenare* but with common Finnish surnames; and frequently, the newspapers expressed worries over Finns who for one reason or the other 'went along' with the gypsies; etc. Still, with the important exception of inter-ethnic marriages, discussed below, it has to be said that no clear evidence supporting a 'tattarization' thesis in the Finnish case has emerged in my research materials. This is, of course, also a methodological question, having to do with reliance mostly on synchronic sources dealing only with people explicitly categorized as 'Gypsies' at a particular moment. Without painstaking genealogical research, ideally going back several centuries, assumptions of mobility of individuals and families from 'non-Roma' to 'Roma' communities through social labelling remains an unsubstantiated hypothesis.

Consequently, aside from people with 'peasant' background marrying with a 'Gypsy', the following chapter deals exclusively with Roma who integrated into- or were otherwise close to the mainstream Finnish society. This should not be read as an argument that social mobility in the other direction did not take place, but simply as an admittance that if such mobility did exist, it is not clearly detectable in my sources.

⁴³⁷ Heymowski 1969.

⁴³⁸ *Suometar* no 42, 19 Oct 1855.

⁴³⁹ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Keuruu.

5.1 Interethnic marriages

In the light of the late 19th century Gypsy surveys, intermarriage between Roma and non-Roma was a rare affair. Particularly, the Roma women's matrimonial partners were almost exclusively from within the group. In 1866, the first Gypsy survey included 13 men and 8 women – c.4% of the 443 adults classified as *Zigenare* – either married to- or otherwise engaged with a non-Roma. In 1895, the proportion was smaller still. Out of 1025 adults categorized by the local bailiffs as *Zigenare*, 147 were married to- and 313 otherwise engaged with another Roma. There were 17 Roma men married to- and 2 otherwise engaged with a non-Roma women, 9 Roma women married to- and 1 otherwise engaged with a non-Roma man. Together with 1 man and 2 women who were widowers to a non-Roma, this made up 32 persons, or about 3% of the total adult population of *Zigenare* found by Walle's Gypsy committee.⁴⁴⁰

But what do such figures actually tell? There are evident a-priori reasons to doubt the reliability of the 19th century synchronic 'head counts' as sources in respect to intermarriage. Neither survey showed any reflection on the ethnic categories employed; they relied solely on the local authorities' perception of who, in their opinion, could be counted as *Zigenare*. Since the authorities' enquiry was framed by the measuring the 'Gypsy problem', ie. the counting of itinerant *Zigenare* families engaged in illegitimate profession, this could have excluded many – if not most – of those who were in matrimony with a non-Roma, if this was coupled with the adoption of a 'mainstream' way of life.

Simple comparison between the 1863-65 and 1895 surveys points to numerous cases of Roma in inter-ethnic unions who, between the two surveys, 'disappeared'. Members or descendants of five out of the 16 local lineages which included one or more intermarriages in 1863-65 can be identified in the 1895 survey data. For the rest, neither the parents nor their offspring can be found among the listed *Zigenare*. While mortality, emigration, and incomplete registration undoubtedly accounts for some of this disappearing, it also seems evident that a number of people who were categorized as *Zigenare* in 1863-65 had in fact lost their ethnic distinctiveness by 1895, as far as the local authorities were concerned. In Finnström, Åland Islands, for example, there were in 1863-65 two extended families, altogether 19 persons, who were told to be the

⁴⁴⁰ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51; Komiteamietintö 3:1900, 55-56; *Wiipurin Sanomat* no 291, 27 Oct 1898.

descendants of a gypsy couple who moved in from the Finnish mainland in 1804. The two families were relatively well 'integrated', lived in their own homes on rented land, and all of the adult children – three men and one woman - were intermarried with what the parish priest called 'inhabitants of this land'. In 1895, none of the members- or descendants of the family were included in the Gypsy survey.⁴⁴¹

Both surveys found Roma men marrying non-Roma women noticeably more common than the other way around. Taken at face value, this could be interpreted as confirming that the normative pressure towards endogamous marriage was stronger for Roma women than for Roma men. However, in a generally patriarchal and patrilocal society, Roma women marrying with non-Roma men would have been likely to move in with their husband's family, which could eventually lead not just to a change in livelihood pattern, but also to a lessening distinctiveness as a *Zigenare*. It can thus be assumed that Roma women were more prone than Roma men to 'disappear' from the authorities' and statisticians' view in the event of an inter-ethnic marriage.

Comparison of the surveys seems to offer some support, if inconclusive, for such assumption: out of the eight intermarried Roma women found by the parish priests 1863-65, only one was recognizable in the 1895 survey, as well as the daughter of another. (The latter was an adopted daughter of a Roma woman and a tenant farmer, who was added in the 1895 survey with very little information; the former Maria Sibyllasdotter C., who was soon to inherit her land-owning grandfather. With her newly wed non-Roma husband, Maria Sibyllasdotter was expected to take over farming on the family's allotment; in 1895, she did in fact control the farmstead, living there with her son, but was marked as being in matrimony with an unknown Roma.⁴⁴²)

Besides the survey data, reminiscences and oral interviews of Roma and non-Roma alike offer a trickle of references to Roma women who had married a non-Roma man, and subsequently passed over the ethnic divide. For example, in the beginning of the 20th century, at a time in which it was highly unusual for Roma to live in urban areas, a non-Roma respondent remembered a train conductor living in a middle-class area of Helsinki,

whose wife they said was a gypsy by her birth. She had dark, curly hair, and wore earrings, but otherwise dressed up in Finnish way, and there were no gypsies visiting

⁴⁴¹ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Finström.

⁴⁴² KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Orimattila; TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista, Orimattila.

their house. They had two girls, Lempi and Asta, we met on the way to school and they told their mother knew how to speak the gypsy language.⁴⁴³

As the citation implies, some of the Roma women married to non-Roma men not only underwent a kind of a visual assimilation through dressing up ‘in the Finnish way’, but also made a more or less a clean break from the rest of the Roma, including their kin, by moving into areas where these did not frequent, and declining from visits. This cutting of ties could be mutual. Oral interviews point to heavy social sanctions from Roma peers against kinswomen engaged in inter-ethnic relations, as for example in an interview of a woman, born in 1900:

- I(nterviewer): Well, if in the old days a gypsy girl married with a finnish man, was she abandoned by the tribe?

- R(espondent): Yes, yes, they abandoned her, and she herself didn’t want to come back any more [...] if somebody was with a finnish man then they were not equal any more and they [the Roma kinsmen] didn’t value her much, she was left to take care of herself and of her own life... she didn’t get similar treatment from the Roma tribe any longer, but was more, like, discriminated and depreciated.⁴⁴⁴

However, such a severing of ties did not always take place. In areas where the relations between the Roma and the non-Roma were particularly good, there seems to have been also relatively unproblematic intermarriages, as in Hartola, where it was told that

[...] Veeru’s group had many bunches, for example the band of Roope’s, the women of which were for the third generation married to the whites. They are doing well. [...] ⁴⁴⁵

In the written reminiscences of the non-Roma, there is a romantic topos of particularly beautiful Gypsy women marrying high-status non-Roma men, whether the latter were Russian aristocrats, esteemed scholars or, as in one story, the prince of Lichtenstein.⁴⁴⁶ The factual basis of these and of some more mundane stories relating to Roma women’s intermarriages is unknown, and cannot be overinterpreted. In any case, the persistently reappearing topos of Roma women marrying non-Roma men and consequently dissociating themselves from their ‘tribe’ seem point to at least some existing mobility across the ethnic boundary through intermarriage in each generation.

⁴⁴³ KM, A17, (F1902).

⁴⁴⁴ SKS, RN 19/67.

⁴⁴⁵ KM, A17, 725 (F1910).

⁴⁴⁶ E.g. KM, A17, 622 (F1899);

Not only women could ‘pass’ into the mainstream society through intermarriage. In 1895, Rudolf Palmberg, the bailiff of Uusikirkko was asked to compile a list of all the gypsies in his district; he wrote to the priest of the parish, Rafael Sarlin, inquiring especially about the family of Juhana L., born in 1836 in the same parish. Sarlin replied with details of L.’s family; the father, a cottager, had remarried after the death of his first wife, and had altogether nine children from the two unions. Both the late- and the current wife were non-Roma, as was the husband of the oldest daughter. The family had been vaccinated, and had attended the Holy Communion, had good reputation and earned their living with ‘ordinary works of the rural folks’. Sarlin concluded that the family had to be considered as ‘being in every way naturalized [*naturaliseerattuina*] Finns’. In his remarks to the Walle’s committee, Palmberg borrowed Sarlin’s wording, emphasizing the sedentary life and the lack of criminal record of the family. Palmberg suggested that ‘it would hardly be befitting to count Juhana L. among the gypsies any longer – and in any case, not his children’.⁴⁴⁷

As L.’s case illustrates, the problematic nature of ethnic labelling was sometimes made explicit by the local authorities. This was true also for the 1863-65 survey. In Pomarkku, for example, the parish priest Herman Hellén depicted positively the ‘useful’ and ‘impeccable’ livelihood of Karl Gustaf H., the municipal horse-shoer and rag-gatherer, who had bought a house after marrying a non-Roma woman. H. had a son and three daughters, the oldest of whom was married with a non-Roma workman. In Hellén’s opinion, ‘these children, who are born from a mixed marriage, and Christianly raised, should [...] not be counted among the Gypsies.’⁴⁴⁸

Whereas the local authorities were thus sometimes hesitant to include ‘mixed’ families into the category of *Zigenare*, the officials and statisticians receiving their reports showed little interest to such nuances. We cannot know how many uncertain cases were left out by local authorities; but at least Juhana L. and his family *were* in any case included into the results of the 1895 survey, as was Karl Gustaf H., who was one of the few intermarried *Zigenare* to reappeared in the latter survey.⁴⁴⁹

While it seems safe to assume that the tricle of individuals across the ethnic divide through intermarriage has been significantly more common than what uncritical reading of the two Gypsy surveys (and common claims of the Finnish Roma’s ‘racial

⁴⁴⁷ TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista., Uusikirkko.

⁴⁴⁸ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Pomarkku. Rosenvall’s case is also referred to by Pulma (2006, 73).

⁴⁴⁹ TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista.

purity'⁴⁵⁰) would suggest, it is still evident that interethnic marriages were in fact an exception to a general rule of endogamous marriage. The electronic database of the so-called history books of Finland, *HISKI*, includes 48 registered marriages throughout 19th century in which at least one of the partners was marked as *Zigenare*. In 44 cases out of these, both partners are identified as- or otherwise clearly recognizable as Roma. In three cases, there is one marriage partner whose ethnic background cannot be decreed; and only one couple involves a person appearing with reasonable certainty to be a 'non-Roma'.⁴⁵¹ The few existing genealogical studies do not suggest a significant amount of passing that would have been 'hidden' from the synchronic survey data either; intermarriages seem to have become more common only gradually along the 20th century.⁴⁵²

Further, as Pulma has suggested, most of the intermarriages found by the Gypsy surveys took place in areas where there were only one or few relatively isolated Roma families or individuals, pointing to preference to- or pressures towards endogamy where the Roma communities were large enough to be self-supporting.⁴⁵³ Interethnic marriages were also concentrated overgenerationally to a few particular lineages and their descendants, as in the cases of the families H. and L., and the two extended families of Finnström, the latter of whom accounted for 5 of the 19 known intermarriages in 1863-65.

Some of the reasons for the rarity of inter-ethnic marriages can be perhaps be illustrated by looking at the position of those who *did* intermarry. It is apparent that such couples could expect heavy social sanctions from both sides of the ethnic divide, including close relatives. In 1907, the travelling missionaries of Gypsy Mission wrote in Kiertolainen of a 'Finnish' woman, who had married a Roma musician; the man had been arrested after his mother-in-law had made vile accusations against him:

As we were looking for Roma, we met on the highway near the market place, amongst Roma women, a blonde Finnish woman dressed in a red skirt and Roma shawl, whose eyes were red of crying. Having asked the reason for her grief, we learned that the woman was the wife of a certain widely known Roma musician. They had lived together for two years. Now at the market-place, the man had been arrested [...] We

⁴⁵⁰ E.g. Nygård 1998.

⁴⁵¹ HISKI, 1800-1900 (as the database stood 15 May 2010.). The last-mentioned exception was the maid Anna Juhontytär Pesu, who married in 1887 in Sakkola (Eastern Finland) with a Roma man, a dependent labourer Antti Heikinpoika Z.

⁴⁵² E.g. Austin 2008, 87; research carried out by Kristiina Heinonen.

⁴⁵³ Pulma 2006, 73.

promised to talk to the bailiff about the matter. [...] The bailiff told us that the wife's mother had visited him during the winter and asked him to imprison the man, as the latter had supposedly tortured and finally killed her daughter. He also said that the man had earlier ruined many Finnish girls. He was, namely, a beautiful man. Since, however, the wife was present and alive, the bailiff released the man, with the condition that he would within few hours travel out of the municipality. [...]

The missionaries questioned the woman on the marriage, giving rare positive glimpse into the human side of inter-ethnic marriage in turn-of the century Finland:

Otherwise, the wife told us that his man had treated him very well. "Not many Finns can be nearly as good to me as him", she told. When she was asked, how and where she had met her husband, she answered: "at dance. – But I don't love his playing, or his dance; I love his kind heart."⁴⁵⁴

When marriages such as this withstood external pressures and possible cultural differences, the label 'Gypsy' could subsequently be extended on the non-Roma marriage partner as well as on the children. Such labelling could persist even when intermarriage was coupled with settled living and 'legitimate' occupation. For example in Ii, Northern Finland, a settled non-Roma man who married a Roma woman was still referred to as a *mustalainen* decades after the wedding, despite the couple's children being settled and married with non-Roma.⁴⁵⁵ In Impilahti, Eastern Finland, a woman married to a settled clocksmith of Roma origin was, after the death of her husband, generally known as the 'widow of the clocksmith Gypsy'. According to the reminiscence of a worker's wife, born in 1902, the widow was frequented mainly by passing Roma and remained socially isolated in the local community, being the object of fascination and fear among the local children.⁴⁵⁶

The recurring theme in the reminiscences of the non-Roma on the beauty of the Gypsy women – already touched upon above – conversely implied a notion of a social hierarchy on the marriage market, in which physical beauty was necessary in order to compensate the impediment of 'gypsiness' if a Roma was to marry a non-Roma. This can be read in stories such as the one told about a marriage between two Roma in Kiikala around 1910:

⁴⁵⁴ *Kiertolainen* no 5, 1907.

⁴⁵⁵ KM, A17, 193 (M1922).

⁴⁵⁶ KM, A17, 155 (F1907).

When Iitu S. [...] married a Gypsy, people said: why couldn't she get a better one, despite being such a beauty!⁴⁵⁷

But the de-preciation of marriage partners from the other side of the ethnic divide also worked the other way around. Many Roma seem to have strongly preferred endogamous marriage partners, and disregarded non-Roma in-laws, as is evident in the interview of a Roma woman, born in 1900:

- I: Well what about, how was a white daughter-in-law, a Finnish in-law, regarded?
- R: well, [...] there weren't that many [...] they [the Roma] didn't consider her as equal, they didn't demand any of that [- adherence to purity rules, MT], but they didn't consider her as having the same value... [...] I myself felt that a Finnish person, that even if he had dripped gold, I would never have even thought about it [...]⁴⁵⁸

The heavy social sanctions, particularly against Roma women engaging in inter-ethnic marriages have already been mentioned. Marrying a non-Roma was seen as deeply shameful, as forcefully stated by a woman, born in 1913:

- R(esponent): Everything is mixed these days! [...] Those who go with peasant men are not gypsies any more.
- I(nterviewer): Well, is that [inter-ethnic matrimony] a shame?
- R: [shouts] Yes, yes! It used to be such a big shame that, listen, if a gypsy girl went for a peasant man, they didn't even take her into the same company any more [...] it's not shameful any more, but people used to be ashamed [...]⁴⁵⁹

Yet, norms of endogamy might have ultimately played a less independent role in matrimonial choices than what the above excerpts and the references to intentional 'protecting of pure Gypsy blood' would suggest. The tendency towards endogamy and the consequent fixedness of ethnic boundaries was also a consequence of economic barriers, which concerned Roma men as much as the women. The ethnic boundary was entwined with a social one; in a society based on land-ownership and rigid social orders, the fact that most Roma were dispossessed as far as land and housing was concerned, already radically narrowed their range of potential matrimonial partners. The converging of ethnic and social impediments on the marriage market is captured in a verse of a lament, written down by a Roma informant of Arthur Thesleff in Karelia, 1895:

⁴⁵⁷ KM, A17, 714 (M1922, told to him by a female informant, born in 1885).

⁴⁵⁸ SKS, RN 19/67.

⁴⁵⁹ SKS, RN 23/68.

*Miks ei kukaan voi mua rakastaa
siks että sukuni on halvinta
mustalainen olen syntyjää
maailman kiertolainen arvoltaan*

Why can no-one love me
Because my family is the lowest
I am a Gypsy by descent
Vagabond of the world by my rank⁴⁶⁰

5.2 Foster children and farm labourers

Being raised as a foster child, or working as a maid or a farmhand all had the effect of attaching mostly young Roma, usually as isolated single individuals, into non-Roma households and communities. In such culturally exposed position, foster children and young farm labourers could be expected to be much more likely than other Roma to adopt the values and livelihood patterns of the mainstream sedentary society. In fact, assimilation through placing Roma youth into work in rural households was explicitly proposed by many of the exponents of 'raising the gypsies out of their degradation'.⁴⁶¹ However, passing over the ethnic boundary seems to have been a rocky road for the Roma taken into houses as foster children, farmhands and maids. This was noted also by contemporaries, such as by a candidate of philosophy, Robert Kojonen, who, in his survey on the 'religious and civic state of the gypsies', 1899, described how persistent popular contempt against the Roma pushed those who had grown up in peasant households back on the road with 'their people':

Of the ten known attempts to raise gypsy girls, not a single one has succeeded. Why? As they have grown older, they have seen the despised position of their kin, and perhaps themselves received insults from thoughtless people, they have decided to share everything with their people.⁴⁶²

Kojonen's interpretation on the marginalizing effects of ethnic labeling seems plausible enough, and is in any case more reflective than the standard references to 'restless Gypsy blood' or 'nomadic instinct' in explaining any difficulties those with a Roma background might have in settling down.⁴⁶³ However, it is unknown which ten

⁴⁶⁰ KB, Arthur Thesleffs papper, L11:4, Anteckningar om Zigenare, 5: Zigenares sånger och visor upptecknade i Finland.

⁴⁶¹ E.g. *Kotimaa* no 24, 28 Feb 1910.

⁴⁶² Kojonen 1899, 229-230.

⁴⁶³ E.g. KM, A17; Cf. Vehmas 1961, 162-165.

Roma girls Kojonen is referring to, as there are very few reliable references to this kind of cases from around the turn of century.

By contrast, the 1863-5 reports by the parish priests offer some exceptionally rich accounts on the life-situations of a number of Roma children and youth being- or having been raised in non-Roma community as foster children. The relative vividness of these descriptions reflects the close relationship between the adoptees, parish authorities and foster parents which the fostering necessarily involved. There are accounts of 22 such cases in the 1863-65 material, referring to a significant proportion – c.9% – of the 260 Roma children under 15. While not telling much about subjective experiences, the accounts still frequently convey something of the pressures faced by youth living on the borderline between Roma- and non-Roma communities.

In a laconic letter of the parish priest and theologian Aron Gustaf Borg to the Chapter of Turku in 1865, Borg described the situation of a maturing Roma girl, brought up as a foster child in the rural parish of Kuopio:

Katarina T., who calls herself nowadays with an assumed surname L., born in 1847. Birthday unknown. Parents unknown. Raised by the freeholding peasant Aron Jalkanen in the village of Haminalaks. Accepted to the Holy Communion 26.6.1853 with good skill in reading the book [Bible] and acceptable knowledge of Christendom. Earns her living for the moment as a maid at the home number 12 in the aforementioned village. Has not had complaints against her reputation.

After she in the fall 1864 gave up her service and joined her kinsmen in Leppävirta parish, wandering with them for nearly a month, she returned by her own will to the undersigned, and with a bitter sorrow renounced her behaviour, and has since that stayed in place in all decency, occasionally visiting the priests of the parish to relieve her soul's agony.⁴⁶⁴

Like Katarina T. or L.,⁴⁶⁵ many children from poor background were brought up by adoptive parents throughout the 19th and early 20th century. The giving of children into adoption was typically the last resort of unmarried maids and agricultural workers with illegitimate children. However, all the cases of adopted Roma which I have found from different 19th century sources involved children whose parents were either dead, imprisoned or unknown to the authorities. The case of Charlotta O. is typical. In early childhood, Charlotta was sent into a spinning house together with her mother, Helena,

⁴⁶⁴ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Kuopio Moderkyrko landförsamling.

⁴⁶⁵ Katarina seems to have been one of the last people bearing the name T., one of the oldest traceable *Zigenare* surnames in Finland, prominent in 17th century sources. SKS, Kansanrunousarkisto: Karl von Schoultzin arkisto.

who was sentenced there for vagrancy. Helena died in captivity in 1854. Six-year old Charlotta was then sent back to where she and her mother had been arrested, to be placed into the custody of a foster home. The municipality responsible for Charlotta proved difficult to settle, however. Charlotta and her mother had not been written down into the parish- or tax records in Nummi, where Charlotta had been born, nor in Kisko, where the two had mostly stayed at, and the authorities of both municipalities rejected responsibility over her. After an administrative tug-of-war, she was finally placed into a 'good, Christian' foster home in Kisko, which was compensated directly by the crown with a yearly payment of two barrels of grain, until Charlotta would reach the age of fourteen.⁴⁶⁶

The adoptive parents usually gained custody over children such as Charlotta in a yearly 'auctioning' organized by the municipality, in which orphans and abandoned children were placed into the households which were willing to take responsibility for their upbringing for the least compensation from the municipality. There were also less formal ways of gaining the custody over a Roma child. In 1830, the then 11 years old Lars U. was transported from Turku to Helsinki with his parents, who were sentenced 'either for vagrancy or for some crime' to forced labour in the Viaborg fortress island. In Kirkkonummi, some 25 kilometres before arriving to Helsinki, a local freeholding peasant charged with transporting prisoners offered to take Lars into his custody; according to the parish priest, the boy himself accepted the offer and agreed to stay.⁴⁶⁷

In Lars U.'s case, his foster home seems to have been able to give him a relatively secure upbringing as far as the sources can tell. More generally, however, the system of foster homes lacked oversight. Particularly the 'auctioneered' children were often treated as near-free labour, who could be severely disciplined and highly exploited by the adoptive households (usually farmers with both the need- and the capacity to support extra labour).

The frequently low social status of particularly the 'auctioneered' foster children ('*huutolainen*'), together with the persistent contempt towards those with Roma background perhaps partly explain, why many of the Roma youth raised at peasant houses seem to have had flimsy prospects on the local labour market once their foster parents' responsibilities ended. In Isokyrö, the parish priest described in 1864

⁴⁶⁶ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Kisko.

⁴⁶⁷ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Kirkkonummi.

disapprovingly Roma siblings, whom no-one in his parish wanted to hire after the adoption-term had ended:

[...] as I came to the parish, two Gypsy-children, the siblings Herman Karlson Y., born in 15.4.1838, and Maria Karlsdotter Y., born in 14.9.1846, were raised with a yearly support of the crown by an honourable and well-reputed freeholding peasant [...].

But while the last-mentioned fulfilled his obligations with honesty and care, as well as seeing rather orderly that the children were taught, partly in home, partly in the village school, he nevertheless did not succeed better than that, after both were [...] admitted to the Holy Communion, and shortly thereafter were separated from their foster parents to support themselves independently, both were found to be so restless, lazy and unwilling for any real work, that no-one wanted to take them into the yearly service, and that they only with difficulty could support themselves with temporary work. Finally, the brother asked for a moving certificate and went to Ala-Härmä, where he, according to his own account, bought a little tenant-farmhouse in 1864[.] His syster followed him there shortly after, without having yet asked for a moving certificate.⁴⁶⁸

In Vöyri, physical impediments caused by the authorities' mistreatment made some of the Roma adoptees' future prospects seem gloomy from the start. The three underaged daughters and a son of a gypsy woman Fredrika C. had been sent to Vöyri for adoption after she had died in the prison of Turku in 1853. All of the children were weak and of stunted growth, most probably owing to insufficient feeding while they had been kept in the prison of Turku; moreover, the youngest girl had become crippled after her legs froze during the wintertime prison transportation from Turku. The two oldest daughters nevertheless passed through the Bible school and moved to the town of Vaasa (Wasa) after they were discharged from the custody of their foster parents. The son, Johan, had also been discharged, but was told to have a tendency for itineracy, and to be so weak and lacklustre in work, that the parish priest thought it likely that he would eventually join his itinerant Roma relatives. As for the youngest girl Wilhelmina, who was just turning fourteen, and consequently falling out of the upkeep of her foster home, the parish priest thought that she should be given a lifetime maintenance by the state to compensate for the ailing caused by her 'worthless' transportation. Yet, it was doubtful whether this would be the case.⁴⁶⁹

In the case of Charlotta O., whose upkeep at her 'good, Christian' foster family in Kisko had also ended in 1864, the local parish priest was more optimistic.

⁴⁶⁸ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Isokyrö.

⁴⁶⁹ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Vöyri.

Charlotta was told to be good-natured, an excellent student at the bible school, and now properly employed as a maid. She had also made a promise never to follow her kinsmen on their wanderings, on which the priest marked dryly: 'we shall see if she keeps that promise'.⁴⁷⁰

The most upbeat description was given by the parish priest of Kirkkonummi on the above-mentioned Lars U. Lars was described as a devout Christian who regularly attended church services. Since leaving his foster home, he had worked in local peasant households as a farmhand. In 1848, he became a permanent labourer for a wealthy land-owner, and married in the same year a daughter of a tenant farmer. Subsequently, the couple got three children, the eldest of whom was by 1864 also already working as a farmhand. Only one thing still distinguished Lars U. apart from his community: the priest added that 'both his hair and the colour of his skin show, that he is of Gypsy origin'.⁴⁷¹

Of the 22 current or past adoptees described by the parish priests 1863-65, only a handful reappears in the 1895 material, or in any other of my source materials. In respect to these cases, a mixed picture emerges. There are cases such as Otto Vilhelm S., an adoptee from Ilmajoki, who emerges in 1895 material remarkably as a tailor and a journeyman of a baker, living in the industrial town of Tampere, with a non-Roma wife and a daughter. Lars U., adopted by the prison chauffeur, seems also to have 'passed' with his family. He died as a victim of an epidemic of typhus few years before his eldest son, also marked as a farmhand, married a non-Roma maid.⁴⁷²

More often, it seems that aspirations of social mobility hit a stone wall. In an extreme case, Anna Lovisa S., an adoptee from Koski, faced a systematic refusal of the local farmers to hire her after her adoption period ended; eventually, this led to her being arrested as a vagrant, which was followed by a cycle of workhouse sentences.⁴⁷³ Otto Wilhelm J., a fourteen-year-old raised as a foster child in Sortavala, was serving in 1864 as a farm-hand and was told to be determined 'not to wander around with other gypsies'. However, in 1895, we find him classified as *Zigenare*, living in the neighbouring parish (Uukuniemi) with no house, family or occupation, sentenced in 1868 for vagrancy, in 1870 for thefts, and in 1882 for a horse-theft.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁰ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Kisko.

⁴⁷¹ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Kirkkonummi.

⁴⁷² HISKI, Kirkkonummi, kuolleet, vihityt.

⁴⁷³ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Koskis Kapell församling i st. Mårtens Socken.

⁴⁷⁴ TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista, Uukuniemi.

The publicly criticized labour discrimination against Johan L. has already been mentioned below.⁴⁷⁵ Johan, an adoptee from Kuopio rural parish had difficulties in getting hired as a farmhand, despite having done agricultural work since childhood. Without any marked occupation, he later married a Roma woman and was involved in an attempt in Viipuri in 1907 to found a Roma-led local section of the Gypsy Mission.⁴⁷⁶ In 1908, Johan was attacked and beaten up in a village near Viipuri by two 'hooligans well-known by the police'.⁴⁷⁷

Besides these and few other fragmented markings,⁴⁷⁸ the fortunes of the foster children mentioned in the 1863-65 survey material are left obscure by sources relating specifically to people perceived as *Zigenare* / *mustalainen* by the authorities. More generally, the whole phenomenon of Roma foster children appears to be curiously absent from most sources concerning the decades around the turn of the century, including the oral histories and written remembrances.⁴⁷⁹ In any case, despite the pessimism of Robert Kojonen, and the theme of 'Gypsy blood' undermining all attempts of settling down,⁴⁸⁰ it seems likely that a proportion of the 'disappeared' foster children *did* in fact pass into the mainstream society, and, like most of those intermarried with a non-Roma, subsequently disappeared from sources based on ethnic differentiation.

The situation of some of the Roma youth working on the farmsteads of non-Roma was in many respects quite similar to that of the foster children (actually, many of the farm labourers in 1863-65 *were* former foster children). Both were in a position in which they were closer to non-Roma communities than most Roma; at the same time, it was usually far from self-evident that they would have been accepted as full members of these communities. In another example of the marginalizing power of ethnic labeling, Kojonen (1899) refers to a farmhand who keenly experienced this:

⁴⁷⁵ Ch 4.2, section 'Other economic activities'

⁴⁷⁶ TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista, Viipurin mlk; *Kiertolainen* no 10, 1907.

⁴⁷⁷ *Viipurin Sanomat*. Supistus no 126, 5 Nov 1908.

⁴⁷⁸ For example, Wilhelmina C., whose legs were frozen as a child when she was transported from Turku to Vöyri, can be found in the same parish in 1895, together with her elder sister who had returned from Vaasa, after having had an illegitimate daughter with a non-Roma man; there is no mentioning of any state compensations being given to Wilhelmina. TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista, Vöyri.

⁴⁷⁹ From 1930s onwards, however, the theme of Roma foster children resurfaces forcefully, particularly in the two first-hand accounts recently written or co-written by Roma who have themselves experienced the often oppressive childrens' homes. Lind 2010; Tanner & Lind 2009.

⁴⁸⁰ E.g. KM, A17, 558 (M1894); 204 (F1905).

One gypsy man had served six years, but then again left to wander with gypsies. To my question, had it not have been better to stay as a farmhand, get food regularly, good clothes to wear, a clean bed to sleep in, and above all, a powerful horse to ride with, he replied: "It was good otherwise, but as the village youth always mocked me for being a gypsy, I got angry and went away to live as a gypsy, as that is what I in any case am."⁴⁸¹

In the 1863-5 survey material, there are several cases in which previously sedentary young Roma men have recently quitted their earlier labour contract, and since then 'stayed outside the parish'.⁴⁸² However, these do not have to be necessarily interpreted as the ousted victims of ethnic labelling and discrimination. The work of farmhand was normally one which was undertook in young age, and was expected to gradually lead into more independent work. Quitting a labour contract and moving out of a parish was also normal and might have just meant seeking better terms of employment elsewhere. Moreover, the mobile Roma livelihood seems to have had genuine 'pull' factors, and it would be simplistic to see a switch to more mobile livelihood automatically as signs of exclusion and social decline. Taking contract as a farmhand could be intentionally aimed at saving enough money to buy a horse and then start horse-trading or gelding, occupations which were more prestigious within the Roma community, and potentially also profitable in economic terms.

This, of course, was only possible if one managed to get hired in the first place. As getting a yearly contract in a peasant house was highly dependent on local reputation and expectations, this seems to have been impossible for many young Roma. For example in Kemiträsk (Kemijärvi), Fredrika O., the 25-years old daughter of the local horse-shoer, complained that she had repeatedly offered to take the yearly service, but no-one wanted to hire her. Instead, she then travelled with her elderly father who complemented the incomes from horse-shoeing by fishing, as well as making and peddling 'lesser handicrafts'.⁴⁸³

In any case, as already seen in chapter 4.2 ('Other economic activities'), the position of farm labourer did in fact work as a stepping stone for upwards social mobility for some Roma. Getting employed in agricultural work both reflected and

⁴⁸¹ Kojonen 1899, 230.

⁴⁸² KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Nummi; Kuortane; Ruovesi.

⁴⁸³ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Kemiträsk.

strengthened trustful relations within peasant communities, as illustrated for example by the account of a non-Roma bricklayer, born in 1899, on the local gelder's family in Kangasniemi:

These gypsies were considered as the locality's own gypsies and they worked during the summers, for example Katri was even a maid in houses for many years, and bought also a cottage for herself [...]⁴⁸⁴

However, finding occupation as farmhand or a maid seems to have been getting significantly rarer during the late 19th century. In the 1863-65 material, there were 9 farmhands and 11 maids; in 1895, only 2 farmhands and 7 maids, representing a significant proportional and absolute decline. While there were other types of agricultural work which did not lose their significance to the same degree, this still meant the near-disappearance of one of the few legitimate, low threshold interfaces between the Roma and non-Roma communities.

All in all, the foster children and farm labourer were not very numerous, but in a position within the peasant households which gave an exceptionally direct pathway of 'integration' into the mainstream society. However, following this pathway was far from self-evident for most of the Roma in such position. For many, the uneasy position on the fringes of both the Roma- and non-Roma communities resulted in profound economic insecurity and to the 'soul's agony' suffered by Katariina T. or L. As Kojonen suggested, returning to itinerant life with one's 'own people' must have been very tempting where the Roma foster children or farm labourers were subjected to contempt or discrimination, regardless of the loss of material security and the social re-orientation which was to be expected from such a switch.

⁴⁸⁴ KM, A17, 165 (M1899).

5.3 Settled Roma

Throughout the research period, there were a number of Roma families and individuals which could be described as more or less ‘settled’. From the point of view of inter-ethnic relations, particularly the few families genuinely engaged in agricultural production on their own- or rented land were in an important watershed position. As they were scattered in individual families around the country, ‘settling down’ necessarily meant for them close interaction with the local non-Roma society, from municipal authorities, parish priests and neighbours to employees, landowners, etc.

As with the farm labourers, adopted children and those in matrimonial relations with non-Roma, a certain structural tension can be detected in the position of the settled Roma, with signs of uneasiness in combining Roma social and ethnic background with a sedentary livelihood within a non-Roma community. With this, I am not referring to any abstract notion of ‘identity crisis’ (my sources would in any case not enable such psychologizing) but rather to the evident difficulty of engaging simultaneously on two radically different socio-economic fields, seemingly mutually exclusive in many regards.

‘Settling down’ could of course mean many different things. Here, I am referring to those Roma who had access to their own or rented housing and/or an established position within a particular sedentary non-Roma community. As even clearly mobile Roma could be inscribed as nominal members of a particular non-Roma household, it is often impossible to make a clear distinction between the settled and more clearly mobile Roma in the sources. Yet certain groups of more or less genuinely settled Roma seem to be recognizable.

On the more modest end of the social scale, there were individual elderly men and women with the status of dependent labourer or ‘inmate’ (*inhysinge*, *muonamies*, *loinen*). They were paying a peasant or a tenant farmer, most probably in kind, to live in the latter’s houses or in separate cottages, while usually supporting themselves through the selling of various handicrafts, fishing and doing farm- and household work. Begging and fortune-telling could also be resorted to. Also mobile Roma artisans such as tailors

or blacksmiths, as well as temporary agricultural workers could be inscribed as residents of a peasant household with the status of *inhysinge*.⁴⁸⁵

There were also cottagers, tenant labourers and -farmers of various kinds, described in Finnish with the terms *muonamies*, *jyvätorppari*, *mäkitupalainen*, *torppari*, *lampuoti*, etc. As with the dependent labourers or inmates, the degree of actual sedentarization is often difficult to make out; at least in the 1863-65 material, the parish priests often expressed doubts about the genuineness of many Roma labourers' attachment to the households to which they were inscribed in.

On the wealthiest end of the social scale, there were the few Roma families who owned a farmstead, either partly or completely. Also these families were in the 1863-65 usually told to be itinerant, often leaving the farming to a hired steward. Around the turn of the 20th century, however, it seems that the number of Roma engaged in farming themselves was slowly rising.

More or less secure access to housing was often coupled with other signs of integration. Some of the members of the settled families were engaged in inter-ethnic marriages and their children could be enrolled in the local schools. Many were also told to be keenly religious, such as the above mentioned rag-gatherer and municipal horse-shoer of Pomarkku, Karl Gustaf H., who was in 1864 trying to get Roma youth enrolled into a missionary school, so that they could be used as envoys among the Roma of Eastern Finland.⁴⁸⁶ Surnames were also sometimes changed into less distinctively Roma ones, particularly after the first nation-wide wave of 'Finlandization' of surnames in 1906.

Whether these were the result of a conscious strategy of 'passing', or simply pragmatic adaptations to the sedentary social environment, it is impossible to tell. In any case, even the most clearly settled families could still face problems of acceptance, which resembled those experienced by foster children and farmhands. Being on the borderline between the Roma- and non-Roma communities could be connected to a difficulty of forming an established position within the local non-Roma society and holding on to it overgenerationally. In Sakkola, 1864, the dramatic story told by the parish priest of Margaret J. and her two brothers also points to the 'pull' of the Roma community and of itinerant livelihood:

⁴⁸⁵ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51; TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista; In many cases, however, it can be asked whether this meant much beyond the nominal legibility which this gave in relation to the vagrancy statutes.

⁴⁸⁶ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Pomarkku; Pulma 2006, 73.

Her [Margaret's] father Karl J. was in 1820s farming a part of an estate [*frälse hemmans del*] in the village of Kelja, assumably with the intention that his children, two sons and a daughter would stay there as farmers, but the sons became great swindlers and were both eventually killed. The daughter Margaret was still able to learn to read, wore similar dresses as the common people, and showed all signs of giving up gypsy-life. She was admitted to the Holy communion with adequate skills. But this had barely happened, when she gave up her good intentions – she married with a Gypsy, Wilhelm V., with whom she lived for some years, until he left her – took himself a Gypsy woman as a concubine, and with her by his side started to live a typical gypsy life. V. was also some years ago killed. Now, in her old age, she [Margaret] lives calmly, makes a living through doing handicrafts to the peasant women, and perhaps little witchcraft.⁴⁸⁷

The parish priest's interpretation of Karl J.'s inability to pass his position to his children, blaming it straightforwardly on moral failures of the sons who 'became great swindlers', and Margareta who 'gave up good intentions', leaves room to speculate whether some of the 'push' factors experienced by many foster children and farm labourers were also involved. As seen in the previous section, the latter were frequently marginalized as 'Gypsies' even when they had grown up in non-Roma families; it is probable that also the 'second-generation' of settled Roma faced strong social pressure from the surrounding non-Roma community.

Whatever the attitude of the non-Roma, it is evident that settling down often also meant a problematic relationship with the Roma who remained mobile. A common complaint against the settled Roma by their neighbours and by the local authorities was that they attracted 'flocks' of itinerant Roma visitors, who then begged in the surrounding neighbourhoods.⁴⁸⁸ If the settled Roma wanted to improve their standing vis-à-vis the non-Roma community, they were then under strong pressure to distance themselves from their itinerant relatives. As was the case with a number of Roma women in inter-ethnic marriages, some settled Roma families seem to have indeed severed their ties with most mobile Roma as they started to integrate into the non-Roma community. In Koivisto, Eastern Finland, for example, there was a village in which the local itinerant Roma did not stop, according to a non-Roma woman, 'because there was

⁴⁸⁷ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Sakkola.

⁴⁸⁸ E.g. KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Etseri.

a settled gypsy family living there with its own house, which did not tolerate their itinerant kinsmen.’⁴⁸⁹

Sometimes, the settled Roma were harassed by their mobile kinsmen;⁴⁹⁰ there were even violent clashes, as in the Kangasranta brick factory near Wiipuri, the dormitory of which became a scene for a series of knife-fights between resident Roma and their visiting kinsmen.⁴⁹¹

The tensions between sedentary and mobile Roma, as well as the wider problematique surrounding settled Roma are illustrated below by the case of the family E. of Leppävirta, a land-owning family which is exceptionally prominent in many of my various source materials.

‘Peasant Gypsy’ Carl Fredrik E. and his offspring

The Roma family headed throughout the latter part of 20th century by Carl Fredrik E. (1822-1897), situated in Leppävirta municipality in the province of Kuopio, was one of the very few to acquire proper farmsteads and to run them with apparent success for several generations. The family progenitors Ludwig and Carl Ludwigsson had for the first half of the 19th century held the post of municipal horse-shoer in Leppävirta, establishing a firm local position, and eventually investing their gains into a good-sized farmstead within the municipality.⁴⁹² Besides this farmstead in the village of K., the E.’s owned at least intermittently several others in the surrounding municipalities, Karttula, Kuopio and Tuusniemi, and apparently as far as in Kiihtelysvaara⁴⁹³ - some 150 km east from Leppävirta - at times renting these out- and selling them.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁸⁹ KM, A17, 213 (Woman, age unknown). The Roma family was told to be active in the local parish, send their children to school and maintain good relations to their neighbours – still, they also travelled for some weeks in every two months or so.

⁴⁹⁰ *Kiertolainen* no 10/11/12, 1909 (‘Kiertolaisen Joulu).

⁴⁹¹ *Kiertolainen* no 3, 15 March 1908.

⁴⁹² KA, Henkikirjat 1815, Leppävirta, Sockne Betjenste; KA Henkikirjat, Leppävirta 1830, Keinälänmäki.

⁴⁹³ *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* no 206, 5 Sep 1866; *Suomalainen Wirallinen Lehti* no 117, 1 Oct 1872.

⁴⁹⁴ *Finlands allmänna Tidning* no 25, 1 Feb 1859; *Tapio* no 25, 20 Jun 1863; KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Kuopio moderkyrkoförsamling. Carl Fredrik E. also subletted a housestead in Ritoniemi, Kuopio, to Wilhelm L., a Roma whose sincerity and status as a tenant farmer the parish priest of Kuopio rural parish in 1864 doubted, and who is later found with the inscription ‘municipal tailor’ (*sockne skräddare*).

The uncommonness of the family's situation was reflected in their inconsistent categorization in official documents. In 1833, Carl Fredrik's father, Carl Ludwigsson, was given a rare double inscription of *Bonden Zigenare*⁴⁹⁵. This ambivalence in official naming was passed to the next generation, who could in the tax inventories appear under 'normal' occupational categorization as *bonde* (peasant) one year, and as *Zigenare* the next⁴⁹⁶.

The case of the family E. seems to illustrate that in economic terms, it was possible to combine Roma-style commercial mobility with land-ownership and agriculture. At least before the last decades of the 19th century, the former seems to have taken precedence over the latter, however. From Carl Ludwigsson onwards, the family's land property was usually leased with a contract to tenant farmers, who were mostly non-Roma.⁴⁹⁷ This system, commonly used by the Roma at the time, gave the family a legitimate status which permitted travelling in the countryside. In 1864, the vicar of Leppävirta, L.Walle described the men of the family as mainly gelders, animal doctors and horse-traders, while the women knitted and weaved.⁴⁹⁸ (The latter appear to have been highly skilled, winning recognitions for their handicraft skills in provincial exhibitions.⁴⁹⁹) In 1895, everyone in the family except for ageing Carl Fredrik were still told to be itinerant, despite Carl Fredrik and his three sons being also marked as house-owners.

While this 'itineracy' doubtlessly involved old horse-related activities and services, by the last decades of the 19th century, the mobility of the family's sons seems to have increasingly connected to larger scale commerce, particularly trading with real estates. This was the case especially with the eldest son, Alexander. Whatever the nature of his affairs were – this is quite difficult to establish from the scattered sources – he seems to have been mostly successful, surfacing in local newspaper announcements concerning an estate of a deceased persons left to his custody (1882), debts owned to

⁴⁹⁵ KA, Henkikirjat, Leppävirta.

⁴⁹⁶ KA, Henkikirjat, Leppävirta.

⁴⁹⁷ The full contract made with the tenant farmer can be found, for example, in JMA, Leppävirran kärjäkunnan varsinaisiasiain pöytäkirjat 1867, talvikäräjät §74. As the family owned at times many farmsteads, communication with the tenant farmers could be problematic; in 1863, the tenant farmer in the farmstead in Kuopio, Kasurila, announced in the newspaper that he was getting too old to take proper care of the farm, and that Karl E., whose whereabouts he was unaware of, should urgently come to visit his property to make arrangements for the future. *Tapio* no 25 & 26, 20 & 26 Jun 1863.

⁴⁹⁸ Carl Ludvigsson's widow Albertina Långström nominally controlled the family housestead, and was the signator of the contract with the landlender; KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Leppävirta; JMA, Leppävirran kärjäkunnan varsinaisiasiain pöytäkirjat 1867, talvikäräjät §74.

⁴⁹⁹ E.g. *Tapio* no 39, 29 Sep 1866.

him (1887, 1905), announcements of newly bought property (1889) and an auction of a farmstead organized by him (1891).⁵⁰⁰

Despite their evident mobility, in context to the first public debates on the ‘Gypsy issue’ in 1860s, the family E. were perceived in central Finland as a unique and positive example of how Roma could settle down and support themselves with legitimate work. In the conjunction to the first Gypsy survey initiated in 1863, they even became something of public figures. Their views were heard in 1864 by the vicar of Leppävirta and by the governor of the province of Kuopio, relatively liberal-minded Samuel Henrik Antell, who summoned settled Roma to his office to give him information on the habits of the ‘Gypsy tribe’.⁵⁰¹

In the summer 1864, another ‘progressive’, newspaper editor Antti Manninen took interest in the family E. Manninen had founded a popular Mid-Finnish newspaper *Tapio* in 1861; under his editorship (1861-1866)⁵⁰², the paper published a series of articles dealing with the ‘miserable state of the Gypsies’. One of the articles included what was presented as the views of the settled Roma in the province of Kuopio, with an explicit reference to the family E. *Tapio* emphasized a sharp difference and tensions between the settled and the itinerant Roma, and claimed that the former subscribed to a very harsh stand towards the latter. According to *Tapio*, the few settled families did not partake into the ‘dishonest trades and the disorder’ caused by itinerant Roma, but

strongly disagree with that kind of life, even though they do not dare to make serious complaints against them [itinerant Roma], in the fear of their revenge. Of the sedentary [*kiintonaisista*] families, which are already well on the way of becoming settled and hardworking inhabitants, the farmowner Kalle E. and tenant farmer Taneli E. from Leppävirta both keep their eldest sons in a preparatory school here [in the town of Kuopio], in which these boys are known for their diligence and good behaviour.

There are thought to be about hundred Gypsies in this province, of which three families, one in Leppävirta, one in Iisalmi and one in Kontiolahti support themselves through regular agriculture in their own houses; besides this, two families in Leppävirta live as tenant farmers [*maa-torpparina*]. The rest [...] all practice itinerant life, without any legitimate occupation except for horse-trade and horse-healing with the men and some common local handicrafts with the women. They often forcibly stay in houses and deceive the local population, who treat them with fear and disgust.

⁵⁰⁰ *Savo* no 55, 18 Jul 1882; *Savo* no 91. 13 Aug 1887 (this could also refer to Carl Fredrik E.’s other son, August); *Savo* no 7, 17 Jan 1889; *Savo-Karjala* no 72, 8 Jul 1891; *Uusimaa* no 105, 13 Sep 1905.

⁵⁰¹ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51.

⁵⁰² Research dealing with Manninen’s fascinating newspaper career is currently undertaken by professor of ethnology Laura Stark.

When asked, the interviewed gypsies said that there is little hope to get older gypsies to do regular work, but that they can be kept in order and abidance of law only through the fear of losing their freedom, and through sentencing them into correction houses, whereas the gypsy children should, when the parents cannot be improved, be separated from the former and be taken into the families of peasants, in which they should be taught and forced into work; although they feared, that the remaining local gypsies would with force and in secrecy take back the children thus separated from their group.⁵⁰³

It is impossible to say, whether the views presented as those of the settled Roma were really theirs; the tough disciplinary idea of imprisoning the adults and taking the children into custody is suspiciously close to the ‘hardliner’ view on the ‘Gypsy question’ current at time, which, particularly after Manninen’s editorship, was advocated by the staff of *Tapio*.⁵⁰⁴

In any case, while sharply juxtaposing the itinerant and the settled Roma, the ‘interview’ of *Tapio* gave a largely unproblematic picture of the local position of the E.s’ in relation to the non-Roma society. Among with other settled Roma, the family was told to be ‘well on the way to becoming settled and hardworking inhabitants’, with particular reference to the schooling of their children. However, other sources give a less harmonious picture of the situation of the family E. in the following years.

Particularly in terms of interaction with the surrounding social environment – Roma and non-Roma alike – the story of the lineage seems ridden with conflicts, ranging from petty legal disputes to deadly violence. From decade to decade, members of the family appeared in the sessions of the local courts in and around Leppävirta and the town of Kuopio. They do not appear merely as respondents: they also repeatedly took legal action to settle their affairs, whether the issue dealt with contractual disputes with tenant farmers (such as in 1867), collecting of debts (1867, 1882), libel cases (1869), or claims of unlawful arrest (1874)⁵⁰⁵.

One of the lawsuits initiated by Carl Fredrik turned the relationship between the family and the newspaper *Tapio*, increasingly tense after Antti Manninen’s editorship of the magazine had ended in 1866, into an outright conflict. In 1869, *Tapio* made a passing accusation, based on hearsay, that Carl Fredrik E. would have been involved in

⁵⁰³ *Tapio* no 31, 30 Jul 1864.

⁵⁰⁴ E.g. *Tapio* no 39, 29 Sep 1862; *ibid* no 36, 3 Sep 1864.

⁵⁰⁵ JMA, Leppävirran kärjäkunnan arkisto, varsinaisiasiain pöytäkirjat 1867, syyskäräjät §52; *ibid*, §53; JMA, Kuopion raastuvanoikeuden arkisto, varsinaisiasioiden pöytäkirjat 1869, no 417; *ibid*, 30 Oct 1869 §5; *Tapio* no 37, 11 Sep 1869; JMA Kuopion raastuvanoikeuden arkisto, varsinaisiasioiden pöytäkirjat 1874; JMA, Pielaveden ja Keiteleen kärjäkunnan varsinaisiasiain pöytäkirjat 1882, Syyskäräjät §82; *Tapio* no 67, 25 Aug 1883.

an attempted violent robbery of a leather haulier near the market town of Kajaani.⁵⁰⁶ Carl Fredrik responded by suing the editors of the magazine. This led to a series of court sessions in the town court of Kuopio.⁵⁰⁷ Johan Rännäri, a head editor accused of defamation, wrote a commentary in *Tapio* with the title ‘peculiar’ (‘*merkillistä*’), in which he stated with cold irony that ‘this is probably the first print-libel case in Finland in which those gypsies, known to be innocent of crime, claim for their honour’.⁵⁰⁸ Remarkably, Carl Fredrik persisted and eventually won the case, although the compensations paid to him were in the end little more than symbolic.⁵⁰⁹ Particularly after the trial, *Tapio* skewed permanently against the Roma, with frequent hostile writing published until the closing down of the paper in 1888.

There were several less unique types of cases, which made the family E. highly conspicuous in legal sources and press material throughout late 19th century. Firstly, there were the kinds of accusations which ‘normally’ accompanied the life of many mobile Roma. In 1867, for example, Hedvig C., wife of Carl Fredrik, was accused of robbing belongings from a peasant’s daughter Brigitta Kluostarinen while visiting the latter’s home in a village in Leppävirta. There was also a connected accusation of fortune-telling. However, according to several testimonies, Kluostarinen had actually given the contested belongings away voluntarily as a compensation for the fortune-telling. Later, she had regretted her decision and sued Hedvig C. - probably not just in the hope of retrieving what she had given away, but also of avoiding being ridiculed.⁵¹⁰

Rarer in connection to Roma, male members of the E. family faced numerous disputes related to money and land property. Carl Fredrik and his sons Alexander, August, Gerhard and Sewerus seem to have been quick in making both debts and gains, and appear to have handled their affairs at times on the borderline of legality. In 1872, for example, Carl Fredrik and his son Sewerus were accused of selling land which they did not own;⁵¹¹ in 1877 Carl Fredrik was again accused together with a son, this time Alexander, for forging a false bond of debt.⁵¹² Several of the debts claimed by the

⁵⁰⁶ *Tapio* no 11, 13 Mar 1869.

⁵⁰⁷ JMA, Kuopion raastuvanoikeuden arkisto, varsinaisasioiden pöytäkirjat 1869, no 417; *ibid*, 30 Oct 1869 §5; The trials were reported on by *Tapio* in 11 Sep 1869; 25 Sep 1869; 2 Oct 1869; 30 Oct 1869; and in 6 Nov 1869.

⁵⁰⁸ *Tapio* in 11 Sep 1869.

⁵⁰⁹ JMA, Kuopion raastuvanoikeuden arkisto, varsinaisasioiden pöytäkirjat 1869, 30 Oct 1869 §5; *Tapio* 6 Nov 1869.

⁵¹⁰ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Kuopion lääni, §20/1867.

⁵¹¹ *Tapio* no 5,3.2.1872.

⁵¹² MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Kuopion lääni, §45/1877.

family members were publicly disputed⁵¹³, sometimes leading to legal battles, as in 1882, when August sued a Roma man from a nearby parish, actually hiring a prominent lawyer to help him win the case.⁵¹⁴

Finally, there was violence, with frequent incidents involving members of the family either as victims or perpetrators. In 1874, there was a fight involving Carl Fredrik's sons August and Gerhard against two appointed town guards in Kuopio;⁵¹⁵ in 1881, Carl Fredrik was sentenced to fines for assault and battery;⁵¹⁶ in 1882, August E. wounded another Roma man with a knife, again in the town of Kuopio;⁵¹⁷ in 1883, August was assaulted and badly beaten by two Roma men in Polvijärvi;⁵¹⁸ in the same year, Carl Fredrik's eldest daughter Albertina was beaten to death in Leppävirta;⁵¹⁹ in 1885, Gerhard was accused of attacking a peasant in conjunction to a robbery;⁵²⁰ in 1890, Sewerus's son Karl Robert died after being slashed with a knife by a Roma in Iisalmi;⁵²¹ in 1894, there was a fight in Kuopio between 'E. brothers' and Roma from Iisalmi, in which the parties accused each other of injuring a non-Roma passer by;⁵²² in 1899, Sewerus' grandson was sentenced for stabbing a Roma man to death in the town of Raahe, while acting in self-defence;⁵²³ and 1907, another grandson was killed after a knife-fight with two non-Roma acquaintances.⁵²⁴

This history of violence included some attacks against members of the family which were clearly connected to the E.s' strained relations with particular Roma lineages from nearby parishes. Any tensions were undoubtedly worsened by the family's straightforward manner of forwarding their interests, even in dealings with their kinsmen; thus, August was in 1883 seriously injured in an attack by two Roma men which took place few months after the above-mentioned lawsuit against another Roma man from nearby parish, in which August successfully claimed for debts with the help

⁵¹³ *Tapio* no 5, 3.2.1872; *Tapio* no 67, 25 Aug 1883; *Suomalainen Wirallinen Lehti* no 266, 13 Nov 1884; *Suomalainen Wirallinen Lehti* no 223, 27 Sep 1886. (however, the last two announcement of annulling debt to Sewerus E. might in this case refer to another person than Carl Fredriks' son Sewerus).

⁵¹⁴ JMA, Pielaveden kärjäkunnan arkisto, Pielaveden syyskäräjät 1882, §82.

⁵¹⁵ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Kuopion lääni §22/1874; JMA, Kuopion raastuvanoikeuden arkisto, varsinaisasioiden pöytäkirjat 1874, §3 (23.2.1874).

⁵¹⁶ TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista., Leppävirta.

⁵¹⁷ *Kuopion Sanomat* no 9, 30 Jan 1882.

⁵¹⁸ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Kuopion lääni §46/1883.

⁵¹⁹ *Savo* no 89, 3 Aug 1883.

⁵²⁰ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Mikkelin lääni §35/1885.

⁵²¹ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Kuopion lääni §7/1890.

⁵²² *Savo-Karjala* no 32, 9 Mar 1894.

⁵²³ *Vasabladet* no 132, 4 Nov 1899; *Tornio* no 86, 8 Nov 1899; *Salmetar* no 88, 11 Nov 1899; *Kokkola* no 47, 16 Jun 1900.

⁵²⁴ *Savon Työmies* no 124, 31 Oct 1907; *Keski-Savo* no 128, 12 Nov 1907.

of an advocate. In fact, most of the cases of violence were fights between the male members of the family E. and Roma from close-by parishes, some of them direct relatives. A number of the cases will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter; suffice it to say here, that while members of the family were frequently attacked, many of them did not shy away from using violence themselves either, and seem to have been mostly well ready to defend themselves.

The family E.s' relationship with their social environments was then routinely conflictual, and violence potentially present in their everyday life. Yet, Carl Fredrik and his sons were clearly also able to create and maintain extensive social networks, both with Roma and non-Roma, which enabled them to gradually strengthen their exceptional position as 'bonde zigenare', and to acquire considerable amount of property. From August E.'s advocate – an auscultant of the Supreme court – to godparents, clients, tenant farmers, parish priests, business partners and newspapermen, there were innumerable connections to the sedentary non-Roma society. At the same time, the family maintained long-term alliances with two-three local Roma lineages, whose members appear as the husbands, wives, tenant farmers, travel partners, etc of the family. This undoubtedly gave the family both social clout and, when needed, also physical force in their dealings with other Roma.

Carl Fredrik (or Kalle Reetrik) E. died in 1897, in the age of 75, after a prolonged illness, leaving behind him a fast growing offspring.⁵²⁵ The inheritance of the family farmstead was heavily disputed between Carl Fredrik's four sons, apparently leading to a temporary exile of Alexander, who, together with his family, moved to Russia for some years. Eventually, he won a lawsuit concerning the family farmstead and gained possession over it, but decided not to move back to Leppävirta. Instead, Alexander and his family moved into the capital of Finland, Helsinki, living apparently comfortably with the incomes from the rented farmstead.⁵²⁶

Subsequently, different branches of the E. family seem to have drifted apart. With some branches, settling down begun to mean an increasing orientation towards the non-Roma mainstream society. Alexander and his children seem to have been in the frontline of this development. Alexander, the eldest son of Carl Fredrik, was one of the

⁵²⁵ The passing away of Carl Fredrik was announced publicly, among other papers, in *Uusi Savo* no 78, 13 Jul 1897.

⁵²⁶ Palmgren 1966, 241; the passports which Alexander and his family took to move to Russia can be found from the digital database upheld by the Siirtolaisinstituutti (Migration institute, <http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/emreg/index.php>).

two children mentioned by *Tapio* who attended a preparatory school in Kuopio – although apparently only for few semesters. In 1891, he changed his surname into N., adopting a ‘non-Gypsy’ name well before this became common among the Roma. In 1896, he officially married his spouse, a non-Roma house-servant from Kuopio. His business affairs have already been mentioned; while in Russia, Alexander also worked as a surgeon, natural healer and a foreman, under which title he also appeared while publicly claiming large debts from an actor from Leppävirta in 1905. Alexander, one of the few Roma at the time to have received any formal education, was also told to have assisted Wallé’s ‘Gypsy committee’ while living in Helsinki on the turn of the century.⁵²⁷

Alexander’s motives for changing his surname in 1891 probably connected as much to pragmatic business considerations as to matters of ethnic identification. Connection to the E.’s was undoubtedly a liability in some of Alexander’s ventures, as the family had had much negative publicity after Carl Fredrik’s suing of *Tapio*, and as many of the family affairs had ended in publicly announced disputes. In any case, it is evident enough that the family’s old surname, with its unmistakable Roma association, could be a social burden and a hindrance to Alexander’s ambitions. There had also been a kind of a shadow boxing on the pages of local papers over the family’s status: whereas the E.’s always presented themselves publicly as farmers (*Bonden / Tilanomistaja*), those with any kind of grievance usually referred to them as *mustalainen*, evidently in many cases using this to question the legitimacy of the former’s claims. Under a less ‘ethnic’ name, Alexander perhaps hoped to be better protected from such public depreciations.

N. was a Swedish name connected to wealthy gentility- and merchant lineages, and as such carried overtones of prestige. However, as a choice it went against the great tide of the late 19th century: the rise of Finnish-language surnames. In the turn of 19th -20th centuries, in the context of the rising nationalism and the threat of political ‘russification’,⁵²⁸ the Fennoman movement campaigned for the ‘finlandization’ of the surnames of the Swedish-speaking gentry and other non-Finnish -sounding families. At the same time, Wester Finnish peasants, who had traditionally only used patronyms, were adopting Finnish surnames *en massé*. Perhaps with the exception of the latter group, what took place could be described as a large-scale masking of ethnic and

⁵²⁷ Palmgren 1966, 241.

⁵²⁸ Cf. Ch 3.1.

linguistic heterogeneity of the land's inhabitants, and a more or less conscious subscription to the nationalistic logic that only those recognizable as 'nationals' could become part of the emerging community of equal, enfranchised Finnish citizens.

In a great wave of 'finlandization' of surnames following J.V.Snellman's 100-year birthday celebration, 12.5.1906, about 35 000 families thus Finlandized their names within weeks.⁵²⁹ Along with these were Alexander N. and his family who changed their surname again, this time into M., as well as some other branches of the E. family who now 'finlandized' their surname.⁵³⁰

Between 1904 and 1907, most other branches of the E. family followed suit and adopted 'Finnish' names. Besides simple going along with nationalist popular sentiments and assimilationist pressures, these namechangings can also be interpreted as active seizing of new opportunities. Changing surname was now socially acceptable, even a national virtue; this hinted, at least symbolically, to a certain permutability of old identities, -ties and -social statuses, opening up prospects of new individualization. In the case of Carl E.'s descendants, it is noticeable that each of the family-branches chose its own surname, not a new collective one; 'E.' consequently versed into a multiplicity of 'ordinary' Finnish surnames.⁵³¹

Among the new Finnish-language surnames adopted by different branches of the family, Alexander's choice, 'M.', still stood out. It was a rare name which resembled the newly invented surnames of the Swedish-speaking upper classes rather than evoking associations to Finnish peasant roots. While finlandizing the family's surname was, then, an act which reflected a strong grasp of which way the wind was blowing in the Finnish society, at least in Alexander's case it was still far from a mere plea of being accepted as similar, to 'pass' or to 'melt in'.

The story of Kalle M., youngest of Alexander's sons, illustrates how the next generation both confronted- and distanced itself from the family's Roma background. Kalle was born in Leppävirta in 1891, originally baptized with the surname W. after his mother, then turned N., and finally M. With his family, he moved first to Russia and then to Helsinki, receiving proper schooling in the latter. As a youth, he became a journalist, working in several different towns in Finland. In 1909, at the age of 18, he

⁵²⁹ E.g. Paikkala 2004, 514-515.

⁵³⁰ *Suomalainen Wirallinen Lehti* no 109, 12 May 1906; *ibid* no 143, 23 Jun 1906; *ibid* no 174, 30 Jul 1906; *ibid* no 45, 23 Feb 1907.

⁵³¹ *Suomalainen Wirallinen Lehti* no 109, 12 May 1906; *ibid* no 143, 23 Jun 1906; *ibid* no 174, 30 Jul 1906; *ibid* no 45, 23 Feb 1907.

published *Mustalaisen kosto*, literally, ‘the Revenge of a gypsy’, which was a theatrical adaptation of ‘Liw’, a novel written by a Norwegian priest and writer Kristofer Janson.⁵³²

Liw was dark, romantic feuding story of a young Gypsy man, Aslak. Ushered by his mother, Aslak arrives to a remote peasant house to revenge his father’s violent killing decades ago by the master of the house, Gunnar. Aslak infiltrates into Gunnar’s household, becoming his farmhand. He begins his revenge by seducing and making pregnant Gunnar’s daughter, Liw, and by spreading rumours about Gunnar’s violent past. After many dramatic twists, the protagonist, softened by Liw’s love and Gunnar’s repentance, is finally unable to take his revenge to a bloody conclusion. Instead, he makes peace with Liw and Gunnar, and settles down in the house, uttering the last phrase of the play: “I think that a Gypsy will now become a real human being”.⁵³³

Apart from conventional romantic themes, *Liw* can be read partly as an apology of a ‘Gypsy’ lifestyle and morality, as well as a surprisingly subtle study of the problem of ethnic identification. It represents Gypsies fundamentally as dignified victims of poverty, harassment and depreciation. At the same time, the play shuns their ‘pretending, lying and stealing’, as well as social taboos and group pressures preventing individual Gypsies from breaking out from the forced fellowship and finding alternative livelihoods. For Kalle M., whose family had for decades tried to balance in the position of ‘settled’ Roma, and who himself was increasingly distancing from this background, Liw’s storyline must have had a deep resonance. Particularly, the figure of Aslak, a young man torn between the Gypsy- and peasant worlds, in the end deciding to ‘become a real human’, must have been easy for him to identify with. Kalle M.’s emotional charge can perhaps be read from the new title he gave to the play: whereas a previous Finnish translation⁵³⁴ had retained the novel’s original title, he chose to rename it with the much more dramatic title, ‘The revenge of the gypsy’.

After publishing *Mustalaisen kosto*, Kalle M.’s life continued with a remarkable sparkle. He studied in Germany in 1909-1910, after which he migrated into the United States, working in numerous occupations, among others as a street sweeper, gardener, house-servant, advocate, self-taught ‘doctor’, and finally again as a journalist, working in several different cities around the continent. During this time, Kalle M. became a

⁵³² Palmgren 1966, 241-242.

⁵³³ Tähtelä 1909, 50.

⁵³⁴ Appeared in 1879 in the newspaper *Uusi Suometar*.

committed socialist, publishing plays, novels and poems reflecting his new political views as well as his experiences as an emigrant. He moved back to Finland shortly before the Finnish Civil War broke out in 1918, becoming the head editor of *Sosialisti*-magazine (*The Socialist*). As the ‘red’ side soon faced a military collapse, he fled to Soviet Russia. Along with a handful of other Finnish emigres, he became a fighter-pilot for the Red Army, taking part in defending St.Petersburg from a counter-revolutionary attack. In 1919, Kalle M., who had started preparing a book dealing with the Finnish civil war, was shot down and killed by the white army.⁵³⁵

Apart from Kalle M.’s dramatic and clearly exceptional story, the overgenerational life course of Carl Fredrik E.’s lineage can be read as an example of largely ‘successful’ integration into the non-Roma society. From 1860s to 1890s, there seems to have been a tension inherent in the position of ‘bonde zigenare’, reflected in continuing mobility and conflicts with kinsmen, authorities, press, and neighbours. Subsequently, this tension seems to have been resolved through increasing orientation towards the non-Roma society, marked by increasing sedentarization, formal education, religiosity and the splitting of the family into several branches with ordinary Finnish surnames. As the reminiscence accounts of a one-time neighbour of Carl Fredrik’s grandchildren collected in 1971 testifies, there was also adoption of cultural habits and active creating of ties with key figures of local village communities:

The gypsies who owned farmhouses in the locality [Leppävirta] adopted same customs as the rest of the local masters. [...] The family of Vihtori E. were developed folks, and they owned a house in village H. [c.1910-1916] [...] they had a son, and they asked the teachers of the village to be his godparents [...] They once invited my mother and the teacher Mykkänen for a visit. The offerings were similar to those of other houses, and the housefolks very polite and friendly.

At the moment there are no gypsies with houses in my home village, although I have heard that there are some in Leppävirta, village of K., and that they are civilized people.⁵³⁶

But while the branches of the E. lineage referred to were told to be ‘developed’, ‘civilized’, ‘polite and friendly’, it is noticeable that the fundamental ethnic differentiation persisted; at least the families which had stayed in the locality remained, quite simply, ‘gypsies with houses’.

⁵³⁵ Palmgren 1966, 241-242; Ylikangas 2007, 123-147.

⁵³⁶ KM, A17, 475 (F1904).

5.4 Persistence vs. malleability of ethnic differentiation

- “Oh Alekski”, said the wife, “do we have to live like this all our lives; we don’t know if we’ll become prisoners tomorrow or today. Oh, it would surely be better to have our own place, if even a croft, in which we could work, live peacefully and teach that daughter of ours to be a human.”

- “Ha!” said Alekski, “what worth would we then be given, what peace would we get? Yes, everyone would mock the gypsies and laugh at them, and even our own companions would abandon us. Have you not often noticed with bitterness this contempt, which forces a gypsy to be a gypsy.”⁵³⁷

The excerpt above is from a story, published in 1852, allegedly depicting the life-story of a man who was adopted by the Roma in his childhood after the death of his parents.⁵³⁸ While reflecting the liberal progressive attitude of the writer, the excerpt seems to capture accurately one side of the dilemma faced by most of those Roma with aspirations towards social mobility within the mainstream society. Alekski, the fictional character of the citation, brings out explicitly what must have been a factual reality for many who otherwise might have had the resources or possibilities to settle down: that it was preferable to cope with the illegitimate and insecure itinerant livelihood than to face the social isolation, disdain and even violence frequently connected to social mobility and boundary transgressions.

In respect to inter-ethnic marriage, foster children, farm labourers and ‘settled’ Roma, the evidence points to a kind of an enforced ethnic belonging, sanctioned from both sides of the ethnic divide. For example, a Roma marrying a non-Roma not just remained a ‘gypsy’ in the eyes of the mainstream society, but also the spouse and offspring might have been subsequently labelled as such; at the same time, relations with Roma relatives might have been severed as a consequence of the inter-ethnic marriage. Similarly, settling down or working as a farm labourer not just exposed a person or a family to daily discrimination and disregard by the surrounding non-Roma community, but could also strain relations with other Roma to a breaking point.

The mutual enforcing of the ethnic boundary is of course not unique to the situation of the Finnish Roma during the research period; on the contrary, it is typical of situations where cultural, economic and phenotypical boundaries coincide. It brings into mind Fredrik Barth’s assertion that

⁵³⁷ *Maanmiehen Ystävä* no 50, 11 Dec 1852.

⁵³⁸ However, the story bears melodramatic and moral overtones which clearly reveal it as fiction.

just as both sexes ridicule the male who is feminine, and all classes punish the proletarian who puts on airs, so also can members of all ethnic groups in poly-ethnic society act to maintain dichotomies and differences.⁵³⁹

Yet, while ‘dichotomies and differences’ might have been imagined as absolute on both sides, they were never breachless in the reality. Equally evident in the sources with the ‘grammar’ of endogamy and strict ethnic boundary drawing is the existing ‘praxis’ of intermarriage, social mobility and assimilation. ‘Boundary’ as a metaphor is perhaps misleading in a sense, as it points to a singular borderline; in fact, there was significant local and personal variation in regards to the social ideals and norms sanctioning interaction between ‘Gypsies’ and ‘peasants’. Moreover, having tangible economic resources could, as in the case of family E., give a much broader range of possible lifestyle choices and, at least overgenerationally, relativize the significance and conspicuousness of ethnic difference. In respect to such complexities, the emphasis of Toivo Nygård, for example, on the intentional upkeeping of ‘racial purity’ by the Roma is understandable, but ultimately mistakes stereotypical mental constructions for much more complex social reality.

⁵³⁹ Barth 1969, 18.

6. The Roma in Court: Eastern Finnish Penal Records, 1865-1901

6.1 The courts and the cases

Before dislocations caused by the Second World War, more than half of the Finnish Roma lived in the eastern Finland, and particularly in the border province of Viipuri. This makes the Provincial Court District of Viipuri, covering major part of the Eastern Finland (see Figure 5), a convenient starting point for tracing the relationship between the Roma and the peasants as it appears in court records.

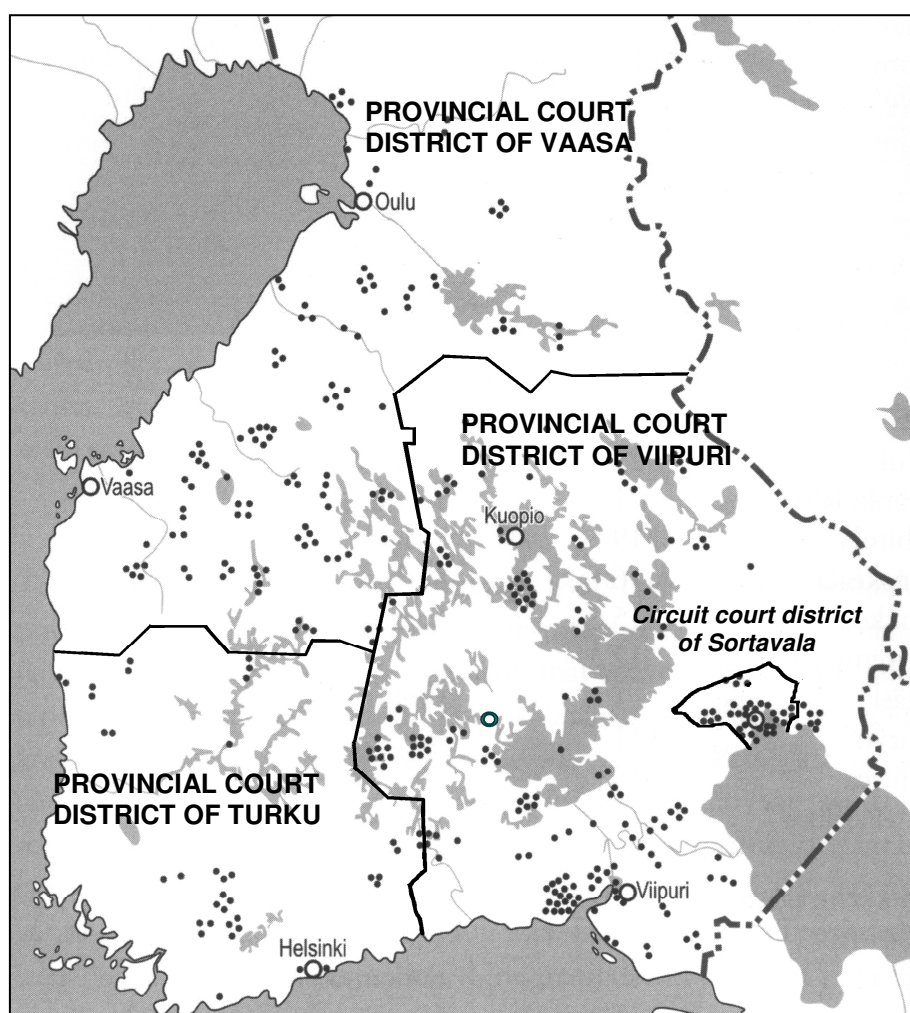


Figure 5. The provincial court districts, circuit court district of Sortavala and the Roma in Finland according to 1895 Gypsy survey (Each dot = 5 persons). Base map: Pulma 2006.

I have made a systematic search of all trials held at the Viipuri Provincial Court between 1865 and 1901 which involved defendants named explicitly- or otherwise recognizable as Roma, totalling 59 cases. As a higher judicial instance, the appeal court handled only serious cases and appeals submitted to it by the local circuit courts of the provinces of Viipuri, Kuopio and Mikkeli.

The appeal court material consists of some 460 pages, and gives a good macro-level picture of the criminal cases against the Roma perceived as serious. However, the provincial court did not produce as detailed primary records of the cases as the lower courts, and the full testimonies or exact evidence for the cases is usually not presented.

In order to form a deeper micro-level understanding of the criminal cases raised against Roma and to probe into the local dynamics of such cases, I have done two additional things. Firstly, I have traced the original circuit court level trials of 14 of the cases. Secondly, and more significantly, I have done a detailed case study on all criminal cases appearing at the circuit court of Sortavala, 1883-1894, involving one or more Roma either as defendant, complainant or witness. Situated in North-East Karelia, Sortavala was the parish which had the largest single concentration of Roma in Finland. The so-called '*Zigenarekoloni*' (Gypsy colony) of Sortavala, together with the districts of Uukuniemi and Ruskiala, which belonged to the same jurisdiction, included 144 persons in 1865, 140 in 1895⁵⁴⁰. Sortavala was also at the frontline of change when the position of the Roma became increasingly debated and problematized from 1863 onwards; several of the initiatives put forward in the Diet came from the representatives of Sortavala.⁵⁴¹

My sample in the circuit court district of Sortavala includes the detailed proceedings of 18 penal court cases from between 1883 and 1895, consisting of some 250 pages transcribed by courtroom clerks. These include all the witness testimonies and other raw material produced in the course of the criminal investigation. Together with 14 circuit court cases traced through the provincial court of Viipuri, these represent the most 'microscopic' level in my analysis.

The 59 trials against one or more Roma held at the Viipuri appeal court (Viipurin Hovioikeus = VHO) made up a little less than a percent (0,85%) of the total of 6940 cases handled by the court between 1865 and 1901. Some of these trials deal with

⁵⁴⁰ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51; TK, Tilastoarkisto, K 9, 1895 tutkimus mustalaisista, Sortavala.

⁵⁴¹ Pulma 2006, 84-87.

more or less professional criminals and intertwine into each other, such as the two hearings in 1866 which were centred around *Zigenare* Johan Å. Together with four accomplices (including three non-Roma, one of them Russian citizen), he was accused of a string of more than 40 thefts and burglaries, perpetrated over the span of four years all over Finland and in the Russian borderlands⁵⁴². Most cases, however, are of much more modest scale, and even though VHO in principle dealt only with serious crimes, repeated offences and cases submitted from the circuit courts, the sample includes also a number of allegations dealing with what appear to the modern reader as very slight offences. Thus in 1893 we find a continuation trial on the theft of two silk scarves, allegedly stolen from fire wreckage by a Roma woman Wilhelmina A. Staggeringly, the circuit court had in the initial trial sentenced A. to death by hanging. Even though death sentences had since the 1820s in practice been systematically converted into other forms of punishments, this automatically meant a re-examination of the case by the Viipuri provincial court. (In the re-trial, the Provincial Court found the sentence formally right, based on a law on theft during a fire dating back to 18th century, but decided to mitigate the sentence rather fundamentally into two years of imprisonment)⁵⁴³.

Together, the Sortavala and Viipuri samples consist of 72 individual criminal court procedures in which the Roma appear as defendants⁵⁴⁴. Since each trial could include several types of accusations against one or more defendants, the number of alleged offences is greater than the number of the individual trials. If the allegations are divided according to the offended party, these break up as follows (table 5):

⁵⁴² MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §65/1866; Kuopion lääni, §8/1866.

⁵⁴³ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §57/1893.

⁵⁴⁴ Three of the cases in the Sortavala sample lead into a continuation trial in Viipuri provincial court, and subsequently appear twice in the court record material. There are also two cases in Sortavala in which the Roma do *not* appear as defendants: in one, dealing with a manslaughter of a day-labourer, three Roma men appear as key witnesses, and in the other, dealing with an arson threat, there is a claim made that an unidentified Roma man was involved.

Table 5. allegations according to type and offended party.

| <u>Type</u> | <u>Occurrences</u> | <u>% of total</u> |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| Offences against non-Roma | 57 | 67 |
| Theft(s), burglary(ies) | 49 | |
| Assault and Battery | 3 | |
| Manslaughter | 2 | |
| Robbery | 2 | |
| Disturbance of domestic peace | 1 | |
| Offences against public order | 17 | 20 |
| Forgery of documents/ incitement to forgery | 5 | |
| Travelling with false passport | 3 | |
| Trade with stolen goods | 3 | |
| Resisting police / theft of officers weapon | 2 | |
| Avoidance of drafting | 1 | |
| Infanticide | 1 | |
| Fortune-telling | 1 | |
| Forgery of money | 1 | |
| Offences against other Roma | 11 | 13 |
| Manslaughter/involuntary manslaughter | 7 | |
| Assault and battery | 2 | |
| Robbery | 1 | |
| Defamation | 1 | |
| TOTAL | 85 | 100 |

In analysing inter-ethnic relations and conflicts, the first category in the table above – alleged offences against non-Roma – naturally appears central. As can be seen in the table, these also clearly dominate the sample. What is further immediately noticeable is that these cases deal overwhelmingly with alleged property crimes – in the Sortavala sample, exclusively so – taken place mostly on private farmhouses and fields. While the Viipuri provincial court records do not always specify what kind of property is involved in the cases, the more detailed Sortavala sample suggests that the property crimes were strongly dominated by alleged horse-thefts, which in Sortavala constituted 8 out of 13 cases.

Of course, not all accusations led into convictions. The Viipuri provincial court reversed many of the sentences already handed down by the lower courts, after founding

lack of evidence or faults in the handling of the cases. Sometimes these faults seem so blatantly obvious, that it is difficult to avoid an impression of the local courts simply wanting to get rid of certain Roma, or to find a locally acceptable scapegoat. For example, in 1873, the circuit court of Uusikirkko (province of Viipuri, Eastern Finland) had sentenced Gustaf Adolf Å., a Roma from neighbouring parish (Koivukylä) for breaking into a church and stealing valuables, among them a government bond for 500 silver rubles. However, at the night of the burglary, the defendant had still been in prison in the town of Tampere, West-Central Finland. In fact, Gustaf Adolf Å. had been released only few days before his arrest, and had only gotten hold of the bond as it was given to him as a warranty for a loan. The charge of theft was dismissed, but Gustaf Adolf was nevertheless sentenced for fines for accepting the bond and, decreed as ‘illegitimate and ill-mannered person’ sent to face vagrancy hearings.⁵⁴⁵

In another, perhaps more typical case, taking place in Walkeala in 1877, 120 lashes⁵⁴⁶ and a life sentence was passed for a third-time horse-theft to a Roma man who, however, was in fact not the person whom the circuit court was claiming him to be. Subsequently, the provincial court re-examined the case, and found the defendant to be a first-timer. This altered the judgement decisively. Instead of life-time imprisonment, the final sentence was just fines, which were altered first into 120 lashes, and then further into 28 days of imprisonment ‘with water and bread’.⁵⁴⁷ This latter case already takes us to the problem of identification, to which I will return to in the section ‘Names, passports and identities’ below.

6.2 The accused

The 72 cases in Sortavala and Viipuri districts involve 121 named defendants, including 15 non-Roma who appear as accomplices, forgers of false documents, buyers of allegedly stolen goods etc. There are also 10 people who are not explicitly or consistently labelled as ‘Gypsies’ in the court records, but described as such in other sources. A pattern familiar from parish records and Gypsy surveys emerges: the ethnonyms ‘Zigenare’ or ‘Mustalainen’ never occur together with occupational labels or

⁵⁴⁵ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §45/1873.

⁵⁴⁶ The official expression for this corporal punishment is an euphemism of a sort: it is always dubbed as ‘40 pairs of lashes, with 3 lashes in a pair’. This kind of punishment was potentially deadly.

⁵⁴⁷ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §26/1877.

other kind of descriptions of social status, under which the non-Roma invariably appear in court records. Rather, the status of Roma substitutes other labels as a kind of total description of the person's occupational and social as well as ethnic status. Conversely, when a person from a Roma lineage clearly has a occupation/status seen as legitimate in the rural social order, such as houseowner, peasant's son/wife etc. (or, as in two cases, is a lifetime prisoner), the description *Zigenare* or *Mustalainen* disappears, and is sometimes literally scraped over from transcribed court records.

Majority of the defendants were men (96), but also 25 women appear, in most cases charged with minor property crimes, household thefts, pickpocketing or fortune-telling. In terms of age, the defendants were noticeably young, typically between the ages of 20 and 25. Also youth and children were involved, such as the two boys aged 9 and 12, dubbed by the bailiff as 'the children of Cain', who admitted stealing four jackets and two hats from Sortavala teachers' seminary.⁵⁴⁸

In terms of geography, the accused came more often from outside the parish where the alleged crime was committed than not. In Sortavala, which had the single largest population of Roma in Finland, this seems remarkable: in more than half of the trials in which one or more Roma were accused, they came from outside the parish (see Figure 6). Furthermore, the few local accused were often involved as members of itinerant bands with widely mixed geographical origins. Thus the relatively small number of local accusants in Sortavala (besides making a genuinely local conflict analysis impossible⁵⁴⁹) supports the picture of functioning inter-regional interaction between Roma and the peasants.

⁵⁴⁸ MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisiasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 10.12.1894.

⁵⁴⁹ From the point of view of my research, an important effect of the fact that most defendants in Sortavala come from outside the parish is that the circuit court records do not really tell much about the communal dynamics or neighbourly relations in Sortavala, something that has been the main preoccupation of many previous studies utilizing lower level court records (see Spierenburg 2004).

[...] now 22 years old, was born in Jääski parish and is a son to a Gypsy Malakias Wilhelmsson E., registered in Hiitola, and to Gypsy woman Albertina Ä., of whom the father died about eleven years ago but the mother still lives. He is not sure whether he was baptised or not. After his father's death, E. tells that he only exceptionally wandered around like other Gypsies, and was mostly employed [as a farmhand] at Pyhäjärvi parish; only last year's fall [1883] he resigned himself and, after starting to make his living as a gelder, arrived to Sortavala shortly before the winter market [...]⁵⁵⁰

Karl Gustaf had worked as a farmhand for more than a decade, which usually meant yearly service in the peasants' houses, periodic search for new employers coupled with seasonal unemployment (which might also account for some of his 'wandering'). Then for some reason he took up an economic activity, gelding, and a pattern of movement that was more clearly identifiable as a 'Gypsy' life-style. Similar shift recurs in many Roma life-courses, in which lawful if low-ranking position in the peasant society (farm-hand, milk-maid, student, cottager, tenant farmer etc.) slides into a more mobile, 'ethnic' and illegitimate livelihood. While gelding was independent work and not necessarily a step downwards in terms of living and working conditions, this kind of economic activity nevertheless carried with it a certain stigma, and was seen as outright vagrancy by the authorities. For Karl Gustaf, the shift proved critical and led him rapidly into troubles with the authorities. In February 1884 he was sent to serve a short sentence in the provincial prison in Viipuri for slashing a peasant with a knife, which was soon followed by a charge on theft. (In the court, E. told that he was talked into taking responsibility of the theft by another Roma man, who wanted to avoid much more serious sentence which he would have faced as an offence repeater.)

After short sentences, Karl Gustaf joined in April with Roma woman Lovisa Z. and a small, loosely bound group of young Roma, who wandered from house to house in the rural parishes surrounding Sortavala. Getting accommodation in the peasant houses did not seem to have been a problem, and it is probable that Karl Gustaf continued with either gelding or farmhand activities. In late May, while he was staying at a tenant farmer's cottage, another young Roma man who had recently joined the company attacked Karl Gustaf E. after an argument over Lovisa Z. In the ensuing knife-fight, Karl Gustaf slashed his opponent mortally; himself severely wounded, he claimed

⁵⁵⁰ MMA, Sortavalan käräjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 15.7.1884.

self-defence and received relatively short sentence of three years of imprisonment, which the court of appeal further mitigated into two years.⁵⁵¹

In 1895 survey data we find Karl Gustaf again. After being imprisoned for a theft in 1893, he, now 33 years old and with several prison sentences behind him, had returned to his childhood parish, Hiitola, and taken up working as a farmhand again.

In another case, a roughly similar picture emerges of lawful but insecure position on the lower echelons of East-Finnish peasant society. Herman A. was a 29 years old itinerant farmhand from northern Savolax region, recently married to a non-Roma woman who went to Russia, Petroskoi, to earn extra incomes during the summer. Confessing a burglary and horse-theft on Greek-Roman archbishops estate in Sortavala, September 1895, Herman told the court that he

...was raised mostly by his mother, learned to read and even to write a little, and stayed most of his young age in the parish where he was born and also registered in [...] About four years ago he moved to Kivijärvi village in Ilomantsi, where he is still registered as a dependent labourer [*loiseksi*][...]. The defendant has supported himself through honest work, although the longest time he has worked in one single place was in parish of Eno [...], where he served in [...] a house for a full year.⁵⁵²

Like Karl Gustaf E., Herman A. was employed only for short periods at farms and gradually became increasingly itinerant. This meant an growing risk of being seen as a vagrant and being viewed as a suspicious outsider when outside familiar areas. While waiting to meet his wife who was supposed to return from Russia to Finland through Sortavala, Herman, who was far from his home areas, told the court that

he did not socialize at all with other Gypsies nor with any other people, except for the grocers who he bought food from, and hotels in which he visited to drink alcohol; neither did the defendant remember any houses in Sortavala town or nearby, where he would have stayed for longer time; instead, he started spending his nights as well as his days alone, out in the nature.⁵⁵³

As the waiting prolonged, Herman A. was running out of money and susceptible to arrest as a vagrant. He was an utter outsider to the local peasant community, which was physically visible in his solitary habitation in the woods and in isolated sheds.

⁵⁵¹ MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisiasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 15.7.1884, MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §2/1884.

⁵⁵² MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisiasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 25.11.1895.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

While the sources leave much room for speculation on the matter, it seems that for Herman A., the step from a status of illegitimacy to actually committing a crime was not necessarily very long one.⁵⁵⁴

Names, passports and identities

What is obvious in the penal records is that the authorities had constant problems in establishing and ascertaining the identity and origins of the individuals labelled as ‘Zigenare’ or ‘Mustalainen’. Especially in Karelia and other eastern parts of Finland, the Roma were often not registered in any parish nor formally married. Their names, especially of those who had not been baptized, could be fluid and follow a distinctive logic in which first names, epithets, matronymes, patronymes and surnames could all take several different forms and be interchangeable. The situation was further complicated by differences between Finnish and Swedish written forms; especially high-ranking officials, often Swedish-speaking, were in the habit of ‘translating’ Finnish names into Swedish ones. The result could be a muddle. In the fall of 1894, for example, the circuit court of Uukuniemi accused *‘The Gypsy Juhana Kalle’s – or Otto-Wilhem’s son C. or C¹, also known as ‘Otto’s Janne’*⁵⁵⁵ for a first-time horse-theft. When the final sentence of three years of imprisonment was handed down, the accused was still called rather ambivalently *‘Juhana C². or C¹’*.⁵⁵⁶

The vagueness of the Roma’s names was only one aspect of a wider position of illegitimacy in relation to the state and the church (or of independency from them, depending on the point of view). At the same time, the Roma could also take advantage of the authorities’ difficulties to establish their identities in order to circumvent the vagrancy laws and to avoid harder offence repeaters’ sentences. Such an attempt, and the risks involved are illustrated by the following case. On the morning of 20 October 1887, the bailiff of Korpiselkä met what he described as a large ‘flock’ of Roma in Soanlahti parish, some 30 km north from Sortavala. The bailiff tried to arrest the Roma, but most of them escaped into the woods, and the bailiff only caught one woman and

⁵⁵⁴ MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisiasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 25.11.1895.

⁵⁵⁵ The numbered letters here refer to separate surnames which nevertheless have significant resemblance with each other. The original Finnish appellation as it appears in the court record is *‘Mustalainen Juhana Kallen - tahi Otto - Wilhelminpoika, C. eli C¹., jota myös kutsutaan: "Oton Janneksi”*. MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisiasiain pöytäkirjat, Uukuniemi, välikäräjät 19.11.1894.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid. The numbered letters stand for three surnames which are distinctive, yet bear also resemblance to each other.

one man. The woman was immediately sent to nearby parish of Ruskeala, where she was apparently registered as a resident. The man claimed to be Gustaf B. from Kajaani, some 220 km northwest from Soanlahti. As a proof, he presented passport and drafting certificate which gave him right of passage in the province of Kuopio. The bailiff then released the man and told him to immediately return to his home parish. However, at nightfall the man returned to the village, and the bailiff arrested him for a second time. This time, the man's belongings were confiscated and he was kept imprisoned for further interrogation.⁵⁵⁷

After nine days of imprisonment, the man told that he was actually Aleksanteri Otonpoika ('son of Otto') Y. from neighbouring Sortavala parish. Later he corrected his surname to be Ö., and told that an unknown man had gave him Gustaf B.'s documents on a market trip to Joensuu town, saying that he would be free to travel with them. The defendant told that he took the documents as he did not have any of his own, and so assumed a false identity⁵⁵⁸.

As already mentioned in Chapter 2, the Roma accused for vagrancy were subjected to administrative rather than legal procedures. There was no trial, and little chances for complaining for the outcome, which could involve long sentences of forced labour. Without additional charges, such as the false identification, the vagrancy cases do consequently not appear in the penal records. In 'Aleksanteri Ö.'s case, we find that the defendant had already served a year in prison for vagrancy. During the trial, he claimed that his father was registered in Sortavala; however, the authorities could not find Aleksanteri Ö. himself in the parish records, so besides the fines imposed on him for false identification, he was sent to the Governor of Karelia for vagrancy procedure. With previous convictions, this might have meant several years either in imprisonment or in forced labour.⁵⁵⁹

As stated in the chapter 2.1, even Roma who were duly registered in certain parishes had often difficulties in getting legitimate passports for travel, making itinerant occupations or looking for work outside home parish risky. As the passports were not very sophisticated documents, the authorities' reluctance to grant travel permissions to Roma inevitably led to the temptation to take matters into one's own hands. Thus in

⁵⁵⁷ MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, Ruskeala, välikäräjät 17.12.1887.

⁵⁵⁸ Or 'Kustaa Pekanpoika B.' in the drafting certificate. MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, Ruskeala, välikäräjät 17.12.1887.

⁵⁵⁹ MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, Ruskeala, välikäräjät 17.12.1887.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to seek out the vagrancy procedure documents, as the material is most likely held in Viipuri, present-day Russia.

1887, Johan V., who was registered at Sakkola Parish as a tenant farmer, was caught at Kuolemanjärvi, some 60 kilometers from his home parish, holding a forged passport with false signature from the bailiff of Sakkola. For this, he was sentenced to fines equalling 12 days of imprisonment on water and bread and to losing his reputation, but avoided the vagrancy procedure as he was registered as a tenant farmer.⁵⁶⁰ However, as his ventures outside home-parish point to, and as a parish priest who knew him (and, incidentally, taught him to write) wrote in his answer to the 1863-65 Gypsy survey, Johan V. was a tenant farmer only on paper.⁵⁶¹ As told earlier, such an arrangement was not unusual: when the Roma could, they bought or rented land for nominal hold and sublet it for a sharecropper to circumvent the vagrancy laws.⁵⁶²

While for Johan V. the status of tenant farmer worked, and he got off the forgery charge with a relatively slight sentence, unclarity with travel passports and identification was risky for others, particularly as the processes of ascertaining identities and documents often turned into prolonged remand imprisonment. In 1868, a case appeared to the Viipuri Provincial Court in which a Roma man was accused for using false travel documents, made to him by a retired bridge guard. The provincial court found the case flimsily built, particularly as no-one had made sure whether the travel document used was actually a copy of a legitimate passport. The case was returned to the circuit court, which, half a year later, passed it again to the Provincial Court. By the time the case was re-examined and the original conviction was finally confirmed in Viipuri in 1869, the accused had already spend a whole year in imprisonment, and while the actual sentence was not very hard – minor fines and loss of citizenship rights for a year - potentially much worse consequences followed as he was also sent to be questioned on vagrancy charges.⁵⁶³

All in all, exposed attempts to present a false identity come out in nine cases. To counter such attempts, the authorities routinely tried to check the identities of the accused Roma from parish records. This, however, involved lengthy exchange of letters with parish priests and only gave results when the Roma actually *were* registered somewhere. In the last instance, for myself as much as for the authorities, there is little certainty of many of the accused Roma's identity.

⁵⁶⁰ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §44/1887.

⁵⁶¹ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51 1863, Dean of Sakkola to the chapter of Porvoo.

⁵⁶² Cf. Pulma 2006, 71.

⁵⁶³ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §48/1869.

6.3 Property crimes

Property crimes were generally the most common category in the court records. Towards the end of the 19th century, steepening social stratification brought in an increasingly clear class element in this. Typical cases, then, were simply ones in which dispossessed people took things from those with property. This picture also held true in respect to the property crimes involving Roma as defendants. Besides limits of trust, allegations of property crimes point to an inescapable class division in the inter-ethnic relations.

In petty household thefts, element of poverty is also clearly present. Unsurprisingly, what the lists of confiscated goods bring out are regularly basic necessities: small amounts of food, clothing and fodder. This kind of thefts concentrated strongly on particular months; especially October was prominent, counting for 21 cases out of a sample of 44 alleged property crimes. This points to the precariousness of the Roma's situation in Autumn and Fall: their dependence on the landholders in terms of food and housing became absolute at the same time as the houses had less motivation to offer accommodation and give or exchange food for them.

Clothing could evidently also be very scarce. In September 1894, for example, a band of 3 Roma men and 2 women were travelling from house to house in Sortavala. They had no particular problem in getting accommodation in the houses. While they posed as locals, they were actually from outside Sortavala (Liperi and Sääminki in the province of Kuopio). According to the tenant farmer Juhana Kiiski,

the accused, after being let into his [Kiiski's] tenant farm in September 8th to spend the night there, stole at night from an open hallway closet one pair of boots, a men's shirt, trousers, a women's shirt, woollen socks, a belt, a new men's shirt and a cotton wool scarf [...]⁵⁶⁴

On the trial, the defendants denied having taken the socks, which Kiiski admitted as possible, as the list of stolen objects had been written by his wife. Such banalities aside, the situation was serious for the Roma, as some of them had already been sentenced for thefts; the sentences given for the members of the band consequently ranged up from four months to three years in prison.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶⁴ MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, syyskäräjät 15.10.1894, §191.

⁵⁶⁵ MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, syyskäräjät 15.10.1894, §191.

Much more serious still, and highly consequential for inter-ethnic relations, were the thefts of horses. The crucial role of the horses as the Roma's most important objects of transportation, trade and prestige has already been mentioned (cf. Ch 4.2). The great importance of horses was not only true for the Roma. Almost as much as the land itself, the horses were at the core of the 19th century Finnish peasant society and economy. They were both the single most important means of production as well as of transport, and regularly the most valuable commodity of a peasant household aside from the fixed property. Owning a horse was also an important status symbol, signalling masculinity and independency in the village community.⁵⁶⁶

Consequently, in cases of horse-thefts, the stakes were high for both parties. This is reflected in the risks the perpetrators were taking (criminal sentences on horse-thefts were severe, and possibility of getting caught relatively high), in the persistence of the victims in pursuing the thieves, and in the swift and often surprisingly effective way in which a wide regional community closed in on the horse-thieves. That horses attracted constant attention in East-Finnish peasant communities is obvious in the sources, and this played a major role in the outcome of many of horse-thefts in the sample. A kind of peasant solidarity is visible here, in which news of a horse-theft immediately activated whole communities into finding the perpetrators.

This is apparent, for example, in a case where a group of two young Roma boys, aged 19 and 15, together with a young girl, stole two horses, carriages and other property from two peasant houses they had earlier slept in at Sortavala, summer 1890. After a flight south to Pyhäjärvi, the group tried to sell the horses to a peasant, who declined as he did not believe the Roma to have ownership over the horses. Finally the trio managed to sell one of the horses to a Roma man at the same parish; by this time, however, fast moving rumours and a group of pursuers trailing the Roma were already catching up with them. The youth divided; eventually, the older boy was caught in Uukuniemi, north of Sortavala, after the son of the stolen horses' owner heard rumours about his whereabouts. A month later, also the younger boy was arrested, after a tenant farmer he was staying with had recognized the stolen horse and given him up to the bailiff.⁵⁶⁷

In another case, already mentioned above, Herman Berg broke in night-time into the heavily locked stable of a Greek-Roman archbishop's estate, riding out with an

⁵⁶⁶ Cf. Östman 2004, 25, 60.

⁵⁶⁷ MMA, Sortavalan käräjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 14.7 & 13.9.1890.

expensive black gelding horse, high-quality carriages and some other property. Swiftness and accuracy of the burglary made the bailiff of Sortavala later suspect that Berg operated with an accomplice from the estate, but this could not be proved. In any case, the theft was followed by Berg's flight to the northern Savo region, an area which he knew well. What Berg also knew was that his horse and carriage would draw attention to him, so he travelled only at nighttimes, staying in the woods at daytimes and feeding the horse with hay he took from nearby meadows. Within a short time, he travelled almost 200 kilometres, not stopping anywhere for long time.⁵⁶⁸

However, archbishop Antonius's estate was not just any scene of crime, and the other side acted swiftly as well. Early in the morning after the burglary, the farm-hands discovered what had happened and alarmed the bailiff, who initiated immediate chase. There was also a warrant of apprehension that was rapidly circulated to the bailiff offices all around Eastern Finland, as well as an announcement of theft that the steward of the archbishop published in local newspaper.

Besides official efforts to catch the thieves, there were unofficial ones; apparently as a favour to the Orthodox archbishop, a Russian merchant from Sortavala town sent his coachman to chase the burglar. Ten days after the crime, the rider recognized archbishop's horse in Juuka on the farmyard of a house where Berg had stopped for the night. Immediately, the rider was able to gather a group of villagers, with whom he then captured Berg and three other Roma travelling with him, delivering them to the local bailiff.⁵⁶⁹

On the basis of this quick mobilization - a recurring phenomenon in the sources - it could be argued that while the authorities' efforts were effective in closing the circle around Berg, in the last instance it was again the peasants' mutual solidarity in the face of a property crime, felt as a stab to the heart of agrarian community's basic means of survival, which was decisive in catching the alleged thief. It is striking that this kind of communal defence of property could also be extended into helping Roma, when *they* were victims of horse-thefts, as will be seen in one of the cases dealt in the Chapter 6.4 ('Violence between Roma').

With the horse-thefts more than with other crimes, it seems that the perpetrators were either very young, un-established locals, or outsiders relatively far from their home areas. The confessed perpetrators were men working in pairs or alone, like Herman

⁵⁶⁸ MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 25.11.1895.

⁵⁶⁹ MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 25.11.1895.

Berg, or itinerant bands with a mixed geographic origin. Sometimes the defendants seem more like professional burglars, such as Johan Å., already mentioned in chapter 6.1, and acted with several non-Roma accomplices. His ‘career’ was not stopped by the jail sentences he received in 1867 and 1869, nor even by a life sentence in 1872, but only six years later, as after a jailbreak and new allegations on horse-thefts he was finally sent to prison for the fourth time in 1878.⁵⁷⁰

In another case of a ‘desperado’ horse-thief, a fugitive Roma, also named Johan Å. but widely known with the nickname ‘Peiju’, committed a string of horse-thefts in 1887 while on flight from the authorities. In the previous summer, ‘Peiju’ had mortally stabbed his half-brother, was caught and sentenced in November to six years of imprisonment (which sentence also included punishment for a theft which Johan Å. had allegedly committed in 1885 while presenting himself as Benjamin Z.). As he was being escorted to a prison, he managed to escape, and went hiding in his home parish, Walkeala, aided by local friends. Finally, ‘Peiju’ tried to escape from Walkeala with his family, and on his eastward flight stole a horse and cart; after two weeks’ pursue, the fugitives were caught.

From the perspective of local relations between the Roma and the peasants, the impression that the alleged horse-thieves were often either ‘upstarts’, ‘outsiders’, ‘desperados’ or ‘criminals’ would seem to make sense. An incident of horse-theft was always a serious blow to the local relations between Roma and the majority, and the better established Roma, dependent on the local peasants’ goodwill for their livelihood, had much to loose in such cases.

6.4 Violence

In terms of violent crime, it is maybe worth repeating that I have only been able to systematically look at cases in which people explicitly labelled as *Zigenare/Mustalainen* (or, in few cases, recognizable as Roma from other evidence) appear as *defendants* for alleged crimes. Consequently, the sample only touches upon the violence perpetrated against the Roma by the majority population – and in any case, it must have been very rare for the Roma to report such cases to the authorities. This should by no means be read as my claim that violence by non-Roma against Roma

⁵⁷⁰ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §39/1872.

would have been less frequent or -significant than vice versa, but simply that it is extremely difficult to reach this violence from the court record material.

Keeping this significant bias in mind, what is immediately noticeable about the incidences of violence allegedly perpetrated by the Roma is that a clear majority of these cases deal with physical conflicts *between* two or more Roma; inter-ethnic violence is much less frequent. If only the 'hard core' of violence, cases demonstrably resulting in serious physical injuries or death are accounted for, there are three times as many cases of Roma against Roma (9) than Roma against non-Roma (3) in the sample. Admittedly, the court record sample includes so few cases of violence that this relation could well be co-incidental. Yet, it seems suggestive that in terms of the relative rareness of inter- as opposed to intra-ethnic violence, some other materials give a very similar picture. For example, a list of Finnish criminal convicts deported to Siberia between 1809-1917 includes 39 Roma, of whom 19 were sent out to serve manslaughter sentences. The victims of these manslaughters included 13 persons explicitly titled Roma (including 3 women) and 6 non-Roma – again, less than a third⁵⁷¹. The Sortavala sample, covering years 1883-95 seems also suggestive: there are two cases of one-on-one knife-fighting between Roma men, both ending in one party's death, but in the period of 12 years, not a single case in which the Roma would be charged of violence against non-Roma.

It is also unlikely that the prevalence of intra-ethnic violence would be simply a result of a bias in the sample. Of all crimes, serious violence – especially when ending in death – was the one in which charges were most systematically raised and those implicated most persistently made to face a trial (as in a case dealt with below, where a Roma man suspected of killing a farm-hand was caught nine years after the event, receiving a life-time sentence). If anything, the sample might underestimate the dominance of intra-ethnic as opposed to inter-ethnic conflicts: the potential to be victims of homicidal violence with no subsequent trial seems much higher for the Roma, who were often itinerant and unregistered, than for the rest of the population.

In Finnish research and literary accounts, a topos has been built around what has been presented as a particularly violent Roma subculture in the 19th- early 20th century rural society, focussing on long-term vendettas between different family lines as well as masculine bravado and knife-fighting, amplified by heavy use of alcohol at the seasonal

⁵⁷¹ Juntunen, Alpo: List of Finns deported to Siberia, 1809-1917.
<http://www.genealogia.fi/linktoold/emi/siperia/siperiaa.htm>

fairs and markets⁵⁷². According to Vehmas, another factor increasing violence between the Roma has been their general avoidance of the authorities and reluctance to resort to the official jurisdiction, particularly in disputes with other Roma. Vehmas suggests that especially in delicate matters that might have meant troubles with the law even for the offended party, the Roma preferred to settle their scores informally, often through violent fights which, however, frequently *did* end up involving the authorities, after the death or serious injury of either party.⁵⁷³

While there is little in my sample to explicitly refute the idea of the Roma's subculture of violence, such a subculture does not appear particularly evident in it either – especially in light of the fact that violence and even family feuds were generally endemic in East-Finnish countryside at the research period.⁵⁷⁴ Nor does an assumption of a Roma subculture of violence seem necessary to understand the cases in the sample. There are plenty of other ways to explain violent conflicts between Roma individuals, family-members and family-groups, involving the 'usual suspects': bread (economic competition), blood (intra-family disputes) and honour (protecting individual or collective reputation), all frequently amplified by the use of alcohol. In fact, interpersonal violence between Roma seems to fit well into a pattern which dominates the historical picture, at least in Finland: apart from domestic violence, a typical case of lethal violence has from early modern times onwards tended to involve socially more or less equal-standing men, intoxicated by alcohol, arguing over nominally minor disputes.⁵⁷⁵

Finally, as we will see in the next section, the picture of the Roma as abiding only a 'primitive law' of their own – allegedly based on vendetta, duels and a system of avoidance – is at least incomplete. Many of the cases dealt below involve Roma as active plaintiffs; and with some cases, it appears that the violence has only come to the authorities' knowledge, and thus ended into my sample, because the offended Roma have sought retribution through the official legal system.

⁵⁷² For example Vehmas 1961, 101-102, 139-142.

⁵⁷³ Vehmas 1961.

⁵⁷⁴ E.g. Lehti 2001, Rajala 2004.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. Matikainen 2002.

Violence between the Roma

Generational and sibling conflicts were common, disruptive to the cohesion of the family, and often resulted in acts of vindictory violence. Marriage in particular was fraught with dangers for the harmony of the wider kinship grouping and was a source of feuds between the groups. Since marriage was the principal means of property transmission, disputes over inheritance and succession were among the commonest causes of disputes.⁵⁷⁶

Interfamily dynamics and matrimony in particular were sources of conflict for the Roma as much as for anyone else, but two things seem to distinguish the Finnish Roma's situation in this respect from the lower French nobility described by Stuart Carroll's quote above – and from sedentary people in rural societies more generally. Firstly, marriage as an institution which was officially sanctioned by the church and governed by explicit lay and ecclesiastical regulations was for majority of the Roma non-existent; according to the 1895 Gypsy census, only 11% of the Roma were officially married.⁵⁷⁷ Secondly, for the vast majority of Roma, there was very little material inheritance to dispute about, and virtually no struggles over the succession of landed property.⁵⁷⁸

Both informal matrimony and the absence of fixed property alleviated some sources of conflicts and gave rise to others. As for the 'Gypsy marriage' it was certainly not the haphazard or barbarian practice which Christian moralists and liberal reformers made it out to be. On the contrary, there is much to suggest that matrimonial behaviour of the Roma was (and is) regulated by a set of exceptionally strict cultural rules and prohibitive norms.⁵⁷⁹ Even so, having no formally recognized and officially sanctioned rules of matrimony meant that there was always some room for status-changes and contestation. This could obviously increase the range of conflicts in relation to matrimony, particularly as preference for intermarriage within the Roma group seems to have been the norm and the number of potential partners lessened by extensive kinship networks.

⁵⁷⁶ Carroll 2006, 30.

⁵⁷⁷ Vehmas 1961, 106.

⁵⁷⁸ Cf. Ch 4. In 20th century literature, there are references to equalitarian economic norms adhered to by the Roma, forbidding among other things the use of the accumulated property left by deceased relatives and family members (e.g. Vehmas 1961, Grönfors 1981). There is no evidence in my research materials that this kind of rules would have been adhered to in the 19th century conditions of severe material scarcity. In any case, the Gypsy surveys, the non-existing tax histories etc. point to very little material property passing from one generation to the next.

⁵⁷⁹ E.g. Grönfors 1981; Vehmas 1961, 103-107.

Karl Gustaf E.'s knife fight in Sortavala, already mentioned in chapter 6.2, is an example of this. It was fought over Lovisa Z., who had been 'together only with E.' for several months at the time of the fight. Earlier, Lovisa Z. had been engaged to the brother of the Roma man who eventually challenged Karl Gustaf to the duel. Several weeks before on their first meeting, the man had already threatened Lovisa and Karl Gustaf with a pistol, evidently in the defence of both his brother's and his family's honour.⁵⁸⁰

Lack of formal rules also led to lineage ambiguities when there were offspring from several unions. As extended family groups were the most crucial point of reference to the Roma both socially and economically, being unclear on one's standing in relation to lineage could be a serious matter. This kind of contestation seems to be in the background of a case in Valkeala in 1886 (mentioned above in the section 'Horses') in which a young Roma man stabbed his half-brother mortally in a 'sudden fit of anger', initiating his long flight from the authorities, during which he also committed a series of burglaries.⁵⁸¹ (Two years later in the same parish, the wording 'sudden fit of anger' was used again for another killing within a Roma family, in which a son stabbed his father to death while both were staying at a peasant house.⁵⁸²)

In terms of inheritance, what seems to have been passed from one generation to the next – in the absence of landed property – were tacit privileges of particular lineages to make use of certain areas and peasant houses for purposes of exchange, accommodation and begging. Whenever one or more Roma ventured outside 'their' recognized territories, they could threaten these tacit agreements, and run into conflict with the local Roma. There were several reasons for this. Most obviously, there was the issue of competition for the same limited resources (surplus production and housing of the local peasants). Another thing was that for the locally established Roma, crimes and especially horse-thefts committed by outsiders could be a serious problem, since suspicions or association with the alleged perpetrators could easily damage relations with the peasants. This made the Roma wary of newcomers in their core areas of livelihood.

Yet, market trips, visits to relatives, evading feuds (or authorities), economic crises and simply growth of population all meant that there was constantly a number of

⁵⁸⁰ MMA, Sortavalan käräjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 15.7.1884.

⁵⁸¹ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §105/1886.

⁵⁸² MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §27/1888.

Roma who were outside their usual routes. Together with the negotiability of territorial divisions, based on unwritten conventions between family lineages (which, as groupings, could also be ambiguous), this produced a fluid system which was easily set off balance.

Territorial disputes seem to be in the background of at least three cases of violence in the sample. In the first one, what begins as an attack on one Roma by his neighbours ends up involving peasants too. In a winter day in 1867, in the context of the first catastrophic harvest failure which triggered the great famine years of 1867-68, Elias Ö. was leaving from a tenant-farmer's (*landboen*⁵⁸³) house at Vesilahti, when a group of five Roma men and three women from this neighbouring Säkkijärvi parish arrived to the courtyard. The group started to taunt Elias, and then physically attacked him, apparently armed with heavy steel-handled riding whips, which was commonly used as a weapon by the Roma at the time⁵⁸⁴. Elias Ö. fled back to the tenant farmer's house and the attacking group tried to follow, but was left outside. Unable (or unwilling) to break the door, the attackers made taunts and threats on Elias, and then took his horse and sledge from the courtyard, riding back towards Säkkijärvi.

Besides being saved from the attackers by the tenant farmer who let him in and shut his adversaries outside their door, Elias Ö. was also able to quickly gather a group of peasants to help him to chase his attackers in an attempt to recapture his property. The followers caught up with the Roma from Säkkijärvi at nightfall. A fight broke out in which one of the Roma inflicted an injury to a landed peasant helping Elias Ö., for which charges were later raised. In the end, the stolen horse and sledge were regained, and the party from Säkkijärvi charged with fines for robbery, disturbance of domestic peace and assault and battery. Potentially more serious for the the defendants was that their property, including three horses and sledges, were confiscated and sold in public auction, and, once again, that the whole group was sent to the governor to be investigated on the suspicion of vagrancy.⁵⁸⁵

Whereas close proximity (and most probably also earlier hostilities and heightened economic competition triggered by the 1867 crisis) were on the background of this conflict, in two other cases, relatively long-distance travelling ended in attacks by the more local Roma. Incidentally, in both cases the victims were members of the

⁵⁸³ I.e., a tenant farmer with full allotment.

⁵⁸⁴ Nygård 2001, Vehmas 1961, 82-83.

⁵⁸⁵ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöskortit, Viipurin lääni, §83/1867.

family E., whose life as ‘bonde zigenare’ has been discussed in Chapter 5.3. As said, the male members of the family seem to have generally not shied away from confrontations. In the two cases dealt with here, it can be speculated whether in the background there was an element of envy or bitterness towards a family perceived as becoming too similar to the ‘*gadjé*’.

In the first case, August E., a house-owner, together with Carl O., both from Leppävirta parish, were travelling homewards through a village in Polvijärvi, some 80 km from their home, when two younger Roma from the neighbouring Juuka parish attacked them violently. August E. was beaten up severely with an iron weapon (probably the same kind of enforced whip used by the Säkijärvi Roma in the case mentioned above) and hospitalized for weeks. In the ensuing trial, the court could not find a motive for the assault; still, it sentenced the attackers to four years in prison and into considerable compensations to be paid to August E.⁵⁸⁶

In the second case, in late September 1890, Emanuel and Karl Robert E. met Wilhelm K. from Pyhäjärvi parish in a landlender’s house in Iisalmi, some 100 km north from Leppävirta. It is possible that the meeting was simply a co-incidence; as suggested in chapter 2.2, sometimes particular ‘lenient’ houses became junction-points for a wide group of travellers. In any case, the E.s were relatively far from their home areas, and perhaps seen as intruders by Wilhelm K. After a short quarrel, witnessed by the tenant farmer family, the latter took out his knife. Karl E. tried to avoid a fight by going behind Wilhelm K. and grabbing the hand in which the latter was holding the knife. Wilhelm K. wrenched himself free with force; in doing so, he slashed a deep wound on Karl E.’s leg, apparently by accident. Even though the fight did not escalate further, the latter died some days later, according to the post-mortem to loss of blood and blood poisoning.⁵⁸⁷

As many of the cases dealt in this section prove, the Roma were not complete strangers in using the official legal system. Offended parties could sometimes raise criminal charges to get even with their kinsmen. However, the threshold to do this was undoubtedly very high. In some cases, this meant serious bodily injuries and demands for compensating hospital bills etc., such as in the assault and battery of August E., already mentioned above. Seeking money to cover hospital bill probably also played a part in the charges which Herman E. raised against the Roma woman Amanda Å., after

⁵⁸⁶ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Kuopion lääni, §46/1883.

⁵⁸⁷ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Kuopion lääni, §7/1886.

she had stabbed the former twice in the chest in 1898.⁵⁸⁸ In other cases, charges were raised by remaining family members after the death of a husband, son or father, such as in a case in 1886, in which group of Roma from Sortavala had mortally stabbed a Roma man from their neighbouring parish during a winter fair held in the town of Savonlinna. In the aftermath, the widow and daughter of the victim appeared as plaintiffs, and made explicit demands on severely punishing the four defendants.⁵⁸⁹ The same was true of the above killing of Karl Robert E. The mother of the victim was heard as a plaintiff; she called extra witnesses to the trial, and demanded that the accused would be charged of intentional murder instead of manslaughter. In more than one way, bitter and tragic cases such as this bring forth demarcation lines between families and factions rather than between ethnic groups, and point to the limits of solidarity and informal settling within what is otherwise easy to idealize as a tightly-knit ethnic community.

Violence against non-Roma

The incidences of violence perpetrated by Roma against non-Roma are so few in the sample that no clear pattern emerges from them. The cases are isolated: in the 25 years between 1874 and 1899, for example, there is not a single incidence of inter-ethnic violence in the sample.

Otherwise, there are three fights, one of which was already mentioned in the section above. In this case, as we have seen, the actual conflict was between two Roma parties, Elias Ö. and his adversaries from Säkijärvi, and the peasant man's injury was 'collateral damage' as he was in helping the first-mentioned to recapture his horse and sledge. In another case, we meet again the family E. from Leppävirta. In the case, the E. brothers' rowdy night out in the town of Kuopio in 1874 ended up with a brawl with two appointed town guards, with the latter ending up in the losing side of the fight. The third case is a one-to-one fight between a young Roma man and a cobbler's apprentice, taking place in 1899, in which the apprentice suffered a severe blow to the head. Unfortunately, besides the consequences – two years of imprisonment and fines on the

⁵⁸⁸ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Mikkelin lääni, §2/1899.

⁵⁸⁹ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Mikkelin lääni, §7/1887.

Roma to compensate injuries – we do not learn much about the origins or circumstances of this dispute from the Provincial Court's records⁵⁹⁰.

Then there are two manslaughters, taking place in 1862 and 1872. The first of these cases is also the only one in the Eastern Finnish sample, spanning three decades, to bring into mind the violent picture of house-invasions and forcible accommodation in remote backwoods which was eagerly painted by the late 19th century Fennoman press and peasant delegates of the senate (and later echoed by most 20th century researchers). In this case, taking place in the province of Kuopio in winter 1862, four Roma arrived into a peasant house while passing through Liperi parish, making their way back towards their home areas. The press later claimed that they were returning from a trip of stealing horses in the backwoods, but no such claim appears in the court records. According to the charge, the Roma forced their way into the house against the inhabitants' consent in order to get shelter. Word of the home intrusion was quickly sent out to neighbours, and soon a group of villagers came to drive the Roma out of the house. However, the first of the villagers to enter the house was ambushed by one of the Roma men, receiving a mortal blow of axe in the head. After this, the group fled the house. Three of them were quickly caught, but the one who was held responsible for the fatal blow managed to escape. This fourth Roma then evaded the authorities for nearly a decade, until he returned to Liperi in 1871, was immediately caught, and quickly sentenced to a lifetime of forced labour.⁵⁹¹

Particularly in this manslaughter case, the newspaper reporting rapidly evolved from mere reporting of facts into angered condemnation of all Roma as harmful criminals.⁵⁹² A week after the event, even urban papers such as *Turun Sanomat* were writing of the 'dreadful deeds of the Gypsies', the kinds of which 'should give reason for the authorities to prohibit those wild beasts (*willipetoja*) from moving around in flocks, committing their violent acts'.⁵⁹³ As we have seen,⁵⁹⁴ the authorities *did* in fact react: the manslaughter case was cited by the Governor General in his justification for taking up the question of the 'Gypsies'' position in the Grand-duchy, leading to the first Gypsy survey conducted in 1863-65.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹⁰ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §7/1899.

⁵⁹¹ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Kuopion lääni, §44/1871.

⁵⁹² Some of these condemnations were quoted above in Ch 3.1.

⁵⁹³ *Turun Sanomat* 1862.

⁵⁹⁴ Ch 3.1.

⁵⁹⁵ KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51.

In the second manslaughter case in 1872, a group of four young Roma men from surrounding parishes met a drunken fireman in a suburb of Viipuri, and decided to ‘rob a pair of boots or a cap for themselves’. To their surprise, the drunken fireman put up stern resistance. In the ensuing fight, the youth pulled out knives and inflicted several wounds on the fireman’s hands and arms. In the end, the Roma fled the city, after taking small amount of money and a cap from the wounded fireman. Eventually, the latter died in loss of blood. The assault and robbery had several eyewitnesses, and after an intensive search lasting three weeks, the authorities finally arrested the four Roma from different parishes on the Isthmus of Karelia. Two of the four men were given life sentences, which, however, were mitigated in the Viipuri Provincial Court into 8 and 6 years of imprisonment, while the two others received six months for accessory to manslaughter.⁵⁹⁶

Like the first case of Liperi, the killing in Viipuri and the subsequent chase of the suspects were keenly reported by both the local and the national press, but in this case the writing had much more restrained tone. In view of how unrelentingly hostile most newspaper writing on the Roma at the time was, it is actually somewhat surprising to find that some of the reports had even emphatic tones on the four Roma convicted for the manslaughter, such as *Suomen Wirallinen Lehti*, which wrote that ‘They [sentenced Roma] did not have an intention to murder Marttinen, only to rob a cap from him, although the fight took such a sad turn that it ended in manslaughter’⁵⁹⁷. Evidently, death in a working-class urban space evoked less outrage than a scene taking place inside a house of a landowner.

Still, even in regards to the latter case, it appears that serious incidences of violence by Roma against non-Roma frequently became highly publicised events, with nationwide reactions which could border on moral panic. As already said, such incidents were also rare – and naturally, this rareness itself meant that they were interesting for the press to cover.

Coming back to the relative rarity of inter-ethnic as opposed to intra-ethnic violence in the sample, there seem to be several different ways to understand it. Firstly, the functioning of the Roma’s local exchange networks, absolutely necessary for their long-term economic survival, required at least some level of trust and co-operation from

⁵⁹⁶ MMA, Viipurin hovioikeus, alistettujen asioiden päätöstaltiot, Viipurin lääni, §37/1873.

⁵⁹⁷ ‘Heilla ei ollut aikomusta Marttista murhata, vaan ryöstää hanelta ainoastaan myssy, vaikka tappelu sai niin surullisen kaannoksen, etta se paattyi miestapolla.’ *Suomen Wirallinen Lehti* 9 Nov 1872.

the local peasants. Violent inter-ethnic conflicts would have immediately destroyed any local goodwill, and so the Roma can be assumed to have had a strong economic incentive, even necessity, to avoid conflicts with non-Roma, particularly in their 'own' areas.

A different if not necessarily contradictory way to understand the 'missing conflicts' in the sample is to interpret it as a sign of social distance between the Roma and the peasants. In terms of matrimony, honour and livelihood, the Roma and non-Roma could simply be not that relevant to each other, leaving less ground for serious disputes. One particular kind of 'missing conflict', that of arson, would seem to support this kind of hypothesis. Arson was a common 'weapon of the weak'⁵⁹⁸ in many European agrarian societies, including Finland, well into the 20th century. It was an effective way for those in the lower end of local hierarchy, particularly the landless population, to make threats and to 'get even' with land-owners, as an arsony was easy to execute and caused immense damage for the victim. As Regina Schulte has suggested in the German context, the mere possibility of such attack forced the peasants to take the farm-hands' interests into consideration.⁵⁹⁹

But while arson threats were sometimes associated with the Swedish Travellers, at least in the 18th century,⁶⁰⁰ there is not a single case in my sample in which the Finnish Roma would have been charged or suspected of arson, nor any other indication that this would such attacks would have taken place. Again, this might tell of extreme dependency on maintaining good reputation vis-à-vis the peasants. But it could similarly be seen as a sign that most Roma were simply outside the paternalistic employment regime of the countryside, and the precarious working conditions which were a constant source of disputes between masters and their servants. Beyond the ever-present possibility of being denied food and housing, the Roma were, for the most, maybe simply too distant socially to have severe long-term grudges and conflicts of interest against the land-holders.

⁵⁹⁸ Scott 1985.

⁵⁹⁹ Schulte 1994.

⁶⁰⁰ Svensson 1993, 70-73.

6.5 The position of the Roma viewed through penal records

What is it possible to say about the position of the Roma within the Finnish peasant society as seen through the penal court records? The answer to this question has to be quite modest. As already mentioned, the court records describe cases that break rather than reflect the normal flow of everyday life. This point is quite far-reaching: much of the ‘normal’, non-conflictual interaction between locally established Roma and non-Roma, strongly present in the oral histories and written reminiscences of both Roma and non-Roma respondents⁶⁰¹ is simply missing from the court records. This is amplified by the fact that cases which reached the level of official criminal justice system, especially the provincial court of appeal, involve only the crimes that were considered as too serious for informal settling.

But even with this bias, the court records offer some insights into the position of the Roma and the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations. Much of the material seems to confirm the observations made in Chapter 2 on the tightness of the formal and informal social control imposed on the Roma. For many Roma, the logic of the legislation had pushed them outside the ordered society from birth. Frequently, those detained were not inscribed in any municipality, and had little possibilities to claim for a legitimate status if arrested. More or less clearly tied up with this legal precariousness is a sense of separateness and social marginality of many of the Roma defendants appearing in the court records. Lists of belongings confiscated from Roma defendants as well as inventories of stolen goods create a picture of absolute poverty and life dangerously near to the lowest subsistence level.

However, considering the negatively selective nature of the sample, this marginality cannot be straightforwardly taken to represent the Roma’s social position more generally. Moreover, in the late 19th century, poverty touched most people in Eastern Finnish countryside. Large parts of the rural population were caught in a spiral of downwards social mobility and increasing itinerancy, caused by combination of population-growth, impoverishment of the soil after extensive slash-and burn cultivation and lowering of commercial farming revenues.⁶⁰² Poverty and large amount of young mobile ‘outsiders’ among the Roma defendants could thus be seen simply as signs that this crisis was affecting the Roma as well.

⁶⁰¹ See particularly Chapter 4.

⁶⁰² E.g. Soininen 1980, 391-392; cf. Ch 2.2.

Beyond the level of conflicts and accusations, the court records give indirect indications of functioning interaction between the peasants and Roma. The relatively low number of local Roma among the defendants in Sortavala, especially in more serious cases, has already been mentioned. In terms of accommodation, even those who were most clearly ‘outsiders’ (wandering bands of Roma with mixed geographical origins) were regularly admitted into peasant houses. Getting accommodation is mentioned as a matter-of-fact in most cases in which the geographical movements of the accused Roma are described. This supports the picture of mostly well-functioning practices of accommodation and exchange, pointing to established networks and the continuing relevance of the Roma’s economic activities.

A contrary way to explain the accommodations would be to assume that the Roma routinely used physical threats and violence to get into peasant houses.⁶⁰³ This ‘banditry thesis’ regularly came out in the late 19th century political discussions and provincial press, and has been echoed by a number of later writers and researchers. However, if the sample is anything to go by, actualized physical force did not play a major role in the relations between the Roma and the peasants in Karelia. In the Sortavala district, *all* cases in which the Roma appeared as defendants and peasants as complainants were property crimes, carried out in houses and fields; in twelve years, there was not a single reported case of forcible accommodation, outright robbery or inter-ethnic violence. Only case of violence was a knife-fight fought between two Roma men – tellingly, the fight took place on the yard of a house they were let to stay at. Even in the much wider sample of the cases dealt by the appeal courts of Viipuri and Vaasa, inter-ethnic violence is extremely rare, and despite a general surge of homicidal violence in Finland in late 19th century,⁶⁰⁴ such cases do not seem to be getting more common in the research period either.

Moreover, we have seen how fast the peasants could mobilize and close in on the Roma when they considered the latter a threat, as in the cases of horse-thefts. In densely populated area such as Sortavala, it seems inconceivable that bands of Roma could routinely force their way into the peasant houses without major reactions from the surrounding community and the authorities. In light of the penal court records, the ‘banditry thesis’, or the idea of a vagabond strategy closing on to local ‘terrorism’ suggested or implied by Vehmas, Nygård and Etzler appears ungrounded.

⁶⁰³ Cf Etzler 1944; Nygård 2001; Vehmas 1961.

⁶⁰⁴ For general trends in homicide rates, see Lehti 2001, 82-23.

7. The Travellers and the ‘peasants’: interaction, conflict and differentiation

The ‘Travellers’ formed a paradoxal category in late 19th - early 20th century Sweden. Whether thought of as a single ethnic group or not, it is clear from genealogical research that the various ‘core’ lineages have throughout several centuries absorbed and formed liaisons with heterogeneous people, such as discharged soldiers, sons, daughters and widows of impoverished peasants, Finnish Roma, Danish circus artists, Norwegian ‘*Fanter*’, etc.⁶⁰⁵ It was commonly recognized that ‘the *tattare* have one name; but there are great differences among this population’.⁶⁰⁶ Yet, even the suggestion of ‘one name’ is historically misleading. In reality, those labelled as ‘*tattare*’ had before the turn of the 19th-20th centuries been called with a myriad of other, regionally varying appellations.⁶⁰⁷

Yet, despite the initial lacking of consistent naming or a commonly accepted notion of origin,⁶⁰⁸ the Travellers *were* nevertheless firmly distinguished as a distinctive group by the surrounding sedentary population, as much as by the Travellers themselves. Even before the crystallization of the notion of ‘*tattare*’ in official usage, the former clearly set the ‘*kältringar*’, ‘*skojare*’, ‘*krämare*’ etc. apart from (or rather, below-) the ‘ordinary’ Swedes. As for the Traveller families, ethnographic descriptions,⁶⁰⁹ the few available historical ego-documents and the historical record of deeply embedded lifestyle- and marriage patterns make it clear that the categorical differentiation was also very much a reality from their side.

In this chapter, I will look into the relationship between the Swedish Travellers and the sedentary population from a comparative vantage point formed by the previous chapters on the position of the Roma in the Finnish society. My starting point is the distinction made by Adam Heymowski between the terms ‘*tattare*’ and ‘*resande*’. Whereas the former was an externally imposed negative label, ‘*resande*’ was a category of self-ascription, used by the members of what Heymowski describes as ‘an extended

⁶⁰⁵ As attested to by many of the genealogical studies used in this chapter: Heymowski 1969; Jularbo 1990; Lindgren & Lindwall 1992; Lindwall 1984; 1995; 2003 and 2005.

⁶⁰⁶ EU78, 22829.

⁶⁰⁷ See Chapter 3.2.

⁶⁰⁸ Aside from numerous stories and legends, there was no clear consensus on the origin of the group, neither among the ‘ordinary’ Swedes nor among those labelled as ‘*tattare*’. E.g. KB, Adam Heymowski's papper, 9:3 Brev från *resande*.

⁶⁰⁹ E.g. Etzler 1944; Heymowski 1969; Lindholm 1995.

family group, a clan or a descent group to which they are born'. Many, but not all of those labelled as 'tattare' were people who considered themselves as *resande*; conversely, there were also self-identified *resande* who were not perceived as 'tattare' by the non-Travellers.⁶¹⁰

It is, then, the relationship between the 'real' in-group of Travellers and what they call '*bonde*', 'peasants', which I am primarily interested in this chapter; the external label 'tattare' and its reification along the 20th century are but one aspect of this relationship.

7.1 The Travellers' livelihood

A crucial transformation in the social position of many old Traveller families seems to date into the turn of 18th and 19th century. Firstly, as with the Finnish Roma, the tight linkage between the Travellers and the Swedish army came to an end. Partly, this was a 'natural' outcome of the pacification of the Swedish society after it lost its great power status in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars. However, there were also targeted exclusions of the *Zigenare* and *Tattare* via a recruiting ban in 1805, in which many former soldiers turned into vagrancy detainees almost overnight.⁶¹¹ In 1824, amendments to the vagrancy law furthermore stopped the enlisting of vagrancy detainees into the military.⁶¹² Secondly, besides losing their positions in the military in fast pace, the Travellers were also near-systematically stripped from the status of burgher which many of them had previously held. In 1781 and 1802, they were also specifically banned from practicing glass-vending⁶¹³, an occupation which had previously offered a significant proportion of Travellers with legitimate status and a connection with what could be described as a 'high-tech' consumer industry of the time.

While the reasons for the above developments are still not very clear⁶¹⁴, it seems that there was a relatively rapid reorientation in the Travellers' occupational and social position in the beginning of the 19th century. Ousted from towns and less free to move

⁶¹⁰ Heymowski 1969, 115-116.

⁶¹¹ Pulma 2006, 31; ongoing research by Tuula Rekola.

⁶¹² Svensson 1993, 130.

⁶¹³ Svensson 1993, 84.

⁶¹⁴ Related research is currently being undertaken by Anne Minken in Norway and Tuula Rekola in Finland.

around the countryside (without military passports, bourgeoisie certificates and vending licences from glass factories), they were forced to adopt new strategies of gaining livelihood and legitimate status. What was available was mostly occupations with low social status; a class of soldiers and pedlars consequently turned into rag-gatherers, hangmen, gelders, night-men, skimmers, nitre-boilers, tinsmiths, etc.

New focus on occupations such as these increasingly meant the establishing of local relationship with particular rural communities. Yet, where such a relationship developed, it could be far from harmonious. Particularly towards the end of the 19th century, various sources presenting the ‘outsiders’ view, present the position of the Travellers as grim, with routine allegations of crime, begging and violence.

The description of Southern-Swedish *Nya Vexjöbladet*, published in 1883, lists many of the recurring accusations and preconceptions levelled against the Travellers (some of which are already well familiar from writings related to the Finnish Roma). But while mounting allegations against what is in the story called ‘rackarne’, ‘vallackere’, ‘nättmän’ (and termed with a surprisingly sociological wording as a ‘pariah class’), the story also hints at the structural constraints and hostility faced by the Travellers towards the end of the 19th century, and the economic adaptations nevertheless adopted by them. I will cite the article at length, as it furthermore highlights the relation between the Travellers and the rest of the population and touches upon the questions of ‘origin’ and ‘race’.

A real pariah class

has for long time since set itself here and there in our province [Kronoberg], and especially Sunnerbo suffers of home visits. I am referring with this to the so-called ‘rackarne’ who themselves call themselves “nättmän” or “vallackere” and inhabit almost whole villages [...]. From the beginning accustomed only to occupations, which the population at large despises, or for superstitious reasons does not dare to do, the *vallackane* have persistently evaded more strenuous bodily work, and sustain themselves nowadays almost completely through begging or, at market fairs, often with that which is even worse [thefts]. They see themselves as some sorts of privileged beggars, who have the right to demand from the rural population the upkeep for both themselves and for their domestic animals. Especially at Christmas-time, they travel around from village to village, from house to house, taking back home cartloads of foodstuff, fodder and clothes, etc. [...]

This cast of people lives completely separated from- and unmixed with the rest of the local population. Not even the most desolate neighbours will want to be in dealings with the “rackarne”. These poor people are dreaded so exceedingly much, that hardly

anyone will offer them roof over their heads as they travel around, or travel in their company when on the road.

As a consequence of the authorities sloppyness towards the Vallackerna, enlightenment amongst them is also utterly weak. Few of the older ones can read, and amongst the youth the situation is probably not much better. Their pecuniary situation, meanwhile, is told not to be particularly unfortunate. On the contrary, it is said that many families are, if not rich, then at least rather wealthy.

To give their wandering life at least some justification, they have of late acquired themselves an occupation, at least in outward appearance: namely, the men take up metalforging [bösslagnig – possibly also gunsmithery?] and similarly to the Gypsies [*Zigenare*] the tinning of copperutensils etc., while the women work to some extent as basket-makers.

If these poor people originally belonged to another people [*folk*] than we ourselves [...] is completely unknown to me; at least they do not seem to be connected to the Gypsies nor to other such itinerants, and the colour of their skin is completely similar with ours [...]⁶¹⁵

Below, I will come back to the context in which the above story was written; at this point, suffice it to say that there was a set of further historical transformations affecting the Travellers' position in the latter half of the 19th century, which in part exposed the Travellers to a growing public problematization.

Still, as seen in Chapter 3.2, their position emerged as an issue in the national politics only gradually. The first nation-wide surveys were carried out in 1921 and 1922, with the police finding 1583 *Tattare* and c.250 *Zigenare*.⁶¹⁶ Much like the Roma in Finland, those identified as 'tattare' were found to be scattered around the country in local family lineages (while not covering the width of the country quite to the same degree as the former). Also similarly, there were a few regional concentrations, usually in relatively densely populated rural areas. According to the police, more than half of the 'tattare' lived in Southern Sweden, particularly in the provinces of Jönköping, Älvsborg, Halland, Malmöhus, Kalmar, as well as Göteborg and Bohus. Other larger habitations were found in West-Central Sweden, provinces of Värmland and Örebro; there were also scattered families living along the North-Eastern coast of Sweden, from the provinces of Gävleborg all the way up to Norrbotten, Lappland (see figure 8, below).

⁶¹⁵ *Nya Vexjöbladet* 24 Dec 1883. I have found the newspaper article from amongst the newspaper clippings included in Adam Heymowski's collected papers held at the Stockholm Royal Library.

⁶¹⁶ SOU 1923:2, 338-340.

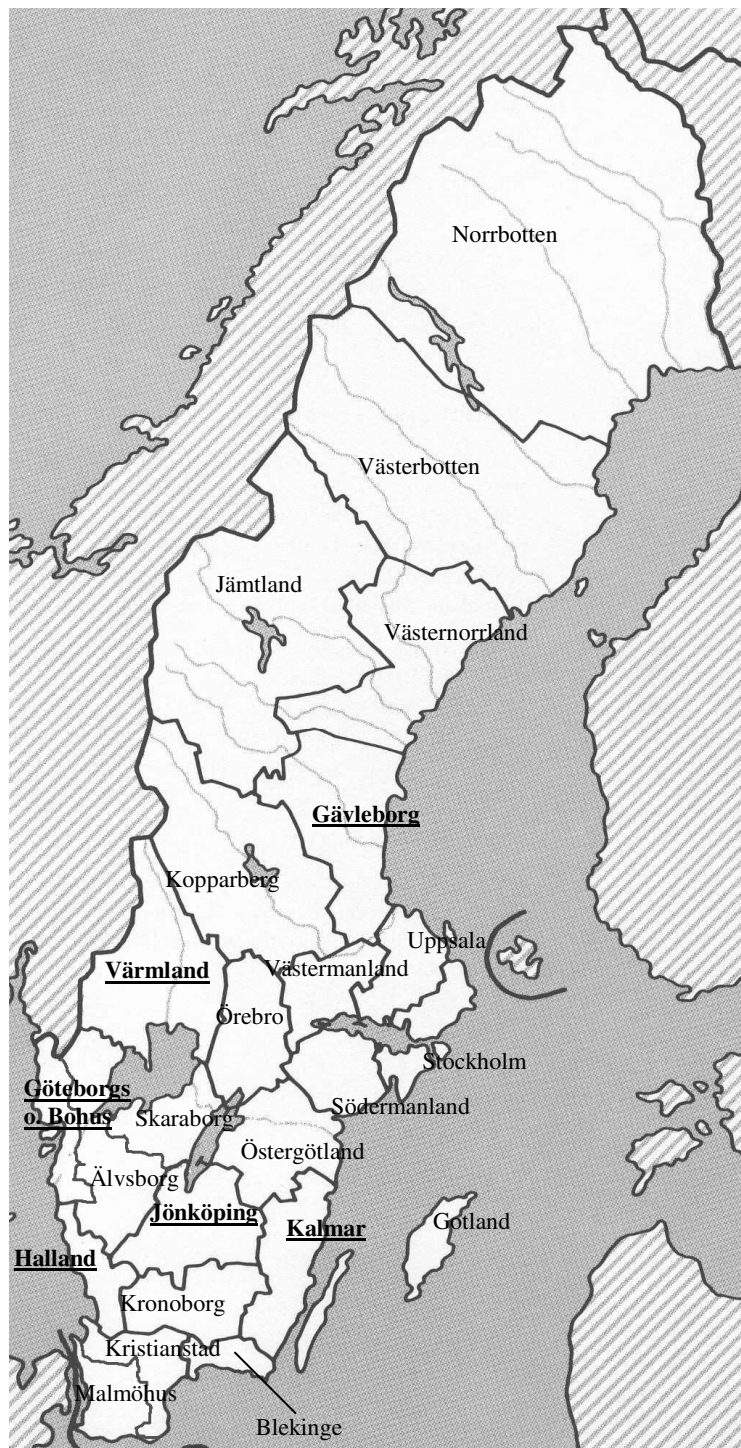


Figure 8. Provinces of Sweden in 1923; the ones with more than 100 *Tattare* according to the 1922 police survey are underlined and typed with bold font. Source: SOU 1923:2, 340.

The basic material conditions faced by this spotty population were fundamentally similar to those in which the Finnish Roma lived in, but can be assumed to have been slightly more favourable in some respects. As majority of the Travellers lived in the Southern part of Sweden, latitudinally some 500km south from the

southernmost habitation areas of the Finnish Roma, most faced a somewhat milder climate respective to the latter, as well as agricultural surroundings which were relatively more productive and wealthy.⁶¹⁷

Moreover, although no quantitative information exists before the police survey of 1922, it seems that the Swedish Travellers had significantly more often their own housing than the Finnish Roma. Owning or renting a house was not uncommon, particularly towards the end of the research period. This is something that I will come back to in each section of this chapter, since it had relevance for all facets of the Traveller-peasant-relationship. However, 'settling down' could mean very different things. At least from 1850s onwards, there were 'squatter villages' with dug-up huts in peripheral backwoods; some families had tenant farms where they gathered; and there were also cottages in ordinary villages shared often by several Traveller families. From 1910s onwards, also urban dwellings begun to appear in the outskirts of towns and cities such as Malmö, Jönköping, Göteborg and Stockholm.⁶¹⁸

Whatever of the type of housing, its mere existence, together with the slightly milder climate, lessened the urgency of having to find accommodation in the houses of the mainstream sedentary population. This was arguably a key factor which worked to create somewhat looser ties with the peasants than what was the case with the Finnish Roma. In the following, I will further elaborate on the material basis of the relationship between the '*resande*' and the '*bonde*' through looking at economic activities, patterns of habitation, interaction and conflicts.

⁶¹⁷ As an example of the productivity, in 1911-1915 the average harvests per square kilometre in Sweden were for many of the most important cereals almost double to those they were in Finland. Östman 2004, 54.

⁶¹⁸ Lindholm 1995, 110.

Economic activities

As will be seen below, the Travellers' economic strategies resembled those of the Finnish Roma's in many important respects. This was true also of the certain opacity of their livelihood to outside observers, consequent of the flexible combining of multiple informal sources of subsistence. Once again, official sources give only limited information on what individual people actually did to make their living. This is particularly true of the Traveller women, who were rarely given any occupational titles. However, unlike with the Finnish Roma, most men *did* in fact have one or more occupations specified in at least some of the documents produced by various officials (parish or census records, passports, birth certificates, court records, lists of prisoners, etc.). Many of these occupational titles have been painstakingly collected by later genealogical researchers. In Table 6, below, I have used the data on Traveller individuals included in a number of studies, particularly those by Adam Heymowski (1969) and Bo Lindwall (1984, 1995, 2003, 2005) to create a systematic outline of the Traveller men's economic activities and their historical changes during the 19th-early 20th century.

The table presents the occupational titles of a sample of 200 traveller men as they appear in the genealogical sources. I have collected the data from a range of studies in order to include members from a variety of different kinds of Traveller lineages from different parts of Sweden.

As the genealogical researchers have in many cases focussed their research on individuals whose full personal data they have been able to decree, it can be assumed that disproportionally many of those whose occupation could not be found out are missing from the genealogical tables. As a selective bias would then in any case be impossible to avoid, I have decided to leave out the relatively few individuals in the genealogical studies without any specified occupation. The result, then, is a rough indicator on what were the main livelihood activities of economically active Traveller men (mostly heads of households) in successive cohorts, before-, during- and immediately after the research period.

Table 6. Occupational titles of a sample of Traveller men (n = 200) born between 1760 and 1920, according to cohort. (NB: individual persons usually have more than one occupational title!)

| Occupation | Cohort: born between | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Total | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-------|------|-------|
| | 1760-1800 | | 1800-1819 | | 1820-1839 | | 1840-1859 | | 1860-1879 | | 1880-1899 | | 1900-1920 | | n | % ** | % *** |
| | n * | % ** | n * | % ** | n * | % ** | n * | % ** | n * | % ** | n * | % ** | n * | % ** | | | |
| Soldier, ex-soldier | 9 | 32 | 3 | 14 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 15 | 8 | 5 |
| Executioner, 'rackare' | 2 | 7 | 1 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Nitre-boiler | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Horse-dealer | 2 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 23 | 11 | 38 | 10 | 32 | 4 | 13 | - | - | 36 | 18 | 11 |
| Gelder, skinner | 6 | 21 | 9 | 41 | 13 | 42 | 9 | 31 | 2 | 6 | - | - | - | - | 39 | 20 | 12 |
| Animal-healer, charlatan | 1 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 3 | - | - | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Horse-shoer | 2 | 7 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Rag-gatherer | 12 | 43 | 4 | 18 | 8 | 26 | 5 | 17 | 5 | 16 | 6 | 19 | 3 | 11 | 43 | 22 | 13 |
| Glass/porcelain-dealer | 13 | 46 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 7 | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 16 | 8 | 5 |
| Hawker, pedlar, trader | 1 | 4 | - | - | 2 | 6 | 4 | 14 | 8 | 26 | 16 | 52 | 8 | 29 | 39 | 20 | 12 |
| Iron/ scrap-metal dealer | 4 | 14 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | - | - | 3 | 10 | 4 | 13 | 5 | 18 | 21 | 11 | 6 |
| Smith, kettle-mender, grinder | 5 | 18 | 4 | 18 | 7 | 23 | 9 | 31 | 10 | 32 | 4 | 13 | 10 | 36 | 49 | 25 | 15 |
| Handicraft worker | 1 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 19 | 4 | 14 | 2 | 6 | - | - | 3 | 11 | 18 | 9 | 5 |
| Farmer | 1 | 4 | - | - | 4 | 13 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 8 | 4 | 2 |
| Tenant farmer, smallholder | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Farmhand | - | - | 1 | 5 | 1 | 3 | - | - | 1 | 3 | - | - | 1 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Skilled labourer | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Unskilled labourer | - | - | - | - | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 13 | 6 | 19 | 5 | 18 | 17 | 9 | 5 |
| Musician, entertainer | - | - | 1 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Other | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | - | - | 2 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Total, occup. titles | 62 | | 33 | | 55 | | 50 | | 50 | | 42 | | 41 | | 333 | | 100 |
| Total, persons | 28 | | 22 | | 31 | | 29 | | 31 | | 31 | | 28 | | 200 | | |
| Titles/person, mean | 2,2 | | 1,5 | | 1,8 | | 1,7 | | 1,6 | | 1,4 | | 1,5 | | 1,7 | | |

* The number of those in the cohort with a reference to the occupation in question

** The percentage of men in the cohort with the specified occupation. As most have had more than one occupational title, the sum of the percents for each cohort exceeds 100.

*** The percentage share of each occupation out of all occupational titles (sum = 100%)

Source data: Heymowski 1969; Jularbo 1990; Lindgren & Lindwall 1992; Lindwall 1984; 1995; 2003; 2005; SOU 1923:2 (C. Specialundersökningar).

While based on a different sample, the table points to roughly similar historical changes as Heymowski's genealogical studies.⁶¹⁹ Above-mentioned transformations in the turn of the 18th and 19th century appear clearly: the rapid end of the two centuries-old military involvement, and the near-complete disappearance of the previously central occupation of itinerant glass-dealer. One subsequent response seems to have been a move to various horse-related activities, at first particularly gelding, which was practiced by nearly half of those in the sample born between 1800 and 1859. In the second half of the 19th century, there was a further shift, this time from gelding to horse-trading. This matches with Lucassen's observation in regards to many other Roma and Traveller groups of North-West and Central Europe. Despite of gradual mechanisation of transport in the 20th century, the importance of horses was still growing in most European countries between 1870 and 1940; this attracted new generations of Roma into horse-trade, and actually made many of them very successful in doing so. A number of Scandinavian Roma/Traveller even gained visibility and wealth in horse-trading as far south as in the Netherlands.⁶²⁰ Yet, somewhat surprisingly, there is a relatively quick decline of horse-trading as a named occupation in the sample, roughly from turn of the century onwards, with only four of the 83 men in the sample born between 1880 and 1920 marked as practicing the occupation.⁶²¹

Besides transformations and adaptations, the table points to the relative persistence of a number of activities. Rag-gathering, iron- and scrap-metal dealing, various forms of smithery (copper- and tinsmiths, kettle-menders, grinders) and crafts (basket-, utensil-, comb-, brush- and weaving-frame-makers, instrument-builders) were all flexible enough to be adopted into the increasingly 'modern' Swedish economy, and remained in the Travellers' palette of activities throughout the research period.

Overall, the occupational titles recorded in official documents point to 'complementary' economic niches not very far from those occupied by the Finnish Roma according to the 1863-65 and 1895 surveys. However, some significant differences stand out. As already said, individual Traveller men had more often officially acknowledged occupations than the Finnish Roma (at least as far as the genealogical records can tell), pointing to a more recognized economic role. The

⁶¹⁹ Heymowski 1969, 37-48.

⁶²⁰ Lucassen 1998c, 159-161.

⁶²¹ This can be speculated to have partly been a consequence of the tightening supervision of animal protection statutes, which seems to have at times been used specifically to hinder the trading of horses by those labelled as *tattare*.

occupations seem to have also formed a relatively wider range of economically viable options for the Travellers. Together with the greater affluence of the Swedish society in general, this perhaps explains why the Travellers seem to have fared relatively well, with little to suggest life recurrently close to- or below the lowest subsistence level. According to Lindholm, particularly long-distance horse-trade (sometimes over the Norwegian border) and scrap-metal dealing held potential for relatively quick prospering.⁶²² The fact that most Travellers usually possessed money was also testified to by the repeated complaints by the police in different regions that

as the itinerant tatar-bands generally nowhere lack the means to support themselves, it has followed [...] that they cannot be treated as vagrants, although they roam around idle, without trying to find work [...]⁶²³

Besides frequent references to money, there is an impression, already from the 18th century glass-dealers onwards, that the Travellers' economic activities were closely attuned to industrializing consumption- and production patterns. During the research period, this is exemplified for example by the prevalence of rag-gathering, scrap-metal dealing, hawking and smithery – all of which existed also in Finland but were in much more marginal role.

Many of the scrap-metal dealers and ironmongers were attached to the iron factories at Eskiltuna, one of the most important industrial centres in Sweden.⁶²⁴ As Lucassen has noted, rag-gathering is also a good example of the 'complementary relationship between industry and itinerant occupations'.⁶²⁵ Before the development of paper production based entirely on wood pulp in the last decades of the 19th century, paper industry was dependent on fabrics collected by the rag-gatherers. Textiles, however, were a scarce and intensively used commodity before industrial mass-production, so the gatherers often had to make wide rounds to gain enough material for the factories. While making these rounds, the rag-gatherers and their families faced the usual accusations levelled against itinerants, with allegations of begging, thefts and other disorderly behaviour. Yet, the Swedish paper factories were not forced to give up their itinerant suppliers, as glass factories had earlier been, pointing to the economic indispensability of rag-gatherers. Only along the first decades of the 20th century, the

⁶²² Lindholm 1995, 106.

⁶²³ SOU 1923:2, 334.

⁶²⁴ Heymowski 1969, 41.

⁶²⁵ Lucassen 1998c, 158.

paper industry moved into a completely pulp-based production, gradually making the occupation redundant.⁶²⁶

The prevalence of more ‘modern’-appearing economic activities amongst the Swedish Travellers respective to the Finnish Roma does of course not have to be read as an argument of a supposedly more ‘traditional’ economic orientation of the latter. Rather, industry- and craft-related occupations of the Swedish Travellers clearly reflected the more versatile and industrialized economy of Sweden compared to the Finland, and the more varied range of economic opportunities which the former consequently offered. This hypothesis would seem to be supported by the very marginal involvement of the Travellers in agricultural production during the research period. Altogether 16 individuals or 8% of the 200 men in the sample were written down as farmers or farm-workers, which does not suggest a much smaller proportion than what was the case with the Finnish Roma. However, latter half of the 19th century seems to have been a time of very little direct engagement with agriculture, with only three farmers and one farm-hand among the 100 men born between 1840 and 1880.

In any case, the occupational titles marked down into official documents – and thus registered by later genealogical researchers – reveal only part of the story (as was the case with the Finnish Gypsy survey data). More qualitative sources present a picture of the Travellers’ livelihood which supports the findings from the sample in some respects, but challenges it in others. Whereas the official documents typically give 1-3 clearly definable occupations per person, more qualitative material (such as the local police reports or the reminiscence- and interview material, the last two of which have been used extensively by Gunborg Lindholm (1995)) point to fluid combinations of mobile activities, which complemented each other as the Traveller families went from house to house. Typically, making artifacts and peddling them was combined with horse-trading, various repair works, buying of scrap metal and leather, etc. As a part of this plurality, even activities which could not give a livelihood in themselves any longer, such as rag-gathering and gelding, were still practiced well into the 20th century.⁶²⁷

The external naming of the Travellers also point to certain occupational emphasis missing from the official occupational titles. This is particularly the case with the occupational titles of *rackare* and *nattman*, which were so common particularly

⁶²⁶ Appelquist 1985, 28-31.

⁶²⁷ Lindholm 1995, 83.

in Southern Sweden that they could be used synonymously with the term *tattare*. It seems evident that while there is only one person officially named ‘rackare’ in the genealogical sample, a significant proportion of the Travellers were actually involved in the occupation or its related activities up until the last decades of the 19th century.

In a narrow sense, *rackare* and *nattman* were occupations distinct from each other, with the former being the assistant of the executioner/whipper, the latter (‘night-man’) a person dealing with household waste and dead household- and farmstead animals. In practice, however, the categories often converged, and frequently also involved the tasks of the horse-gelder (*valackare*) and skinner (*huddragare*). All of these occupational titles could refer to what was in fact a single, more or less institutionalized position within a particular municipality, which was in many cases (but certainly not always) taken over by a Traveller.⁶²⁸

The wide variety of menial tasks performed by a municipal *rackare* (*/nattman, /valackare*) has already been described in Chapter 4.2 (in conjunction to the position of municipal whipper in Finland), as well as the low social ranking which the successive generations involved in the occupation had in local communities. Common usage of the word *rackare* as an insult – sometimes also by Travellers themselves – also bears witness to the highly negative attitude towards the occupation. For example, in 1883, the trader (handlanden) Andreas C. sued another trader, Frans D., for among other things calling him a ‘cheater, crook, scrounger and rackare’ (*skojare, bof, fähund och rackare*).⁶²⁹ Yet, also appreciation and even respect for the professional skills of the *rackare* is evident in many of the written reminiscences of the non-Travellers. In particular, the *rackare* were often thought as more skillfull with animals than the formally educated veterinarians who begun to appear in villages gradually along the 19th century.⁶³⁰

The *rackare* performed most of their tasks while travelling from house to house and were consequently highly mobile. They might possess a house, typically a remote cottage, but often did not. In the latter case, there were sometimes tensions as to what degree the *rackare* and his family were entitled for an accommodation in the houses of the municipality “employing” him⁶³¹, particularly as there was often no official contract between the municipality and the *rackare*. Customary forms of compensation for the

⁶²⁸ E.g. Lindholm 1995, 73-76; Svensson 1993, 102-107.

⁶²⁹ *Kalmar*, 15 Oct 1883.

⁶³⁰ Svensson 1993, 103.

⁶³¹ Svensson 1993, 125; see also for example Jönköpingsbladet 6 Feb 1849.

work of the latter, primarily food and accommodation, seem to have in any case been the norm at least until the last decades of the 19th century.⁶³²

Differences in living arrangements connected to differences in wealth more generally: while some skimmers and gelders seem to have been reasonably wealthy and could afford to build or buy housing with the incomes from their work,⁶³³ others seem to have been more or less clearly concentrated on simple begging for necessities. Allegations of being full-fledged beggars were strengthened by the fact that the work of skinner and gelder were heavily focussed on certain short periods of time, in the spring and fall.⁶³⁴ Outside these periods, accusations such as the ones presented against Nils Petter A. at the communal meeting at Harplinge, 1856, were typical, and once again point to the unclear status of the *rackare* and skimmers:

The parish made it known [...] that the above-mentioned [skinner] A. has earlier often, and now recently again, wondered around the parish with his wife and children, and that he seems to think that he has the right to do so [...]⁶³⁵

13 years later, the former skinner Nils Petter A. had turned into a poor-relief recipient, living in a nearby parish of Slättåkra, where his petition for admitting his daughter into the local boarding school was accepted by the municipal council.⁶³⁶

An economic sphere even more completely concealed by the officially acknowledged occupational titles than the position of *rackare* / *vallackare* / *huddragare* were the livelihood activities of the Traveller women. It is clear from various qualitative sources that the women played a key role in the Travellers' itinerant family economy. Partly, they took part in- or practiced independently the occupations already mentioned above,⁶³⁷ even when only their husbands had a named occupation in official sources. In Fingåspånga in 1894, for example, Matilda Sofia E., known as 'Hund-Fia', questioned under vagrancy charges, told the court that

⁶³² Svensson 1993, 104.

⁶³³ E.g. SLD, Protocoll hållit i Stämna med Åhs Sockenmän den 4 Aug 1844.

⁶³⁴ E.g. SLD, Protocoll hållit i Tjerby Kyrka ... den 9 Januarii 1848.

⁶³⁵ SLD, Protocoll vid allmän Socknestämman med Harplinge Församling d. 6 April 1856.

⁶³⁶ SLD, Protocoll ... i Slättåkra den 17 Jan 1869, §1.

⁶³⁷ E.g. Lindholm 1995, 98-99, 106, 132; Svensson 1995, 122.

she had since 15 years travelled in the provinces of Östergötland, Södermanland, Närke and Kalmar together with a person named Frans Oskar F. [...], gathering rags and selling [...] glass utensils bought from Höganäs [a ceramics fabric in the province of Skåne][...] ⁶³⁸

There were also activities which were clearly gendered as the womens' tasks. These bore a significant resemblance to those practiced by the Finnish Roma women. The Traveller women went from door to door, selling handicrafts, often self-made, practicing fortune-telling and natural healing, spreading local and national news, or simply begging. Once again, there were popular stereotypes, particularly concerning the women, as possessing magical capabilities; and once again, these stereotypes were sometimes turned into an economic asset, or into a means of persuasion or threat. ⁶³⁹ Reminiscence material often presents Traveller women as 'wisewomen' (*kloka gummor*) and fortune-tellers; the use and misuse of the belief in the Traveller womens' magical capacities is also testified to by 'sorcery' sentences in the genealogical material. However, it seems clear that particularly natural healing was as an economic activity highly vulnerable to the increasing presence of rural doctors from the second half of the 19th century onwards.

The activity which is by far most visible in the non-Travellers' memories of the Traveller women at the end of 19th – beginning of 20th centuries is begging. It was also central in the outsiders' negative perception of the Travellers more generally. This is testified to by yet another class of external appellations which could be used synonymously with the word *tattare*, including the terms *tiggare*, *skojare*, *bettlare* and *källtringar*, all of which refer more or less directly to begging. Although the routine accusations of aggressive begging – levelled against the Travellers by newspaper writers, municipal councils, local police and the non-Traveller informants of the reminiscence studies – have once more to be read critically, it seems evident also from 'emic' sources that begging did in fact form an important part of many Travellers' livelihood, and regularly complemented their other economic activities.

Begging and the female sphere of economy connect with a wide variety of informal activities which were usually seen as too marginal to be written down by parish priests, local bailiffs etc., but whose combined significance could nevertheless have been crucial for individual Travellers and their families. These included again

⁶³⁸ Finspångs läns domsaga 1894 10/4 § 169, 1894 25/4 § 174; cited in Lindwall 2005, 20.

⁶³⁹ Svensson 1993, 123-124.

many activities which have already been mentioned in relation to the Finnish Roma, such as music performances or subsistence food production (berry picking, fishing, pig-keeping), etc.⁶⁴⁰ What seems to have been crucial was the ability to flexibly combine various sources of livelihood, no matter how insignificant-appearing – and as with the Finnish Roma, there was nothing particularly “ethnic” about this, when compared with the wide class of landless population in both countries.

Towards the end of the 19th century, there was a number of significant changes in the Travellers’ social position and economic activities. Firstly, resembling the de-institutionalization of the municipal whippers, gelders and horse-shoers in Finland, there was a dismantling of the semi-official positions of *rackare*, *valackare* and *huddragare* in Sweden. Gradually, many of their old tasks lost their importance, and there are indications that sons inheriting the position towards the end of the century could not expect similar compensations and treatment from the local peasants as their fathers.⁶⁴¹ On the contrary, as the local Traveller lineages grew, many families connected to the position of *rackare* begun to appear plainly as vagrants and beggars in the eyes of the surrounding peasant community. In 1880, the two centuries old position was officially abolished.⁶⁴²

Svensson interprets the disappearance of the *rackare* mainly as an outcome of the strengthening of local law-enforcement and peasantry, which made what Svensson seems to consider as a largely delinquent lifestyle of the *rackare* families more difficult to uphold.⁶⁴³ However, it seems evident that developments such as the ending of corporal punishments,⁶⁴⁴ loosening of taboos concerning deceased domestic animals⁶⁴⁵ and particularly the advent of certified veterinarians had simply left less room for the *rackare* during the second half of the 19th century. In 1877, trained veterinarians were

⁶⁴⁰ Particularly those employed as *rackare* often had a reputation of being able to cure sick animals. There was also a number of families which had also a tradition of playing and making music and instruments, some of them achieving fame in the late 19th century. E.g. Svensson 1993, 108-110.

⁶⁴¹ Svensson 1993, 103-105; see also the following chapter.

⁶⁴² Lindholm 1995, 74. The first royal decree offering protection for *rackare* was given in 1696.

⁶⁴³ Svensson 1993, 105-106.

⁶⁴⁴ Svensson 1993, 144.

⁶⁴⁵ In 1883, for example, it was noted with content in *Kalmar* (10 Dec) that thanks to folk enlightenment, old prejudices which had previously relegated all work with deceased horses to *wallackare* had been absolved, and that ‘thousands of families’ now did the skinning and butchering of dead horses themselves. In Vänersborg, Götaland, similar development had been predicted already two decades earlier; not long before, it was said that skinning and butchering had been officially decreed as the monopoly of nightmen and skimmers (*nattmän och huddragare*). *Tidning för Wenersborgs stad och län*, 3 Feb 1863.

given a monopoly in newly created official districts,⁶⁴⁶ in effect undercutting much of the economic basis onto which the position of the local *rackarne* had been based on. It is hardly surprising that in this situation, the position of the *rackarne* became to be viewed as something of an anachronism by the authorities.

The abolition of the position of *rackare* had significant repercussions for many Travellers, and coincided with what appears to have been a wider trend of loosening of the ties between the Travellers and the local peasant communities. Commercial trades which regularly substituted the activities of *rackare*, such as horse-trade, scrap-metal dealing and hawking might be economically profitable, but did not involve a formally established role in any particular communities. Former *rackare* lost the more or less legitimate position which many of them had previously enjoyed, turning them into potential vagrancy detainees. As can be seen from table 7, also the title of *gelder* virtually disappeared from among those becoming economically active after 1880 (the cohorts born after 1860), pointing to the tight connection between the occupations of ‘valackare’ and ‘rackare’.

This is the context in which Nya Vexjö (see above) wrote in 1883 about ‘a real pariah class’ formed by ‘rackarne’ – who had in fact lost this occupation just three years earlier, but whom the title still followed, now turned into an ethnonym.⁶⁴⁷ An unravelling of a previous economic ‘symbiosis’,⁶⁴⁸ at least in South-Western Sweden, seems also apparent in a number of other historical documents appearing after 1880, such as the complaint by the governor of Halland in 1890 and the appeal of the ‘wandering folk’ of Halland in 1896, cited in chapter 3.2. The abolition of the position of *rackare* had evidently made the Travellers more conspicuous and appearing as a class of vagrants, which played an important role in their subsequent public problematization.

The article of Nya Vexjö also pointed to some substituting activities which gave ‘at least some justification’ to the ‘wandering life’ of the ‘rackarne’: metalforging, tinning of copper utensils, and basket-making. As can be seen from table 7, these were not completely new activities, but seem to have indeed gained a new life after the demise of the position of *rackare*. However, the main initial response was the above-mentioned rush into horse-trading in c.1870-1900. This was soon followed by a shift

⁶⁴⁶ SOU 2007:24, 79.

⁶⁴⁷ The same was more or less true of the appellation ‘valackarne’, which was also used in the article to refer to the same group: gelding was loosing ground as an actual occupation, but the trade name could nevertheless still be used as an ethnonym. In 1886, there was even an itinerant glassdealer marked as belonging to the ‘gelder-race’ (*kringstrykande glashandlaren av "vallackarerrace"*). Lindwall 1984.

⁶⁴⁸ Heymowski 1969, 113.

towards more eclectic commercial peddling, hawking and trading. From the turn of century onwards, these now became the centrepiece of most Travellers' livelihood (although typically in combination with a number of older peripatetic activities). The sales items included both manufactured and self-made goods such as used watches, porcelain, scarves, lace, underwear, socks, decks of cards, brooms, whisks, paper flowers, weaving frames, clay pottery, shoestrings, etc. Hawking was not only done on foot or with horse-cart. Also bicycles became to be commonly used from 1920 onwards; and according to an informant of Lindholm, there were even some Norwegian-style 'boat-tattare' on the South-western coast of Sweden in 1920s, who

had their own small yachts, coastboats, and visited fishing communities outside the coast, primarily to buy scrap metal, but complementing this with the usual activities such as: tinning, soldering, selling of watches and various small items. In exchange for their services and goods, they were happy to take fresh, dried and salted fish.⁶⁴⁹

As Traveller families increasingly bought or rented housing of their own towards the end of the 19th century, patterns of mobility, trade and the gender-division of work became somewhat altered. With their own housing, the women began to stay in the home area with the children, while the men extended the scale of their commercial trips.⁶⁵⁰ Increasingly, the Travellers' trade began to resemble modern, a-personalized salesmanship, with highly mobile individuals retailing prefabricated smallwares for money, or swapping second-hand items such as watches or knives. In contrast, the Finnish Roma's 'tinkering' was usually still based on personalized exchange relationships, did not necessarily involve the use of money, and was combined with the asking for accommodation and food for the family as a part of the transaction.

In the rural settings, the increasingly anonymous commerce of the Travellers necessitated trading with a large amount of customers, and thus involved a high level of mobility (although this was still usually centred around particular 'own' localities). In 1922, for example, it was rare that police districts had local Traveller residents; yet, a vast majority of the districts reported regular visits by the Travellers, with the same pattern repeated from northern- to southernmost Sweden.⁶⁵¹ Still, even in 1922, these

⁶⁴⁹ Lindholm 1995, 84. The existence of the 'boat-tattare' also partly explains another commercial occupation common on the coastline, fishmongering. RA, 1907-23 fattigvårdskomiteens arkivet, HV1.

⁶⁵⁰ E.g. EU78, 22829; Lindholm 1995, 99.

⁶⁵¹ In the geographically wide, northernmost province of Norrbotten, for example, only 4 of 29 police districts reported to have 'tattare' residents (and none 'Zigenare'). Yet, altogether 23 districts reported more or less frequent visits by 'Tattare', and most bailiffs could give some details of the visiting bands.

visits usually followed established geographical and temporal patterns, following in particular the cycle of local market-days, and the whole families could be on the move. For example in Töre, Norrland, it was told that

Every year in the end august, two families of Tattare, together 4 adults and 5-6 children [...] visit the Töre main village [*kyrkoby*] for a few days, whereupon they are engaged in tinning of copperutensils, selling steel wire crafts, etc. The male members of the families also swap horses. From Töre, they continue their journey to the so-called fallmarket in the Kalix main village.

The families in question have a house in- and are registered [*kyrkoskrivna*] in the village of Heden, in Överluleå parish. [...] Any illegalities during the tatar's visits within the district have not been detected, with the exception for the begging, which is possibly practiced by their women and children.⁶⁵²

In the end, a certain opacity concerning the Travellers economic activities remains. Particularly the occupational titles inscribed in official documents give an impression of livelihood strategies which were highly adaptive, even vulnerable, to changes in state policies and economic structures, with clear reactions to external factors (such as the ban of recruiting *Zigenare* and *Tattare* into the military, or of using itinerants as glass-retailers, the arrival of trained veterinarians and doctors, the abolition of the position of *rackare*, pressure on uncertified horse-trading, the rise of industrial smallware-production, increasingly dense network of retailing shops and warehouses, etc). At the same time, qualitative sources in particular point to surprisingly strong continuities and resilience in adopting old activities to new circumstances. Thus, horse-trade, rag-gathering and even the retailing of glass- and porcelainwares still belonged to the Travellers' economic activities in the end of the research period, despite centuries of change in the surrounding economy and legislation.

(Somewhat surprisingly, there are no signs of visits by Finnish Roma in districts adjacent to Finland in police reports, nor in the ethnographic memory accounts.) In the province of Halland in the Southern Sweden, the situation was roughly similar. RA, 1907-23 fattigvårdskomiteens arkivet, HV1.

⁶⁵² RA, 1907-23 fattigvårdskomiteens arkivet, HV1, Töre.

7.2 Interaction and conflicts

The fact that the Travellers became significantly more often settled during the research period than the Finnish Roma brought with it a somewhat different kind of problematique in terms of their relation with the ‘peasant’ population. At least from 1900s onwards, there was less pressing dependence on the latter in terms of accommodation, as even on long trips, the Travellers were increasingly relying on temporary lodgings provided by their kinsmen. Together with the somewhat shorter and milder Southern-Swedish winters, this meant a relationship in which personal networks with the peasants were not as directly a matter of life and death, as they were for the majority of Finnish Roma. As I will argue below, this relative independence did not necessarily translate into better relations with the mainstream sedentary population. Sedentarization also brought with it new kinds of tensions and sources of conflicts.

In any case, the different relationship with the ‘peasants’, consequent of better access to housing, seems to have been a difference in degree rather than in kind. With the exception of those who ‘passed’ more or less completely into the settled mainstream society, majority of the Travellers seem to have remained highly mobile, whether they had a house or not. Once the scale of travel was great enough, they necessarily faced a problematique which in many fundamental respects resembled that already seen in the Finnish case. In terms of the interaction between the Travellers and the ‘bonde’ or ‘buro’, we can thus see a familiar constellation in which patterns of interaction, exchange, tensions and conflict were connected to few basic forms of mobility and locality.

Whether or not a particular Traveller family had a fixed ‘base’ in the form of a tenant farmhouse, cottage, makeshift hut etc., they usually had established relations with a network of sedentary households within their ‘own’ localities. The Travellers were typically in economic dealings with sedentary rural inhabitants whom they already knew, and who provided them with repeated short-term accommodations. As with the Finnish Roma, the connections between the Travellers and certain households could be established to the degree that the latter sometimes lodged members of the same Traveller families from one generation to the next.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵³ E.g. Lindholm 1995, 147; Svensson 1993, 26; EU78, 22829; 23877.

Yet, again similarly, the Travellers were as a rule admitted only for one-two nights at a time.⁶⁵⁴ Established local position did not necessarily mean that the relations between the Travellers and majority of the local peasants would have been particularly warm either, nor that the economic interaction would have always been balanced. Svensson in particular has emphasized popular hostility towards- and fear of the Travellers, even among the neighbours of settled families.⁶⁵⁵ The fearsome reputation of the ‘tattare’ was connected to many factors. As with Finnish Roma, cases of inter-ethnic violence seem to have been rare throughout the research period, and were actively avoided by the Travellers. Besides practical considerations, this tendency was also supported by norms according to which it was shameful to fight with the ‘*buro*’.⁶⁵⁶ At the same time, as with the Finnish Roma, biographical data points to a high presence of interpersonal violence *within* the group, with male Travellers being strikingly often involved in mortal violence either as victims or perpetrators (or sometimes, as both⁶⁵⁷). Together with the repeated vagrancy arrests and prison sentences, dealt with in chapter 2.1, this produced a ‘criminalized’ perception of the Travellers among the sedentary population. Further accentuating the popular fears was the belief in the capability of the ‘tattare’ to invoke magical retribution.⁶⁵⁸

Yet, seen as a wider ‘system’, it is evident that most Travellers had an existing role in particular communities, which was at any rate functional enough to give them a living and a roof to stay under, even when they had no house of their own. As in Finland, local goodwill correlated with economic functionality. When the Travellers had well-mastered economic niches useful for the ‘peasants’, interaction and gaining accommodation could appear reasonably unproblematic.⁶⁵⁹ As is evident in the reminiscence of a Traveller man’s son, born in the beginning of the 20th century, accepted role could also be coupled with a certain pride:

My father was a tinner, he was well-known. He never had led in [the tinned seams]. His work looked like silver. The peasants could not tin themselves so we were always welcomed.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁴ E.g. Svensson 1993, 103.

⁶⁵⁵ Svensson 1993, 95, 139-140.

⁶⁵⁶ E.g. Lindholm 1995, 227-228; the rarity of inter- as opposed to intra-ethnic violence is also apparent in the genealogical- and the press material.

⁶⁵⁷ An example of this for example in Lindwall 2003, 68.

⁶⁵⁸ Svensson 1993, 96, 139-140.

⁶⁵⁹ E.g. EU78, 23877.

⁶⁶⁰ Man, born in the beginning of 20th century, originally cited in Lindholm 1995, 87.

The importance of economic function in the reception of the Travellers is also apparent in Svensson's description of the life and local position of a *rackare* Christian G. and his son Widrik in the district of Albo, province of Kalmar, around mid 19th century. Christian was a district gelder [*häradsvallackare*] whose status in the local community was regulated by a number of unwritten rules and conventions. These ascribed him a symbolically low position, visible for example in norms denying him entry into peasant houses beyond the hallway and foremost part of the common hall; yet, rules of convention also acknowledged certain rights and respect for Christian, and guaranteed him with food and accommodation in the houses of the municipality. Christian's son Widrik, however, was presented in local reminiscences as both less willing and -competent in gelding. Despite having been a well-liked local figure, with musical talent, good sense of humour and a reputation of honesty, he consequently had problems procuring food and accommodation from the houses, and had to face humiliations such as being denied a Christmas meal to which his father had traditionally been entitled to.⁶⁶¹

While the reminiscences of 'mainstream' sedentary Swedes bring out a wide spectrum of attitudes towards the Travellers, it is clear that the dominant tone in descriptions of the Travellers is very negative. However, as Lindholm emphasizes, there is a repeatedly a clear distinction made between familiar and local Travellers on the one hand, and unfamiliar visitors on the other. The former, named individuals who lived in the respondents home villages or neighbourhood, can be referred to as 'our own' and told to be 'like anyone else'; they are often presented as a positive exception and set against the second category, 'dangerous, sorcerous, or thieving people who idle through villages'.⁶⁶²

This dualism resembles closely that found in the Finnish context, as presented in the chapters 4.3-4.5. The shunning of unknown Travellers also connects with the second basic pattern of interrelated mobility / locality: longer trips, undertaken by the Travellers particularly to visit seasonal fairs, but also as part of 'normal' practicing of various economic activities, of visiting friends and relatives, avoiding feuds and authorities, etc. As with local mobility, long-term travel was usually based on accommodation offered at a number of key friendly houses, acting as junction points. These were either the houses of 'peasant' acquaintances, or – increasingly from the turn

⁶⁶¹ Svensson 1993, 103-105.

⁶⁶² Lindholm 1995, 79.

of the century onwards – those of settled Travellers’. Still, also contacts with more or less unknown peasants along the way were usually necessary. It was these encounters which were often cited as a source of problems.

As with the Finnish Roma, the Travellers were regularly accused of forcible accommodations and of using threats to gain food, as well as committing thefts and other crimes, particularly in sparsely inhabited backwoods. However, compared to the Finnish Roma, there is an impression that the division between those admitting- or not admitting the Travellers was not quite as clearly established. Evidently, the relatively lesser direct dependency on the peasants meant conversely a lesser urgency in building long-term networks and maintaining the peasants’ goodwill. Perhaps related to this, fear of retribution was cited conspicuously often as the main reason for letting them in, both in reminiscence- and press material as well as in various reports of the authorities. In Ale, province of Västra Götaland, for example, the local police complained in 1922 that

the conduct of the *Zigenare* and *Tattarna* greatly upsets the population of the district, as these risk having their property stolen, but still, for fear of revenge, seldomly dare to deny travelling bands food or fodder. There is no opportunity to give the former a warning for vagrancy, since they as a rule do not lack the means of supporting themselves, but on the contrary, possess capital.⁶⁶³

There was also a cycle of mistrust, familiar from the Finnish case, in which both Travellers and the peasants had legitimate safety concerns over each other. There are plenty enough indications that Travellers – systematically outnumbered in peasant communities, and unable to rely on the protection by the authorities – had to be ready to face aggression by hostile peasants, drunken youth groups, violent bailiffs etc.⁶⁶⁴ Together with the frequent fights between Traveller men from different family lines, this makes it unsurprising that many Travellers carried arms such as knives, pistols, and batons, as well as were often followed by large guard dogs.⁶⁶⁵ All of which was naturally enough in itself to evoke the peasants’ fear and make them wary of the Travellers’ intentions, particularly when the latter were previously unknown.

It is then clear that Travellers routinely faced hostility, fear and rejection from the side of local population outside their ‘own’ areas. More often than in Finland, there were also institutionalized local systems which aimed specifically at preventing or

⁶⁶³ RA, 1907-23 fattigvårdskomiteens arkivet, HV1, Ale (Västra Götaland).

⁶⁶⁴ E.g. Lindholm 217, 227-228; EU78, 22439.

⁶⁶⁵ EU78, 30310.

restricting the visits of itinerant *tattare*. As seen in chapter 3.2, there was a rise of local anti-tattare decrees between 1870 and 1900.⁶⁶⁶ The effect of these measures, as well as the popular dislike of the Travellers (named here '*kjältringar*' or '*vägarnas folk*') were acknowledged in the report of the governor of the province of Halland in 1890:

[...] These itinerant bands are both feared and hated by the settled population. On one hand, one hardly dares to deny from them what they threateningly claim; on the other, there are very few, who are willing- or dare to take them and their families over for even one night[.] In several communities, there has been an agreement to not to take them into houses for the nights, on pains of a set fine. A consequence of this has been, that on one day they show up in one municipality, and in the next day are met in another one, many miles away [...]⁶⁶⁷

According to Halland's governor, the local regulations banning the upkeeping of Travellers had thus in fact accentuated their mobility, as both the Travellers and their hosts had to avoid being overly visible. Yet, the governor's straightforward claim that the Travellers were 'feared and hated' by all of the settled population does not seem to present the whole picture. It does not seem plausible that the Travellers would have been able to routinely simply force their way into sedentary houses in a relatively densely populated rural area such as the province of Halland. Instead, they also had their hosts, clients, protectors and friends.⁶⁶⁸ In respect to the latter, however, the reminiscence material and anti-tattare municipal decrees point to even stricter class division than what was the case in the Roma/peasant-relations in Finland. It seems to have been overwhelmingly smallholders, cottagers and even poor-relief customers who were most intensively in dealings with the Travellers. Through admitting Travellers, they risked being stigmatized as riff-raff in the eyes of their social environment, as made clear in the reminiscence of a respondent from Skåne, Southern tip of Sweden:

[...] there have been for example tenant farmers and cottagers [*torpare och jämtasittare*], who were in good terms with the Tattare, so they gave them shelter and 'backed them up' [...]. But these tenant farmers and cottagers were considered to be the 'bad folks' of the locality.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁶ Similar regulations were however decreed also earlier. Bergstrand (1942) refers to 18th century local anti-'skojare' statutes, and there are references to fines imposed on those admitting *tattare* in their houses for example in Norra Wi in 1810 (EU78, 022439).

⁶⁶⁷ RA, Civildepartement, Länshövdingarnas femårsberättelser. EII baa vol 39.

⁶⁶⁸ This was true even of the most infamous families, such as of the Black Peter's ('Svarte-Peter') family, based in Gladsax, province of Gladsax; see Svensson 1993, 117.

⁶⁶⁹ EU78, 22829; the reminiscence is based on oral communications with 7 informants, born between 1800 and 1857.

Another respondent expresses even more clearly the stigmatization which economic relations with the Travellers meant:

if there was someone, who often hosted tattarna, he was considered as little worth [mindervärdig]. This helped also to some extent so that not so many wanted to host them.⁶⁷⁰

It was then people with relatively low socio-economic status whom the municipal anti-tattare decrees – put forward by the boards occupied by freeholding peasants and local notability – largely targeted. Sometimes this bias was made explicit, as in the municipality of Färgaryd, province of Halland, in which a following minute was written in 1883:

§5. It was announced at the council, that the so-called Tattare and itinerant persons roam around in the parish and often have their accommodation among some of the tenant farmers and cottagers [*Torpare och Backstugsittare*]; the parish will thus make a most serious notice that the above-mentioned persons are not allowed to be housed [*hysas*] within the parish; the ones who do this, fall due to a fine of 10 crowns[.]

According to a protocol decreed earlier, a person receiving poor-relief support who accommodates such Tattare will also lose their support.⁶⁷¹

The last-mentioned threat of slashing poor-relief benefits from the Travellers' hosts did not remain a dead letter either. In the winter of 1915, for example, Alfred I., a poor-relief recipient, applied for additional help from the municipal council of Färgaryd as his wife was sick and the family had run out of flour. Instead, his previously admitted benefits were cut into half, after he was accused by the council of hosting 'inappropriate itinerant person, beggars and the so-called tattare'.⁶⁷²

Similar threats towards tenant-farmers, cottagers and poor-relief recipients were repeated in a number of Southern-Swedish municipalities in late 19th – early 20th century. In Färgaryd's neighbouring municipality, Femsjö, the internal division in relating to the Travellers can be read in between the lines of a protocol of the municipal meeting held in 1893, in which the council members pleaded the residents for unity in

⁶⁷⁰ EU78, 27981.

⁶⁷¹ SLD, Protocoll förddt vid i behörig ordning utlyst ordinarie Kommunalstämma med Färgaryds församling den 18de December 1883.

⁶⁷² SLD; Protocoll vid extra sammanträde med Färgaryds sockens kommunalnämnd [...] den 7 februari 1915, §3. The same faith had previously threatened the above-mentioned former skinner Nils Petter A., who was threatened in 1869

order to fight the ‘evil’ formed by the presence of beggars and ‘so-called tattare’ in the municipality. The council imposed a fine on those accommodating the above-mentioned, but, exceptionally, felt it necessary to justify their position by arguing that ‘high-handedness’ and laziness should not be supported in the name of mercifulness – and that in any case the poor-relief efforts of the municipality were already overloaded.⁶⁷³

Settled Travellers and their neighbours

The fact that the Travellers begun to settle down in significant scale some decades earlier than the Finnish Roma can be interpreted in two very different ways (which, as the Traveller group has been far from homogenous, are not necessarily mutually exclusive). On one hand, it can be read simply as a sign of increasing wealth, at least among commercially successful Travellers, making it financially possible for them to acquire homesteads, tenant farms or cottages. On the other hand, there are also strong signs that getting accommodation among local peasant hosts/clients was becoming increasingly difficult, in effect forcing many Travellers to acquire whatever independent housing they could. Along with the demise of the position of *rackare*, rapid population growth amongst the Travellers, increasing police surveillance and anti-‘tattare’ regulations, growing number of prison sentences, etc, the modernizing Swedish countryside seems to have been decidedly – and at least partly intentionally – pushing the Travellers out.

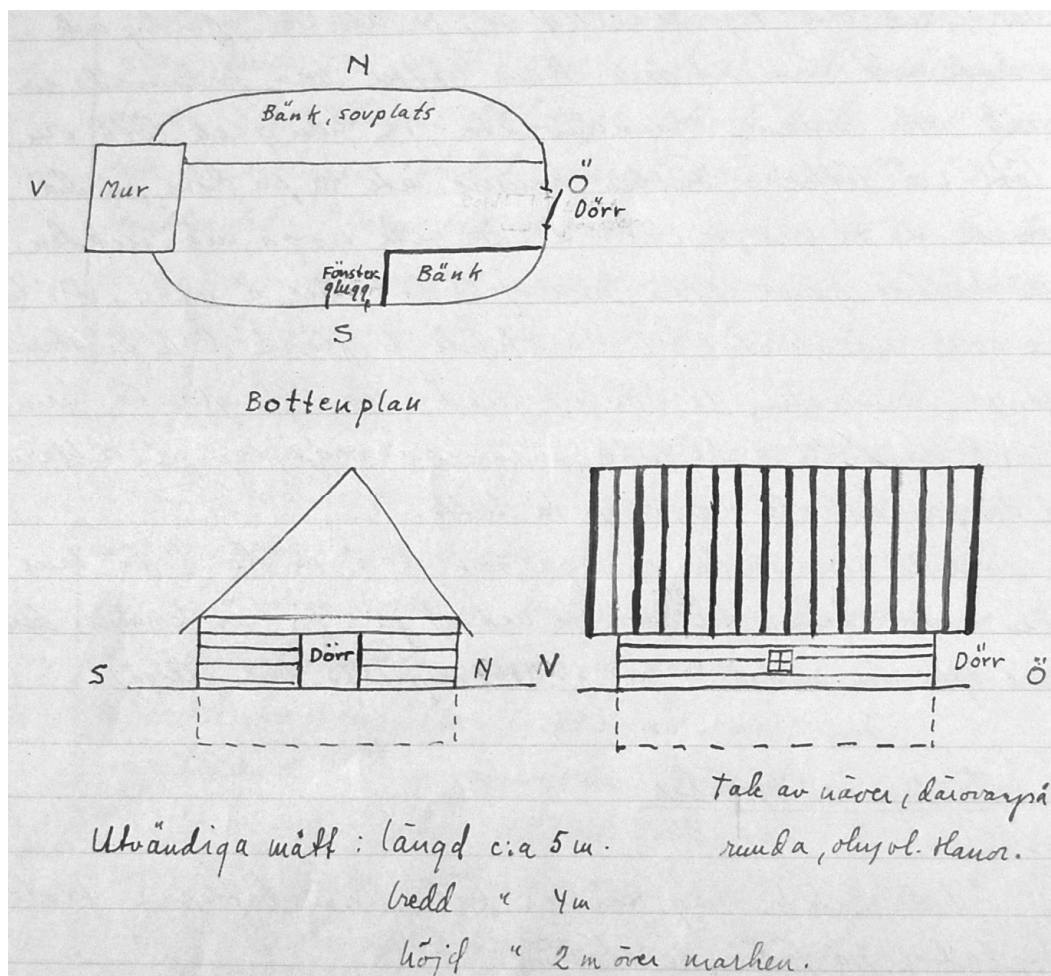
Here, again, the timing and substance of complaints presented above in Chapters 3 and 7 can be pointed to. In 1890, at a time when more and more local regulation targeted mobile Travellers, it was told that there were ‘very few, who are willing- or dare to host them and their families over for even one night’. At the same time, a number of newspapers begun to describe the Travellers’ mobility in new way as ‘homelessness’, as a problem in itself.⁶⁷⁴

The relatively fast development in which majority of Travellers became sedentary between 1890s and early 1920s, then, can be interpreted at least partly as a sign of an increasingly dysfunctional relationship between the Travellers and the rest of

⁶⁷³ SLD, Protocoll vid extra kommunalstämma i Femsjö den 28 Augusti 1893. §3.

⁶⁷⁴ *Kalmar* 31 Dec 1890; *Norra Skåne* 4 Jan 1896.

the rural population. This interpretation is supported by the emergence of makeshift 'tattar-towns' ['*tattarstan*'] throughout the latter half of the 19th century. The best-documented example of these is Snarsmon, a squatter settlement in the province of Göteborg and Bohus. Snarsmon was situated on an isolated woody hill in the immediate vicinity of the Norwegian borderline, and had tightly crowded makeshift huts which were partly dug into the ground. There are few other known cases like Snarsmon; Figure 8, below, presents a scetch of a typical Traveller dug-in hut, drawn by a local schoolteacher from the parish of Älgå, Värmland.



Picture 4. A scetch of a Traveller hut in Älgå parish in Värmland, close to the Norwegian border, drawn by a local schoolteacher. The hut was partly dug underground and had only one small window to minize the loss of heat. The drawing specifies the proportions of the single-room hut: it was c.5 meters long, 4m wide and rose 2m above the ground level. Source: EU78, 27860.

Later, from 1910s onwards, the increasing movement to the outskirts of towns and cities can also be seen as pointing to a ‘crowding out’ of Travellers from the countryside (even though rapid urbanization was at this period certainly not an ethno-specific process).

In any case, majority of the Travellers were- or became settled in one way or the other towards the end of the research period, making them ‘locals’ within particular peasant communities in a new, more direct way. Yet being ‘settled’ did not always mean significantly more engagement with the surrounding community, nor even more much sedentary lifestyle, than previously. The most common arrangement was to buy a tenant farm, often more or less isolated from other houses, which was then used as a base into which a Traveller family could return in between their longer trips.

There is no singular picture of relations between settled Travellers and their neighbours. What was central was whether a Traveller family became to be considered as ‘local’, one of ‘ours’, or not. But even the acceptance of immediate neighbours was not always enough, as is clear from a reminiscence of a non-Traveller from Svenljunga (province of Älvsborg):

During the time that they [the Travellers] lived here in Mårdaklev, there was never any trouble with them. They walked or cycled around and sold socks and rags [...] The community bought [their house] with overprice to get rid of them.⁶⁷⁵

What the neighbours, authorities and municipal board members often presented as the largest problem were the visiting relatives and kinsmen of the local Travellers. This connected to the Travellers’ continuing mobility and incomplete sedentarization. Individual Traveller houses became junction points for the numerous travelling families, all the more so as the mainstream sedentary inhabitants became less willing to accommodate them. Houses of the Travellers gained logistic importance beyond their number, but, conversely, became in many cases to be seen by the surrounding non-Traveller society as ‘nests’ of itinerant *tattare*, felt as burdensome as the visitors often wandered in the surrounding neighbourhood, and were often accused of begging and stealing.

This was the context, for example, for a clash between villagers and Travellers in Wallarup in 1882, studied by Svensson. On a winter evening, a settled Traveller Nils

⁶⁷⁵ Lindholm 1995, 77.

Larsson J. and his family were visited by four relatives, two men and two women, who stayed overnight at the former's place. On the same night around midnight, a group of villagers arrived outside the house, banging and kicking the door and demanding to be let in. The door gave in, and the group stormed the house, armed with sticks, wanting to 'see who it is that you [Nils Larsson J.] are housing'. Nils Larsson tried to calm the situation, explaining that he could not deny a place for the night from his relatives. The situation nevertheless escalated and a fight broke out, in which the two male relatives pulled out their knives. Two of the intruding group were stabbed, one of them later dying in his wounds, after which the visiting relatives escaped.⁶⁷⁶

Nils Larsson J.'s case illustrates the dilemma – familiar from the case of the Finnish settled Roma – which Travellers with their own housing faced. At a time when the mobile Travellers were increasingly hard-pressed to find accommodation, denying visits by their kinsmen was prone to shatter deep in-group ties and loyalties. Yet, there was also tremendous pressure from the surrounding peasant community to put a stop to visitations of non-local Travellers, accentuated in many areas by the threat of fines and public humiliation imposed by the local anti-*tattare* regulations.⁶⁷⁷

Nils Larsson J.'s wife belonged to a Traveller family which had a particularly fearsome reputation among the peasants, and the immediate motive of the night-time attackers was thus to intervene in the visits of these relatives rather than to evict the Traveller family itself. Yet, in other contexts, there were also direct attempts to get rid of settled Travellers. For example, the Traveller village Snarsmon was abandoned after 1910, apparently as the local population – or, according to rumours, a drunken youth mob – forcibly evicted its inhabitants, breaking down the dwellings.⁶⁷⁸

More common than outright attacks were subtler forms of exclusion and expulsion. Elderly and poor Travellers with children were made clear that if they settled down and became residents, the children would be taken into custody by the municipal authorities.⁶⁷⁹ There were also direct cash payments for Traveller families from municipal boards, conditional on the former moving out of the municipality⁶⁸⁰; as well as payments to those letting land to Travellers or 'peddlars', conditional on evicting

⁶⁷⁶ Svensson 1993, 178-179.

⁶⁷⁷ Cf. Barth 1955, 141.

⁶⁷⁸ Before this, the huts had apparently already been broken down several times by the local bailiff and peasants from the surrounding villagers. An attempt had also been made to make the Travellers to pay rent for the land on which they had settled on. Andersson 2008, 59-61.

⁶⁷⁹ Lindholm 1995, 147.

⁶⁸⁰ E.g. Etzler 1944, 160; Lindholm 1995, 112.

these.⁶⁸¹ Further, there were ‘preventive’ public purchases of plots and houses on which Travellers were known to be interested in. In Rolfstorp, province of Halland, for example, an emergency meeting of the municipal council was arranged in 1912 as it had come to the knowledge of a council member that there was a house which was about to be sold to a ‘tattar-family’ [*tattarfamelj*]. A previous owner of the plot had promised to come into the council’s rescue and to buy off the property from its current owner, thus cancelling the planned sale, if he was given a substantial compensation to cover the higher price which was demanded by the current owner. The council, after a ‘lively debate’ finally voted for a proposal according to which it would indeed pay 500 crowns for the previous owner to redeem the property, on the condition that he

evicts the residents from the house, in case they have already moved in, as well as makes a commitment to the municipality to henceforth not sell the plot nor the house to a *tattare*, or to such a person who might become a burden to the municipality’s poor-relief [...]⁶⁸²

As can be seen, the discrimination of the Travellers was completely open, thinly veiled in this case by the reference to possible poor-relief costs. The ‘tartarphobia’ could also give rise to considerable speculation among real estate owners; there were instances of milking public money by threatening to sell otherwise low-value properties to Travellers unless the municipality made a purchase with what could be a considerable overprice.⁶⁸³

Through their key role in sanctioning legitimate status of residency, parish priests were also conjoined in the effort to hinder the moving in of Travellers. For example, according to a non-Traveller woman born in 1860 in the Swedish parish of Högsäter, province of Dalsland,

the priest Wennergren was so careful in looking after that those living in the municipality would be honest, Godfearing and orderly people. He guarded over that no *tattare* would be living in the pastorat.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸¹ E.g. SLD, Protokoll, förddt vid extra kommunalstämma med Frillesås församling den 8 september 1905, §3.

⁶⁸² To make their anti-‘tattare’ stand even clearer, the municipal council decided on the same meeting to set fines on residents who offered food, fodder or lodgings to *tattare*. SLD, Protokoll hållit vid extra Kommunalstämma med Rolfstorps församling den 25 Februari 1912, §1 & 2.

⁶⁸³ Etzler 1944, 160.

⁶⁸⁴ The written reminiscence of the informant is cited in Bergstrand 1942, 129-130.

The kind of ‘not in my backyard’ -phenomenon behind this speculation can be assumed to have been nothing new to Travellers. Unsurprisingly, instances of hostile municipal reactions towards the settling down of Travellers can be found throughout the 19th century.⁶⁸⁵ Cases of municipal resistance towards the settling down of Travellers could doubtlessly be found also much earlier; it can even be suspected that the whole history of Roma and Travellers in Nordic countries would in fact have looked very different without centuries of various kinds of communal interventions. Still, it seems that this begun to have heightened significance from late 19th century onwards, and particularly during the first half of 20th century. Systematic discrimination in rural municipalities, together with the lessening possibilities to rely on ‘peasant’ networks in terms of accommodation, pushed Traveller families on the outskirts of rapidly growing towns and cities, in which authorities had fewer possibilities to monitor the influx of newcomers.

However, even in towns, the seemingly intensified perception of ‘tattare’ as unwanted residents made the ones labelled as such highly vulnerable to discrimination on rental- and job markets. Particularly in South-Swedish regional centers such as Jönköping, Göteborg, and Malmö, new kind of ethnically distinctive ‘slum’ areas emerged, such as the ‘tattar-valley’ [*tattardal*] in Malmö, anticipating ethnic tension which found their worst expression in the so-called ‘tattar-riots’ of Jönköping in 1948.⁶⁸⁶

However, it would be a mistake to read into the relations between Travellers and peasants only hostility and discrimination. As said, popular perception of the Travellers seems to have had an inherent class bias. Not everyone were as hostile towards the Travellers as the official and municipal council documents would lead to assume. Being seen as local, one of ‘our own’, together with the Travellers’ constant economic re-adaptations produced also well-functioning Traveller-‘peasant’-relations – which included also matrimonial relations.

⁶⁸⁵ E.g. SLD, Protocoll vid Stämna I Tjerby Kyrka Söndagen den 1. April 1849; Protokoll (...) med Slättåkra församling den 5 Sept 1875; Lindgren and Lindwall 1992, 90.

⁶⁸⁶ Ericsson 2006.

7.3 ‘No rule without exception’: passing over the ethnic boundary

In the case of the Swedish Travellers, the paradox, noted by Fredrik Barth, of persistence of ethnic boundaries despite ‘a flow of personnel across them’,⁶⁸⁷ is evident at the outset. On one hand, it is clear that a strong normative and discursive line of demarcation was drawn between the ‘Travellers’ and the ‘peasants’ from both sides of the divide. From the side of the majority population, this can be most clearly read from diverse reminiscence materials; from the side of the Travellers, Lindholm has charted equally strict boundary-drawing on the basis of interviews and ego-documents.⁶⁸⁸ On both sides of the divide, the demarcation line had also involved elements of racial categorization, although the perceptions of phenotypical difference were less clear-cut than in the Finnish case.

On the other hand, it is equally clear that in terms of praxis – what people actually did, whom they married- and socialized with, and what kind of life they led – a ‘rule’ had in each generation its ‘exceptions’. This phenomenon is described by Heymowski as follows:

Examples may be quoted of persons who have, in spite of [...] isolation, passed from the traveller environment to peasant society and have become fully accepted members of the latter. On the other hand it happens again and again that a “peasant” leaves his original environment and becomes absorbed by the traveller community. Usually this process is combined with marriage, formal or not, into a traveller family. Some of these “fresh” travellers have even learned the language known as travellers’ Romany and are generally regarded by their neighbours, the authorities, etc., as *tattare*. It is less sure that they are fully accepted as members of the travellers’ community. It may be guessed, however, that their children, in most cases, will be looked upon as true travellers (although not quite “deep”). What seems to me most relevant from the sociological point of view is the continuous turnover which characterizes this group. Branches of old traveller families disappear, new families rise and are stigmatized as *tattare*.⁶⁸⁹

Heymowski has been criticized by Lindholm of overemphasizing the flexibility of ethnic boundaries, at least in the short term of 1-2 generations, and of underestimating the strict norms of endogamy within the Traveller community.⁶⁹⁰ Whether Lindholm’s emphasis on hard ethnocentrism on both sides of the ethnic divide can be stretched back

⁶⁸⁷ Barth 1969, 9.

⁶⁸⁸ Lindholm 1996.

⁶⁸⁹ Heymowski 1969, 74.

⁶⁹⁰ Lindholm 1995, 172.

in time into the 19th century is unclear, however. In any case, while the ‘turnover’ between *resande* and *bonde* communities might have been continuous, as Heymowski claims – and enhanced by the latter’s eagerness to label any ‘deviants’ as ‘tattare’ – it was also subject to historical changes. Bo Lindwall (2005) and Anne Minken (2011) have emphasized the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries as a significant divide in the history of the Travellers. This seems also to hold true in terms of mobility into the mainstream society (‘passing’) and inter-ethnic marriages, both of which appear to have become less common in the 19th century.

The genealogical material on Traveller lineages utilized in this study do not enable a genuine statistical analysis in terms of inter-ethnic matrimony or ‘passing’.⁶⁹¹ Nevertheless, the more than thousand mini-biographies included in the various studies seem to point to the second half of the 19th century as a high period of endogamous marriages. There is certainly a continuing tendency throughout the centuries (17th-20th) covered by the genealogies for individuals with a Traveller background to marry or engage mostly within the group.⁶⁹² However, it is in the mid- and late 19th century that this tendency appears to become nearly exclusive, with very few references to inter-ethnic marriages.⁶⁹³

This picture of increasing social isolation is supported by Heymowski’s data on what he called ‘co-sanguinous unions’, that is, matrimonial relations between cousins (first, second, etc.) and other related persons outside immediate nuclear family. Although these cannot be straightforwardly equated with inter-ethnic matrimony more generally, the two can be assumed to be closely correlated. A re-computation of Heymowski’s material, which included 1465 men and women from three Traveller lineages, indicates that the relative proportion of such unions rose significantly after the turn of the 19th century, peaking with cohorts born between 1840 and 1870.⁶⁹⁴

Some of the non-Traveller reminiscences from 1940s, focussing on the latter half of the 19th century and first decades of the 20th, would seem to fit with an assumption of an earlier past in which intermarriages were more common. For example,

⁶⁹¹ Whatever the starting point of the various researchers, they appear in practice to have largely geared their studies towards family lines ending in proband individuals and families which have been more or less clearly recognizable as ‘Travellers’, while sometimes – although certainly not always – leaving out less certain cases and ‘assimilated’ branches.

⁶⁹² As was, of course, the case also with most other ethnic or religious minorities, or status groups such as royal families etc.

⁶⁹³ Assertion based on comparison of material presented in Heymowski 1969; Jularbo 1990; Lindgren & Lindwall 1992; Lindwall 1984; 1995; 2003; 2005; SOU 1923:2 (C. Specialundersökningar).

⁶⁹⁴ The base material is presented in Heymowski 1969, 58-64.

according to three male informants from the province of Östergötland, born in 1860s and 1870s,

No-one knew of a *tatar* who would have been married with a peasant, but it was said that this or that person had ‘tatarblood’ in his veins. Which was seen as extremely scornful.⁶⁹⁵

Apart from the disdain towards ‘mixed’ pedigree, its claimed commonness, as against the rarity of inter-ethnic matrimonies, would logically imply a past in which the crossing of boundaries was more common.

Impressions such as this do of course not constitute proper evidence in regards to matrimonial patterns. A hypothesis of increasing social isolation in the late 19th century would however make sense in light of some of the processes observed in the previous sections, particularly, the apparent loosening of older local ties between the Travellers and the peasants, epitomized by the demise of the position of *rackare*, and the increasing reliance of the Travellers on their own networks in terms of housing and basic necessities of life.

In any case, there were also strong continuities in matrimonial patterns. Firstly, as said, it was not only in the late 19th century that endogamous matrimony was pervasive. This can be interpreted through ‘pull’ as well as ‘push’ factors; Lindholm, for example, has criticized Heymowski’s emphasis on social isolation as the primary explanation, pointing to the functionality of in-group matrimony in kin-based societies.⁶⁹⁶ As in the Finnish case, there are clear signs of deeply ingrained cultural preferences towards endogamy among the Swedish Travellers. Etzler, for example, quotes what his informants presented to him an old Traveller song (in early 1940s):

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>Romano racklo</i> | A Traveller boy |
| <i>vill kamma romani tjej,</i> | will have Traveller girl |
| <i>asjar diro buro</i> | If you’re a ‘peasant’ |
| <i>så fular jag i dej.</i> | I don’t give a damn about you. ⁶⁹⁷ |

Group loyalty, pride of ‘deep’ Traveller roots and the maintenance of social cohesion undoubtably played important role in the Travellers’ high propensity to marry

⁶⁹⁵ EU78, 22439.

⁶⁹⁶ Lindholm 1995, 121. Similarly, Barth (1955, 140) points in the Norwegian context to structural advantages from endogamous choices within the large, highly spread and networked ‘Tater’ families.

⁶⁹⁷ Etzler 1944, 165.

within the group. Yet, following Tillhagen⁶⁹⁸, it can be asked whether the endogamous cultural norms were partly also a matter of turning a necessity into a virtue. In the light of the coinciding of the high period of endogamous unions with a socio-economic marginalization in the latter half of the 19th century, it does not seem far-fetched to follow Heymowski in interpreting the dominance of endogamous marriages largely as a consequence of exclusion from the wider marriage 'market'.⁶⁹⁹ As a non-Traveller man, born in Dalarna province in 1868, laconically states:

The local inhabitants' attitude towards the *tattarna* was such that any approach from their side with such intentions [matrimony / other liaisons] would have not led to any positive result.⁷⁰⁰

But despite strict attitudes on both sides, there was nevertheless also the second continuity, already mentioned: the tricle of individuals and families over the divide between 'Traveller' and 'peasant' communities, which took place in both directions also in the latter half of the 19th century. There were several different ways in which this happened.

Firstly, a proportion of Travellers who settled down in rural parishes, whether as farmers, labourers or craftsmen, did in fact become fully accepted, transforming gradually into 'bonde resande',⁷⁰¹ members of the local peasant communities. Their children went to school, married with descendants of the peasant families, and shifted more or less exclusively into the lifestyle of the mainstream society.⁷⁰²

Secondly, as was the case with the Finnish Roma, it seems that a fairly significant proportion of the children of the Travellers spend at least some years in non-Traveller foster homes, children's homes and orphanages. This was despite the fact that most Travellers avoided becoming customers of municipal poor-relief, in part exactly because this would have easily meant the taking into custody of their children.⁷⁰³ Some of the foster children were forcibly taken into custody by municipal authorities, and could be 'auctioneered' to peasant houses as in Finland; some, again, were voluntarily

⁶⁹⁸ Tillhagen 1956, 296; see also Ch 1.1.

⁶⁹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu's classic concept of habitus would seem to offer a way out of the 'egg or hen' discussion in this respect; the marital patterns could then be interpreted as a result of practical reasoning and internalized norms which have been formed against the crucial backdrop of strong external constraints and structural position.

⁷⁰⁰ EU78, 23877.

⁷⁰¹ Lindholm 1995.

⁷⁰² E.g. Heymowski 1969, 187, pedigree 1.2.1.5; 188, pedigree 1.2.1.6; 251, pedigree 1.1.1.

⁷⁰³ RA, Civildepartement, Länshövdingarnas femårsberättelser. EII baa vol 39; Svensson 1993, 156.

left to the custody of trusted peasants by parents who were unable to provide for their children.

Lindholm's account paints a familiar picture, in which the disdain and discrimination experienced in the non-Traveller environment, together with the pull of the more receptive and emotionally warm Traveller families, resulted in a common occurrence of the foster children escaping and returning to their parents or relatives.⁷⁰⁴ Others were estranged from the Traveller group but became visibly rootless instead. Johan K., for example, was born in 1870 in Southern Sweden, taken into custody from his mother when he was 11, and put by the municipality into a Christian children's home. After two years, Johan fled from the children's home, and took up recruitment in a royal hussar regiment. In the age of 17, he was sentenced to prison for theft and resistance of an official; after the sentence, he emigrated to North America.⁷⁰⁵

Apart from stories such as this, there were undoubtedly always a number of foster children who eventually 'passed' into the mainstream society in their adulthood. According to non-Traveller female respondent who lived in the province of Gävleborg, 'in most of the cases, the children [taken into custody and raised as fosterchildren] became one with the local inhabitants and stayed.'⁷⁰⁶

Thirdly, there were the inter-ethnic marriages. From the reminiscences of the non-Travellers, it appears that these could attract a lot of attention in local peasant communities. They were often described as romantic unions between poor but beautiful Traveller girls and sons of peasants:

[...] in a few individual cases, [...] some Tattar-beauty married with some of the local folk, although this was rare. And when this kind of marriage was formed, it was out of pure love - the guy had fallen in love because she was so beautiful.⁷⁰⁷

The theme of beauty recurs in relation to the Swedish Travellers⁷⁰⁸ as it does to the Finnish Roma; similarly, exoticized beauty was considered in the accounts of the non-Travellers as something commodity-like which could to a degree 'compensate' for the otherwise unappealing possibility of engaging with a 'tattare'. That being a 'tattare' was thought of as a disadvantage is also clear from the stories concerning the union

⁷⁰⁴ Lindholm 1995, 148-149.

⁷⁰⁵ Svensson 1993, 153-154.

⁷⁰⁶ EU78, 27981.

⁷⁰⁷ EU78, 23830.

⁷⁰⁸ See also Svensson 1993, 122.

between Widrik, the son of a rackare mentioned above,⁷⁰⁹ and Malena, a non-Traveller maid who was said to be ‘the prettiest girl in the village’ (in Albo, province of Kristianstad, around mid 19th century). Despite Widrik’s good reputation, it was suspected that he had put a spell on Malena by giving her an enchanted apple; it could not be conceived that a non-Traveller would otherwise want to choose a ‘tattare’ husband.⁷¹⁰

A typical, explicitly racialized view on the inter-ethnic liaisons is given by a non-Traveller man from Kråksmåla, province of Kalmar:

Tattarna are not as dark as Gypsies [*Zigenare*]. “They are mixed”, said my father’s relatives. NB: There are still some blondes among the tattare [...] but it is thought, that these are girls from amongst our people [vårt folk], who went with someone Tattar-like, or who were stolen as a child and raised amongst the tattare. Tattare most rather procreate with their own kind; but among the tattare (as with Gypsies) there are also young beauties. If they find a rich boy among the local population, then they marry those.⁷¹¹

Clear similarities arise here with the Finnish case in terms of the popular racial conceptualizations. Also here, the apparent mismatch between preconceived notions of a racial difference – ‘tattare’ as lighter than *Zigenare* but ‘darker’ than ‘our people’ – and the more complex reality (the existence of blond ‘tattare’) is explained as an abnormality, with a reference to ‘stolen children’. In fact, almost absurdly flimsy accusations of ‘tattare’ stealing the children of ordinary Swedes could be followed surprisingly far in the press and even by authorities.⁷¹²

The reminiscence of the previous respondent continues with a story, set in the time of the First World War, of two sisters from a ‘tattare’ family who lived in his home village. Both of the girls “were true beauties, and behaved themselves so intelligently as if they were from a ‘better’ family”. A local peasant’s son fell in love with the younger sister, and married her despite strong resistance from the boy’s parents. The informant concludes the story by remarking that ‘there are, as can be seen, “no rule without exception”’.⁷¹³

⁷⁰⁹ Chapter 7.2.

⁷¹⁰ Svensson 1993, 122.

⁷¹¹ EU78, 22829.

⁷¹² E.g. *Norra Skåne* no 92, 6 Aug 1895.

⁷¹³ EU78, 22829.

But while the respondent above and many others⁷¹⁴ focus on the liaisons between Traveller girls and peasant boys, this was of course not the whole picture. Nor was subsequent lifestyle always decreed patrilocally after the man. In fact, the genealogies show a surprisingly common phenomenon of non-Traveller men marrying Traveller women, and subsequently leading a Traveller life. This could even take place from one generation to the next, as with Gustava Johanna L., born in 1844, whose husband as well as father were ‘bonde’ who took up Traveller life.⁷¹⁵ In both generations, the children followed the mothers and were regarded as ‘tattare’ by their environment. This qualifies in the Swedish context Barth’s claim that the ‘Tater status is transferred patrilineally from one generation to the next.’⁷¹⁶ On the contrary, identification as a *resande* was actually frequently carried to the next generation through the mother; intermarriage of a Traveller woman with a ‘peasant’ man did thus not necessarily imply ‘settling down’.⁷¹⁷

This was also the case with the above-mentioned Matilda Sofia E., born in 1858 to parents from old Traveller families, who was successively engaged with two non-Traveller men. According to Lindwall (2005) who has traced Matilda Sofia’s pedigrees, both of the men ‘tried, as good as they could, to join in with their wife’s relatives through their choice of occupation and lifestyle’. Also the children became subsequently seen by their environment as Travellers (or ‘tattare’).⁷¹⁸

The background of Matilda Sofia E.’s partners point to the continuing push factors which in the late 19th century turmoil uprooted landless people and drew some of them to ambulant occupations and -lives. The first one was a dispossessed son of a tenant farmer, initially a farm-labourer, who wandered in different parts of Sweden, alternating between spells of military service, odd jobs, prison sentences, and the practicing of various ambulant occupations (tinning, rag-gathering, horse-trade). Travellers, then, were not the only ones affected by the cutting of old ties and breaking down of established patterns in the countryside along the latter half of the 19th century.

The first decades of the 20th century brought further transformations and social upheavals. The growing urbanization in particular seems to have spelled a return to a more fluid situation in terms of marital patterns and ethnic boundary maintenance.

⁷¹⁴ E.g. EU78, 23782; 23830.

⁷¹⁵ Lindwall 1995, 159, 173.

⁷¹⁶ Barth 1955, 128.

⁷¹⁷ Lindwall 1995, 166; Lindholm 1995, 171-172.

⁷¹⁸ Lindwall 2005, 18-19.

Genealogical material points to an increasing number of inter-ethnic marriages from c.1900 onwards; also the share of Heymowski's 'co-sanguinous unions' drops dramatically from the cohorts born from 1880 onwards.⁷¹⁹

As earlier in the 18th century, it seems that towns and cities offered in the 20th century more opportunities for social mobility for the Travellers than the countryside. Together with the fact that marriage in a patrilocal society often meant moving 'out' of the Traveller- and into the non-Traveller community (but not always, as we have seen), this could sometimes lead into surprisingly rapid assimilation into the bourgeois society. For example, Josefina Charlotta M. (1853-1915), daughter of a Traveller horse-dealer Vilhelm M., married with a woodwork manufacturer (*snickerifabrikören*) Viktor N. in Stockholm. Amid rapid urban construction, the husband's business thrived, and the children of the couple subsequently rose into the ranks of the upper middle class. Son Ernst became a headmaster of a school in Stockholms suburb, as well as the chairman of the local town council; daughter Elsa married a prestigious military judge. As with the family E. in Finland, Northern Savo (5.3), upward social mobility and 'integration' was coupled with at least some distancing from the family's Traveller heritage in terms of surnames. When Josefina M., now Mrs N., died in 1915, the heirs posthumously changed the spelling of her maiden name, tacitly claiming a noble descent.⁷²⁰

Lars Lindgren, drawing from Heymowski, has pointed to the widening of the term '*tattare*' along with industrialization and population growth in the beginning of the 20th century. Increasingly, it begun to to serve as a label which could also include non-Travellers whose occupation, life-style or physical outlook matched with a stereotype of 'typical *tattare*'.⁷²¹ It seems indeed that there were changes in the use of the ethnic label '*tattare*' which had also implications for the ethnic boundary-drawing between the '*resande*' and the '*bonde*'. '*Tattare*' was turning into a loose shorthand, referring to what became imagined as a pathologically criminal and racially 'impure' underclass (cf. Ch 3.2). As such, '*tattare*' was an extremely negative label, and served to legitimate both official and unofficial discrimination. Yet, it was also increasingly vaguely defined, including 'criminals' and 'outcasts' as well as 'real' Travellers. With this background, the fact that the members of the 'real' Traveller families could usually not be

⁷¹⁹ Recomputation of material presented in Heymowski 1969, 58-64.

⁷²⁰ Lindwall 2005, 15-16.

⁷²¹ Svensson (1995) poses a hypothesis along parallel lines, although in her view it was the growth of the 'normative power' of the emerging Swedish state which rendered the '*tattare*' identity increasingly into a 'counter-identity'.

distinguished from other Swedes on the basis of their outward appearance became a significant factor. In urban, anonymous environment, this allowed negotiating with- and ‘hiding’ from- ethnic stigma and discrimination – at least temporarily. For example, a Traveller man who in his childhood in 1920s experienced numerous evictions with his family, describes how the family tried to avoid being treated as ‘tattare’:

Mother and father always did what they could to hide their background, father was always a ‘saddle maker’ when we came to a new place. (...) Mother used to instruct us children on how we should answer difficult questions – our lies were tactical and necessitated by the situation.⁷²²

Of course, what is predominant in the citation above is the experience of persistent and heavy-handed ethnic discrimination. Still, it seems that some 20th century developments gave somewhat more room of manoeuvre for many Travellers, who gradually became increasingly sedentary, urban and economically heterogeneous. To be sure, there was a strong external pressure towards assimilation. As being seen as a ‘tattare’ was heavily sanctioned by the surrounding society, and as ‘exit’ option was in the more anonymous urban environment increasingly open, the situation became to resemble for many that described by Barth, writing in regards to the Norwegian Travellers in 1955:

The problem of “passing” – becoming assimilated in the sedentary population – are of major concern to a considerable fraction of the Taters I interviewed. Psychologically, in terms of the ambivalent attitudes which contribute to the motivation in each case, the problems of passing are indeed complex. [...] For the sedentary Tater in a rural district, [...] passing [...] seems to be preceeded and accompanied by the adoption of a fiercely puritan and “bourgeois” explicit code of propriety. Failures in the attempt revert to Tater life. A maybe simpler avenue of mobility is urbanization and assimilation into the ranks of unskilled or semi-skilled labor. In the urban setting, family pressures are reduced, though the technical problems of a new milieu are greater. Failures in these attempts are lost in the marginal urban world of bums, alcoholics, prostitutes, and criminals. The summing-up is strikingly unanimous, and is given both by those who are in the process of becoming assimilated, and those who dare not embark on the attempt: “The difficulty with settling down is you are on your own, you have to stand on your own two feet – no one to help you, no kin to fall back on.”⁷²³

⁷²² EU 52007 15/1, 24/1, 31/1 1961, originally cited by Lindholm, 1995, 112.

⁷²³ Barth 1955, 141.

The Heymowski problem revisited

Is the traveller ethnicity an outcome of cultural blending or of social exclusion? How are the words *resande*, *skojare*, *vägens folk*, *tattare*, *zigenare* etc. best understood – as ethnonyms which ultimately refer to a single, centuries-old ethnic minority, or as fluid labels, stretched by the majority population to include almost all types of socially marginal ‘others’? These are questions on which there has been an extensive debate for several decades, and giving answer to them is out of the scope of my research.

With hindsight, however, it appears that much of the controversy surrounding Heymowski’s ‘labelling thesis’ after the publication of his thesis in 1969 seems to have been based on artificial juxtapositioning between race-bound essentialism and narrowly understood constructionism. Revealingly, Heymowski himself seems less than certain in his terms as he describes the Travellers first as ‘social outcasts rather than ethnic isolate’, and later as ‘social isolate’. The latter term is somewhat paradoxical as Heymowski himself showed that what characterizes the group is ‘the continuous turnover’ of people into- and out of the group. It appears that Heymowski, as well as many of his subsequent critics, have held a notion of ‘pure’ ethnicity, which does not fit with what is at present known about ethnicity as a phenomenon. After the input of another scholar who also did research on the Scandinavian Travellers, and also published his most influential work in 1969 – Fredrik Barth – a generally accepted view regards ethnic groups as always fundamentally constructed and contingent. It is also a truism that with the exception of some island populations, they have everywhere ‘mixed’ roots (although on the short term, the relative mixedness can of course vary). Moreover, it is typical for poly-ethnic societies that minority groups are associated with specific economic niches, with ethnic and material distinctiveness becoming often inextricable.

Yet, none of this means by any means that such groups should not be perceived as ‘real’. In the case of the Travellers, it can from a genealogical point of view be considered as an established fact that the group has ancestors with widely diverse background (whatever the proportion of various groups of ‘Gypsies’ in this⁷²⁴). Yet, the same thing can be said of practically any human grouping. And at the same time - as has been clearly illustrated by Heymowski himself - the core Traveller lineages *have* in fact

⁷²⁴ Heymowski himself later acknowledged that he seems to have underestimated the proportion of Roma (‘Gypsy’) ancestors among the Traveller belonging to ‘international itinerant bands’. Heymowski 1984.

formed a tightly interlinked and –married community, with a clear conception of itself as separate from the rest of the Swedish society. Moreover, it is obvious that the self-ascribed membership in the group, or the bearing of the external label ‘tattare’, have (at least in the research period) been social facts with profound consequences. With a more open interpretation of what an ‘ethnic group’ means, then, it seems that the ‘Heymowski’s problem’ largely disappears.

8. Conclusion

The picture which has emerged in this research contrasts sharply with earlier assumptions of the Roma and Travellers as socially isolated groups. Instead of isolation, the logic of their mobile livelihood tied them into constant and intensive interaction with the peasants throughout late 19th – early 20th century. It seems that the mere survival of the Roma and Travellers in harsh Nordic conditions is a proof of a remarkable success in building up and maintaining ‘weak’ or ‘bridging’ ties with the peasant population, and thereby accessing vital basic resources, which could by no means be considered as self-evident. These networks were maintained over the long term through economic activities which were in many ways structured by an effort to build functioning social relations with key peasant clients/hosts/providers. The kind of social capital thus formed could even be ‘inherited’ to a degree, as the same ‘familiar houses’ were visited from one generation to another.

An established local position did not mean equal footing with the landholding population, however, but rather an a-symmetric and fragile balance, which required active maintenance from the Roma/Travellers’ side. The position of many families, particularly in the first half of the research period, could be described as kind of ‘institutionalized marginality’. This was the case for example with Christian G., the semi-officially authorized county gelder of Albo,⁷²⁵ or with Karl Gustaf J., the district whipper of Orimattila.⁷²⁶ In such cases, we find a socio-economic relationship which, as with the pedlars studied by Fontaine, or the South-Indian peripatetics by Hayden, both supported and marginalized those involved. The examples of Karl Gustaf J. and Christian G. also bring into mind the ‘systemic set of rules governing inter-ethnic social encounters’, which, according to Barth, characterize stable ethnic relations.⁷²⁷

Numerous sources, representing both the perspectives of the Roma/Traveller as well as of the ‘peasants’ and authorities’, make it clear that a strong generalized group stigma towards the former did exist throughout the research period. This was a fact which the Roma and the Travellers had to constantly take into consideration. Again, as with South-Indian peripatetics,⁷²⁸ it seems that a generalized stigma could to a degree be

⁷²⁵ Southern Sweden. Cf. Ch 7.2.

⁷²⁶ South-Central Finland. Cf. Ch 4.2.

⁷²⁷ Barth 1969, 16.

⁷²⁸ Hayden 1987.

compensated on the local level by continuous exchange and reciprocity with particular sedentary households. Still, the structural asymmetry of the relation between the Roma and Travellers and the peasants gave inevitably rise to an uneven power-relation and a latent tension between the groups which could only be relieved locally, never resolved altogether. Economic reciprocity with the peasants was not possible always- and for everyone. The frequent necessity of resorting to begging and the association with thefts and forced accommodations – whether based on real involvement or not – was a constant source of resentment by the peasants, for whom the Roma and Travellers could appear solely as a risk and a burden. It was vital for particular Roma/Traveller families to be able to counter generalized mistrust with personal trust; still, there were always limits to this, as can be seen from the fear, hate and even violence which both the Roma and the Travellers regularly faced outside their established routes.

A paradox of the Roma and Travellers' relationship with the peasants was that intensive everyday interaction and established networks co-existed side by side with extremely strong ethnic differentiation. In relation to certain aspects of ethnic boundary drawing and -crossing, then, a notion of 'isolation' (or Heymowski's 'social isolate') does not seem completely unjustified. Many of the cases of inter-ethnic marriages, foster children, farmhands and -maids and 'settled down' families dealt with in the thesis point to a strict sanctioning of the ethnic boundary from both sides of the ethnic divide. For example, a Roma marrying a non-Roma not only remained a 'gypsy' in the eyes of the mainstream society, but also the spouse and offspring were often subsequently labelled as such; at the same time, relations with Roma relatives were frequently severed as a consequence of such matrimony. Similarly, settling down or working as a farm labourer not just exposed a person or a family to daily discrimination and disregard from the surrounding non-Roma community, but could also strain relations with other Roma to a breaking point.

Moreover, the signification of phenotypic differences, amplified by selective perception, brought a distinctive racial element into the dynamics of boundary drawing. In the Finnish case, already the word 'mustalainen' points to the centrality of 'racial' difference as a marker of group boundaries. In the Swedish case, the situation was less clear-cut; evidently, a significant proportion of the Travellers were difficult to fit into the stereotype of 'dark' 'tattare'. Paradoxically, as the 'tattare question' emerged in the public debates from late 19th century onwards, 'race' nevertheless became a central

element of the discursive separation of the Travellers from the rest of the Swedes – arguably more so than what was the case with the Finnish Roma.

But while ethnic boundaries might have been imagined as absolute on both sides of the divide (and particularly in the Finnish case, also by many researchers), it is clear that they were never breachless in reality. Equally evident in the sources with the ‘grammar’ of endogamy and strict ethnic boundary drawing was the ‘praxis’ of intermarriage, social mobility and ‘passing’. Moreover, having tangible economic resources and/or human-, cultural- or social capital,⁷²⁹ could enable a broader range of lifestyle choices and, at least overgenerationally, relativize the significance ethnic difference. If the economic position of a Roma/Traveller family or individual was secure enough and ties to the majority society strong enough, ethnic identification could be decoupled of social position and become something more ‘voluntary’, a matter of personal orientation rather than an inescapable outcome of entangled material and cultural constraints. This kind of relativization of ethnicity along with social mobility can be seen in cases such as the offspring of ‘Gypsy peasant’ Carl Fredrik E., or in others, connected to inter-ethnic marriages, ‘settling down’, religious activism, etc.

In terms of boundary ‘policing’, one more aspect appears central - connected to policing in the literal sense. What has clearly emerged in the research is the heavy impact which local social control and vagrancy laws had on the Roma and Travellers’ position throughout the research period. There was a kind of a circular logic, in which municipal boards, district bailiffs, parish priests and landed elites all worked in the same direction in ‘marginalizing the marginalized’, continuously pushing the Roma and Travellers outside the boundaries of legitimate society. In effect, local authorities acted as gatekeepers or boundary enforcers, as they intentionally and actively sought to prevent the settling down of Roma and Travellers, blocking ‘exit’ option from those otherwise able or inclined to ‘pass’.

Indeed, there is an apparent discrepancy between the weakness of the state’s ‘ethnopolitics’ and the strong impact of its social control. Swedish and Finnish states could hardly be described as having a direct or consistent minority policy towards the Roma and the Travellers during the research period, and large parts of both groups were in any case outside direct state control. Nevertheless, the vagrancy laws and practices of

⁷²⁹ Referring here specifically to ‘bridging ties’ linking Roma and Travellers with members of the mainstream society with resources and/or influence, whether these were helpful priests, bailiffs, village elders or sympathetic journalists, writers, etc.

local social control cast a permanent state of uncertainty and illegitimacy on the Roma and the Travellers.

Towards the end of the 19th century, there were a number of partly interconnected social transformations both in Finland and Sweden, which worked to loosen the ties between the Roma/Travellers and the peasants in many key respects. In both cases, there was an unwinding of the semi-institutionalized local positions (district ‘rackare’ / whipper / gelder / skinner / horse-shoer), and a shift towards more anonymous commercial activities. While activities such as horse-trade or ironmongering could be profitable for some, they did not involve the acknowledged role in particular communities which the positions of rackare, skimmers and whippers had meant. Upheavals in agricultural production and the impact of rising social inequality in both societies weakened also other institutional interfaces with the peasant population, as exemplified by the near-disappearance of the relatively secure yearly employment as farmhands and –maids.

Loss of more or less legitimate local occupations seems to have gone hand in hand with tightening ethnic differentiation, with inter-ethnic marriages getting rarer towards the end of the 19th century both in Finland and Sweden. As another indication of a more distant inter-ethnic relationship, the Swedish Travellers begun increasingly to acquire their own housing towards the end of the 19th century. Whether or not this was also a sign of improving living conditions, it was in any case necessitated by the growing dysfunctionality of the traditional practice of staying in peasant houses.

These changes coincided with a rise of hostile attention in public debates. I have argued that the rise of the ‘Gypsy’ and ‘tattare’ ‘questions’ was itself also a result of a new, nationalist way of conceptualizing and organizing the society, which both politicized and sharpened the boundary between the national in-groups and out-groups.

The so-called Gypsy and tattare questions were of course only marginal sideshows in the history of Finnish and Swedish nationalism. Nevertheless, they seem to offer interesting insights into their social and political dynamics. In the Finnish case, the Gypsy question brought out early expressions of ‘popular’ nationalism which seem to qualify the conventional top-down/elite-driven interpretations of Finnish nationalism. These expressions clearly preceded any top-down dissemination of nationalist ideology in Finland (which only started to have a wider impact roughly from 1870s onwards). We cannot of course be sure how for example the folk poet Paavo Korhonen understood the word ‘nation’ (*kansakunta*) in 1835, or what the anonymous local correspondent of

Kansan Lehti meant with his reference to ‘our beloved fatherland’ (*rakas isänmaamme*) in 1869. But what is clear in both cases is that their notions unambiguously excluded the Roma, and were defined in opposition to them. It is apparent that a consistent national self-image was easier for members of non-elite to articulate against a heterostereotype (a stereotype concerning other people).

In regards to the Swedish ‘tattare burden’ debates, a politicization of the boundaries of nationhood is also evident, even though these boundaries became primarily expressed through a notion of race. The crystallization of the label ‘tattare’ during the last decades of the 19th century resonates strikingly well with the modernist assumption, according to which clearly articulated ethnic boundaries have been an *end-result* rather than the starting point of nation-building processes. While official usage of the term ‘tattare’ retained much of the ambivalence inherent in the earlier plethora of mostly occupation-based ethnonyms, it was in any case conceived by outsiders from 1890s onwards as referring to a single entity, which was increasingly thought of as racially distinctive and politically problematic.

However, both the ‘Gypsy’ and ‘tattare’ ‘questions’ also point to the limits of the modernist thesis. In both cases, shifting discourses and political circumstances *did* in fact reinforce boundary drawing in relation to the Roma and the Travellers towards the end of the 19th century. Still, the making of distinctions itself seems to have been relatively constant. In Finland, the so-called Gypsy question brought into surface ethnic animosities which clearly preceded the dissemination of late 19th century nationalist framework; ultimately, what was most important in this was the inescapable structural friction between the Roma and the peasants. Similarly, in the Swedish case, while the label ‘tattare’ superceded others such as *skojare*, *wallackare*, *rackare* or *kältring*, there appears to have been a striking continuity in the popular tendency to sort out the Travellers from the rest.

Ethnicity-based distinctions were naturally not something simply imposed on the Roma and Travellers from outside, but were also self-willed and served a crucial function as a social ‘glue’ holding their communities together. Nevertheless, it seems that the persistence of the ethnic boundary drawing was ultimately not only- or even primarily a result of intentional strive for ‘isolation’ or for ‘keeping to one’s habits, laws and language’ by the Roma and the Travellers.⁷³⁰ Rather, strict differentiation was

⁷³⁰ Nygård 2001, 16.

constantly reproduced by a dynamics in which socio-economic, ethnic and ‘racial’ boundaries were tightly interlocked with each other, and cemented by the status of illegitimacy imposed over most Roma and Travellers. As seen for example in the cases of foster children and farmhands who were in effect pressured out of peasant communities, back ‘with their own people’, there was for many a lack of realistic ‘exit option’. This reinforced in-group solidarities further, and gave rise to visibly different ‘counter cultures’ – which in itself perpetuated separation from the rest.

I have tried to describe the dynamics of this ‘enforced ethnicity’ in figure 9, below:

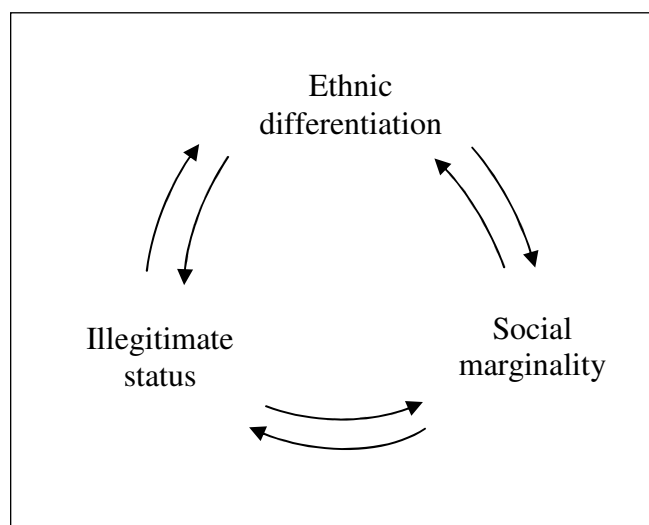


Figure 9: ‘Cycle of enforced ethnicity’

The figure suggests a dynamics in which social marginality, illegitimate formal status and ethnic differentiation all reinforced each other, effectively forming social and cultural barriers around those labelled as ‘Zigenare’, ‘Tattare’ or ‘mustalainen’. In the face of the Roma and Travellers’ constant interaction with the peasants, it would be something of a misnomer to call this constellation ‘isolation’. Still, already before the strengthening of mental segregations implicit in modern nationalism, it gave rise to an immensely strong dichotomization between the Roma/Travellers and the ‘peasants’, reproduced from generation to generation.

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HV1 Inkomna skrivelser. (Statistisk primärmaterial angående tattare och zigenare. Formulär ang. tattare och zigenare, deras förekomst inom Sverige, levnadssätt m.m. Med specialundersökningar och rapporter beträffande zigenare och tattare I städerna Malmö, Jönköping och Göteborg samt Ljusdals och Vårdö landsfiskalsdistrikt.)

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1897 nr 80 Angående beredande af ... de s.k. tattare.

Andra kammarens motion

1897 nr 70 Herr Norman, om skrivelse till Kongliga Majestet med begäran ... med afseende å de s.k. tattare.

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Appendix i. Translated citations in original languages

Ch 1

Vehmas 1961, 152

Kokemukset, tiedot ja huhut mustalaisten mellastamisesta synnyttivät kansassa syvää vihaa heimoa kohtaan. Joskus kykeni isäntä karkottamaan mustalaiset talostaan, joskus oli turvauduttava karkeaan kepposeen, joskus yhteenotto päättyi verinäytelmään. Esimerkiksi markkinoilla saattoi syntyä suuriakin kahakota mustalaisten ja muun väestön kesken. Samoin osallistui talonpojat virkamiesten apuna 'mustalaismetsästyksiin', joiden toimeenpanon antoi aiheen jokin tuntuva mpi rikos tai rasituksen käyminen muuten ylivoimaiseksi.

Svensson 1993, 95

Tattarsällskapet vid rannsakingen i Glumslöv säger sig ha yrken som soldater och glasförare. Deras vardag tycks dock mera bestå i själva resandet – där man kräver mat och husrum hos folk under hot om hämnd – än i något egentligt arbete.

Nygård 2001, 16.

Suomen mustalaiset ovat harvinaisen hyvin säilyttäneet rotunsa sekoittumattomana. He ovat edustaneet alkuperäisimpää ja tyypillisimpää mustalaisuutta, mikä on merkinnyt hyvin vahvaa konservatiivisuutta eli uusien vaikutteiden torjumista. Mustalaiset ovat eläneet suomalaisten keskuudessa pitäytyen omiin tapoihinsa, omiin lakeihinsa, omaan kieleensä piittaamatta valtaväestön elämäntavoista.

Ch 1.3

Östra Finland no 67/12.6.1876.

Ett mystiskt dunkel hvilar öfver alla deras lefnadsförhållanden. Fragmenter till dop-och dödslängder finnas öfver allt i landets församlingars kyrkoarkiver, men mera sällan förekommer zigenare i skriftskole- och vigsel-längderne.

Lindwall 2005, 18

Eftersom arkivmaterialet nästan alltid ger myndigheternas syn på människor och förhållanden så framträder de resande oftast i sin roll som förbrytare, även om brottet endast bestod i att ha passerat en länsgräns utan pass. Man känner sig lite som en historiker som opartiskt försöker skildra ett krig där endast den ena sedan efterlämnat arkiv, tidningar, brev, propagandamaterial, etc. Bilden blir oundvikligen ensidig.

Uusi Suometar no 86, 20 Jul 1878

Nämä personat owat 6 p. tätä kuuta Iinatin (?) kylässä Pudasjärwellä koettaneet käyttää väkiwaltaa nimismiestä vastaan, kun hän aikoi heitä kiinni ottaa. He owat käyneet hänen päällensä, lyöneet häntä (moniaiden ilmoitusten mukaan pahastikin) ja häntä sekä siltawoutia G. Höglund'ia vastaan ampuneet seitsemän pistoolin laukausta. Niin kertoo P. S.

Pukero 2009, 69

Romaniperheen kontrolli oli jatkuvaa ja erittäin pitkäaikaista. Heitä kuulusteltiin ensin yhdessä vanhempiensa kanssa, sitten itsenäisinä aikuisina tai oman kasvavan perheen kanssa. Lopulta heidän lapsensa joutuivat vanhempiensa mukana kuulusteluun. Vankilat ja lääninkansliat useilla paikkakunnilla tulivat iän karttuessa tutuiksi.

KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51 1863, Vicar of Leppävirta to the chapter of Porvoo.

Då t. ex: en man eller qvinna af den savolaxiska ungdomen, innan han eller hon ännu blifvit till Herran Heliga Nattvard admitterad, uttager resebetyg för att söka sig arbet och tjenst, ofta på sitt resebetyg vistas flera år utom församlingen utan att någonstädes vara matalskrifven, och andra med flyttningsbetyg försedda stadna i annan församling, än ort betyget blifvit utfärdast, och resebetygen sällan äro påtecknade hvar de vistats och flyttningsbetygen ofta återlemnas utan påskrift och sådant får passera; månna ej persona af begge dessa kategorier föra ett Zigenars-lif? De få emellertid resebetyg, men Zigenar ej.

KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51 1863, Impilahti.

Att dessa zigenare föra ett ständing vandrande lif är naturligt, då de intet hem hafva och fly för kronobetjeningen från socken till socken. Men icke alla zigenare välja sjelfmant ett sådant lif. En del är tvungen dertill af främnämt[?] skäl, en annan del af fattigdom, emedan fattigunderstöd ytterst sällan sökes[?] af dem och ännu mera sällan bevärljas de som sjelfmant välja att kringstrykande lefnadssätt göra detta antingen af lättja eller håg för stöld och bedrägeri, och desse förleda de öfriga, till hvilkens anförare de göra sig, till laster[?] och brott.

Ch 3.1

Tapio no: 29, 16.7.1864

[...] jos ne voitaisiin eroittaa wanhemmistansa, pitäisi koetettaman kristillisyyden opin ja siwistyksen kautta saada lauhentaa heidän syntyessä saatua mielen raakuttansa ja sillä tawalla saattaa heistä alulle niitä taipumuksia ja vaatimuksia, joita wakinainen ja rauhallinen kansakunnallinen elämä tuottaa.

KA: Senate's Economic department/Ea 3927 (KD 10/375 1900); Central Statstical Office's comments to the 1900 'Gypsy committee's' memorandum

[...] Jämte det Statistiska Centralbyrån i likhet med komitén håller för lämpligheten af att utländska Zigenare icke i någon händelse må tillåtas kringströfva i landet, är Statistiska Centralbyrån af den meningen, att en undantagslagstiftning för landets egna Zigenare icke borde inledas, enär en dylik ju måste antagas blott befordra deras separata ställning och svårigheterna att vinna deras sammangående med folket. Ett strängt genomförande af komiténs förslag t.ex. beträffande särskilda af komitén å sidorna 103-108 föreslagna register öfver Zigenarne torde äfven vara i flere afseenden omöjligt eller ock medföra trakasserier och misstag, enär det torde vara svårt at i många fall afgöra hvem rätteligen bör hänföras under rubriken "Zigenare".

Helsingfors Dagblad no 94, 8 Apr 1872

Det ar ocksa en fullkomligt ny asigt io var statsratt att taga ras och harstamning i betraktande for att afgora om nagon sakll fa vara finsk medborgare eller icke. Ingen af vara lagar har nagonsin uppstallt ett sadant vilkor i detta afseende. Aldrig har en viss härstamning ansetts utesluta fran medborgarerratt. En neger, en mulatt, en zigenare, ne lapp o.s.v. far vara finsk medborgare likasaval som den, hvilken kan uppvisa den mest geninua finska harkomst [...] Och nu vill man utesluta personer fran denna rattighet pa den grund , att de aro attlingar af Abraham, Isak och jakob samt hans tolf soner.

Tapio no 46, 14 Nov 1863

– Eiköhän olisi aika jo häwittää koko nämä ihmiswastukset maasta, sillä ei heistä ole koskaan kuultu mitään hyvää, ainoastansa suurta pahuutta ja ihmis-murhia sekä ryöwäyksiä, emmekä tiedä mikä hyöty heistä on niille, jotka heitä wapauttawat!

Suometar no 47 / 2 Dec 1859.

Sen ymmärtää kuitenkin jokainen, että Lappalaiset, Wenäläiset, Saksalaiset, Mustilaiset yhtä hywin kuin Ruotsalaisetki ja muut Suomen wakinaiset asujamet owat tämän yhteisen isänmaan, Suomen jäseniä ja woiwat täydellä oikeudella kutsuttaa Suomenmaalaisiksi, joita he owatki

Tampereen Sanomat no 35 / 28 Aug 1866

Ihmisrakastajat, erittäinkin siiwistyneissä, tätä onnetonta kansaa surkuttelewat, ja owatkin surkuteltawia, mutta warma on kuitenkin, että tämä loppumattoman kulkuelämänsä takia kawaluuteen ja petokseen tyynni harjaantunut kansa on piansanoin maanwaiwa yhteisölle, koska kesät talwet hewosineen ja muien itikoineen joukoittain kuljeskelewat talosta taloon, [noitumisen uhkauksilla, joita Suomen kansa walitettawasti vielä pelkää, kerjäten itselleen sekä itikoilleen ruokaaineita ja mitä waan silmiin pistää.]

Turun Lehti no 137 / 23 Nov 1886.

[Mustalaiset. Jos kaadamme pari pisaraa öljyä wedellä täytettyyn astiaan ja sitten hylkytämme astiaa, että siinä olewat molemmat aineet, wesi ja öljy, tulewat liikkeeseen, niin siitä seuraa että nuot ennen koossa olewat öljypisarat erkanewat toisistaan.] Ne jakaantuwat pieniin, melkein näkymättömiin osiin ja katoowat weteen; mutta ne eiwät yhdisty sen kanssa, silä wesi ja öljy owat täydellisesti erilaisia, toisilleen wieraita ja wihollisia aineksia.

Kansan Lehti no 32 / 14 Aug 1869.

Kuinka kauwan saanee nuo maan häwittäjät, Mustilaiset, kuleksia meidän rakkaassa isänmaassamme; eiköhän walteella olisi mitään keinoa niiden häwittämiseen; sillä niitä rupeaa taas ilmestymään entistä enemmän ja niiden joukko lisääntyy lisääntymistään. Lieneekö tuo noille talollisille hywinkin suuri hyöty, jotka noita pitäwät talossaan, ja vieläpä owat isännän päällä hengilläkin. Suotawa olisi että nekin ajaisiwat pois semmoisen wäen talostaan; sillä wahinkoa ne waan tekee pitäjäläisille.

MMA, Minutes of Rautua municipal meeting, 18.5.1878.

4§. Erään talollisen pyynnöstä otettiin keskusteltavaksi keinoja, joiden avulla Mustalaisten asustelemista pitäjässä saataisiin häikkenemään. Asiasta syntyi vilkas keskustelu, josta näkyi että kaikki suurilukuinen läsnä oleva talonpoikainen väestö tahtoi sakon määräämistä; ainoastaan pari läsnäolevaa herrasmiestä innokkaasti vastusti tätä. Sitte kokous määräsi kaksikymmentä markaa sakkoa niille, jotka pitäjässä antawat yökortteria mustalaisille.

Suomalainen Virallinen Lehti no 144, 4 Dec 1875

Herrasääty ei tiedä sitä wastusta, mikä Suomen talonpojalla on tuosta laiskasta kansasta. Ainakaan se ei pidä sitä niin suurena, kuin se todellakin on, sillä mustalainen tawallisesti wäistää menemästä herrastaloihin maallakaan.

Tapio no 36 / 4 Sept 1875.

Eiköhän rakas esiwaltamme keksisi joitaki, entistä tehokkaampia keinoja tuommoisten wihollisten häwittämiseksi! Onhan Suomen kansa walmis puolustamaan maatansa ulkonaisia wihollisia vastaan; miksi ei sisällisiä! Tosin sydänmaalais-raukkain hätähuudot eiwät aina kuulu kaupunkiin asti, ja jos milloin kuuluwatki, eiwät ne tunnu millekään siitä, joka suloista rauhaa nauttii. – ”Rauhaa” warmaanki on elämä, jossa kuki henkensä ja omaisuutensa saa wapaasti pitää; mutta sotaa – ja vielä pahempaaki – sitä vastaan olo, jossa ei tiedä, milloin tawara ja henki owat mennyttä kalua.

Ch 3.2

August Afzelius, *Svenska folkets sagohäfder, eller fäderneslandets historia, sådan hon lefvat och till en del ännu lefver I sägner, folksånger och andra minnesmärken* (1853, Stockholm), Cited in Svensson 1993, 132.

De äro lata och ovilliga till allt arbete, som fordrar möda och tid, men hafwa stor kärlek till kreatur, särdeles hästar, med dem de lefwa såsom I syskonlag, och äro derföre mer än andra förtroliga med deras sjukdomar och åkommor, äro ofta goda boskapsläkare och hafwa I sdant hänseende mycket gagnat vårt folk.

SLD, Protokoll hollit vid utlyst Kommunalstämma i Stamnareds kyrka den 14 Maj 1877, §5 På grund af Kongl. Majst. Nådiga Förordning den 9 Juni 1871 angående Fattigvården i riket med påbud att i 39 § ett tillräckligt antal af tillsyningsmän inom hvarje sockens skall finnas för att holla socknen ren för bettlare, och så kallade tattare och anholla sådane; och äfven hafva tillsyn att inga andra obehöriga personer vistas inom Kommunen, samt vaka öfver att ingen oordning i något hus får råda som härleder till oanständigt lefverne att allmänna säkerheten deraf kan blifva ostörd, alltså har Kommunen beslutat dels ett vite af 10 kronor för natt för åbo och 5 för Torpare och Backstugosettare som inhyser förutnämnde personer [...]

RA, Civildepartement, Länshövdingarnas femårsberättelser 1886-1890 (EII baa vol 39) Icke sällan möter man I Halland, särskildt inom mellersta delen deraf, mer eller mindre talrika kringströfvande följen af män, kvinnor och barn, so manses härstamma från zigenare, ehuru de skilja sig från dem så till utseende som lefnadssätt. Af den bofasta befolkningen benämnas de "kältringar", men sjelfve saga de sig höra till "vandringsfolket". En och annan bland männen får hos hemmansegaren en sällan förekommande och I varje fall högst tillfällig sysselsättning eller arbetsförtjenst såsom "vallackare". Kvinnorna och barnen synas deremot uteslutande lefva af bettlande [...]

Norra Skåne, 4 Jan 1896.

'Vandringsfolkets' bön.

Till konungen har från s.k. tattare i Halland inlemnats en petition, i hvilken de bedja honom tänka på det stackars vandrings-folket. Deras sorglösa belägenhet veta de ej huru de i ord skola kunna uttala. Visserligen äro de födda i landet men ingen av dem har någonsin haft ett hem, och de sakna både församling, skolor och lärare. Deras hemlösa lifs bön om plats och arbete besvaras i bästa fall med tystnad och då de icke erhållit någon skol-undervisning saknat kristliga föräldrars vård, ja, mången ej ens känt fader och moder, samt "nödens kalla vind mången gång kännes så hård och begärens och lustarnes stormilar så våldsamma, att ibland dem den ena unga menniskan efter den andra faller likt blomman vissnad till jorden," så drista de, vissa om att äfven den enskildes väl, ligger h.m:t varmt om hjertat, bedja att hans m:t täcks infordra utredning och upplysning om vandringsfolket, särskildt i Halland, eller, derest[?] denna anses obehöflig, till riksdagen aflåta en proposition om vidtagande af nödiga åtgärder till vandrings-folkets belägenhets förbättring, genom sådana bestämmelsers antagande, att åt dem kunde upplåtas jord, der de mot skälig ersättning finge bygga hus och hem och åtnjuta undervisning och religionsvård.

Böneskriften är den 8 febr. 1895 underskrifven af 4 män och 3 qvinnor och bilagd en skrifvelse som kyrkoherde Flodén i Lindbergs församling i Hallands län insändt till fångvårdsstyrelsen i hvilken han framhåller behovet af en lagstiftning för tattare.

RA, Första kammaren protokoll nr4, utskottsutlåtande 1897:10; cited in Montesino 2002, 108 [...] att detta innebär en stor landsplåga för de orter, som deraf beröras, att det är en förfärlig demoralisation, som derigenom, vållas inom vidsträckt områden, och att det sålunda är en verklig samhällsskada, på hvars botande och hämmande man bör arbeta.

Catomeris 2004, 235-236.

Från och med sekelskiftet kan man se hur storsamhället mobiliserar hela den moderna statsapparatusens framväxande resurser: från forskare och myndighetsutövare till politiker och massmedier, allt för komma till rätta med den lilla skara som man egentligen – kommer det visa sig – inte vet vilka de är.

Ch 4

Suomen Wirallinen Lehti 14 Mar 1868

Juwalla 30 p. helmik. Täällä kuoli pakkaseen yksi mustalaisen lapsi pitemmällä jäämatkalla; heillä oli hewonen ja yksi waimo ja toinen lapsi, jotka löydettiin vielä vähissä hengin, sillä heiltä oli näetsen hewonen uupunut, jonkatähden eiwät woineet mennä edelleen, mutta sattui mies, kotoisin täältä, tulemaan Wiipurin markkinoilta, joka heidät saattoi ihmisten ilmoihin. P. W-nen.

03.02.1900 Tampereen Uutiset no 24

[...] he eiwät kylwä, eiwätkä niitä, eiwätkä kokoo riiehen, waan muuttelewat tai kiertäwät paikasta toiseen pitämättä huolta huomisesta ja kumminkaan en ole koskaan kuullut, että mustalainen olisi kuollut nälkään.

Ch 4.2

Östra Finland 12 Jun 1876, n:o 67

Under ett samtal med mannen gjordes frågan: hvar han med sin familj så länge uppehållit sig och hvad han förehåft; mannen svarade oblygt: på förtjenst. På tillfrågan med hvad han förtjenat, lemnade han tvetydigt svar; försäkrade tillika att han aldrig stulit eller mördat.

KM, A17, 546 (M1907)

Mustalais Ida se Oskarin akka oli hyvä laulaja minä hyvin muistan kun 1912 hukku se Titanikki laiva ja siitä kirjoitettiin se Tidanikin hymni, niin kun mustalais iita sen lauloi Ravolaisen tuvan penkillä, se jäi mieleeni ja tuskin lähtee pois koskaan joskaan en sitä kaikkia sanoja muista.

KM, A17, 606 (M1905)

[...] hevoset kierrätettiin pienemmän väen voimin maanteitse ja valtaosa seurueesta kulki mainitun reitin jalkaisin. Heidän kulkunsa ei ollut suoraviivasita vaellusta vaan poikkeamalla joka-asuntoon reitin lähettyvillä. [...] he hajaantuivat pieniin ryhmiin noin 3-4 henk käsittäviin osastoihin, haravoiden näin kulkiessaan eri talot, yhtyen taas määrätyissä yöpymispaikoissa yhteen ja hajaantuakseen taas seuraavana päivänä samanlaisiin seurueisiin. [...] Naisilla oli mukana huiveista kietaistut eväsnytyt, pitsiä ja pitsinvirkkausvälineet sekä povausta varten korttipakat.

Suometar no42/19.10.1855

- Hirvensalmesta walitta U.J:p M. että siellä on paha wastus Mustalaisista. Hän kirjoittaa: Korkia esiwalta on aina kaikkein parasta edistänyt; waan mitä kansaa se lienee, kuin ne owat niin heittiönä sekä sielun että ruumin puolesta. Kuin muiden täytyy otsan hiestä, huolesta ja toimesta kokea tulla toimeen, niin heidän henkensä elää mankumisella (pyytämisellä), joka talon kiertämisellä ja hewoisten waihettamisella. [...] Mustalaiseukot ne taas tarttuwat, kuin takiaisen-nuppu emäntäin kylkeen, ”puistamahan, paistamahan” ja jos yhtä saapi, niin toista jo pyytää. ”Siinä on ensin siunaukset, lohdulliset loilotukset; kirouskin kiirehesti, kuin ei käyne mieltä myöten.” Niin häpeämättömiä he owat.

Heidän keinonsa näkyikin auttawan hyvin: sillä monella talonmiehellä, joka ikänsä ahkeruudella työtä wääntää, niin että waiwaloisena menee hautaan, ei ole sitä warallisuutta kuin heillä.

KM, A17, 622 (F1899)

nuoremmilla oli lapsi sylissä, jota he suureen liinaan käärittyinä kantoivat. lapseen vedoten he anelunsa esittivätkin: ”antakaa rahaa, että saan ostaa lapselle maitoa.” – Tämä kyllä vetosi ihmisten mieleen ja tokihan aina riitti joku lantti antaa toisellekin pyytäjälle, sillä itse asiassa olemmehan Luojan lapsia jokainen.

KM, A17, 554 (M1906)

Se, että m kerjäsivät sellaisiltakin valkolaisilta, jotka saattoivat olla erittäin köyhiä, sekatoiden varassa eläviä, teki hyvin kielteisen vaikutuksen näihin köyhiin ihmisiin. Kysyttiin, miksi ette tee työtä ja hanki elantoanne kuten muutkin ihmiset. Vastaus oli: Kainin merkki panee kulkemaan.

KM, A17, 622 (F1899)

ihmisillä on jokin tunto mielessään, että jos on tyly itseään heikommassa asemassa olevalle, niin se tuntuu itselle jossakin muodossa – saa kokea samaa ”maailman tylyyttä”.

KM, A17, 725 (F1896)

Kun ne kylä kylältä syyskavun käövät riihellisillä, kerääntyhä siitä. Tätä työtä ei tehny mustalaismiehet, vaan akat käö mauruamassa. Välillä tyhjensivät kärryille pussinulokkuu. Kolmas kerjuu aeka osu karjal lasku aekaa, sillon käövät emäntijä myöten, voesuolaisija, villoja saippuata, kankaspalasta.

KM, A17, 259 (F1899)

Pidettiin te(?) että nämä olivat Kiikalan mustalaisi. Ja kyllä mustalaisilla jotain annettiin 1-2 leipää. [...] Näistä Kiikalan vanhoista m en tiedä mitään epärettistä puhetta. Ja heille yritettiin antaa ainakin minun äitini.

KM, A17, 193 (M1922)

Kulkiessaan he kerjäsivät ja toivat taloihin isännille ja emännille terveisiä sukulaisilta kyseisistä pitäjistä. Kaikki surivat todella Hetan ja Oskarin poistumista kerjäläisten joukosta, sillä he osasivat kerjätä oikealla tavalla, eivätkä he olleet vihoissa siitä jos joka kerta eivät saaneetkaan sitä mitä pyysivät. He ymmärsivät sen, ettei sitä joka kerta ole antaa vaikka olisikin haluakin ja läksivät toiseen taloon toivottaen lähtiessään hyvää vointia talonväelle. Toiset mustalaiset olivat joskus vihassa siitä, kun vain Hetalle ja Oskarille annetaan, mutta he jäivät ilman.

KM, A17, 725 (F1910)

Ne naeset ei oekee laeskanna joutannuh olemaa. Ensir ruvan kerjuu, lasten kantaminen helemassaa koko päivän, ruval laetto lasten ja pyykim pesut. Kuv vähänki istuvat nin virkkuu kätee.

Hämäläinen no 43, 24 Oct 1872

Hämeenlinna. [...] Warkauksia on meidänkin kaupungissa ja sen lähitienoilla kuultu harjoitettawan, erittäinkin on tänä syksynä paljo hewoswarkauksia tapahtunut; mutta sanotaankin paljo mustalaisia olleen liikkeellä.

SKS, ROM-SF, 12

H: Vaihtoko kaaleet hevosia keskenää vai?

V: Vaihto.

H: No entäs sitte jos jäi totaa, jos tehti kaaleitten kans kauppaa, ja toiselle kaalolle tulikii paljo huonompi hevonen ni, mites siinä kävi ?

V: Mustalaisille kerrottii hevosten viat, sanottii eeltä päi että mitä on siinä, ja sillä tavalla nii siinä ei oo tuota jäläkee päi sanomisia. No kaajeilleha, minä olin semmone enne ku oltii tuolla paikkakunnalla, minä en tuota antana paikkakunnallekaa tuttui paikkoihi vikanaisia hevosia ollenkaa, no jos oli semmone vika että se ol tyhjänpäiväne vika että se ei haitana, ni sen sanoin ihmisille, rehellisyy luotto eiku parani, ja sitte ku oli iso vika minä vein tuntemattomii paikkoi, minä vein kauemmaks, joo minä en antanu, myö eletti rehellisesti omissa paikkakunnissa. Markkinassa tehti kauppaa siellä tota, eihä siellä oltu nii rehellistä, sitä tehti valakolaisten keske ihan.

KM, A17, 558 (M1894).

Oli paljon sellaisia talon isäntiä jotka tekivät heidän kanssa hevoskauppoja. Minäkin olen heidän kanssa tehnyt monesti hevoskauppoja jo siellä Jaakkimassa sekä nykyisin täällä SJ:lla sekä antanut vielä näihin asti yösijan kun pyytävät. Heillä oli kulkiessa aina tapa tulla samoihin taloihin joissa olivat ennenkin saaneet yöpyä.

KM, A17, 733 (F1884)

joka kylässä oli ainakin yksi talo, johon mustalaise saivat tulla kuin kotiinsa, niissä taloissa isännät tekivät heidän kanssaan hevoskauppaa, eivätkä kuulemma uskaltaneet isäntää pettääkään.

KM, A17, 725 (F1910)

Ennen tämä mustalais Veeru se vanha veeru ol erittäe hyvä kuohar, kaikki porsaat ja etenkin varsat salavattivat sillä. Nei ollu koskua kipeitä, totistuvatte vielä elävät vanhat ihmiset. [...] Se mustalaes Veeru harjotti elukoetem parannusta, sitävast se otettiin ni halullaa vastaa. Veerulla ihtellää ol hihnat mukanna mikkä kuatovat varsan salavettavaks.

KM, A17, 165 (M1899)

Oskari oli kuohari se salvoi sikoja ja hevosia se salvuaika oli keväällä huhtikuun lopulla ja toukokuun alussa silloin Oskari jätti perheensä ja lähti kiertämään salvuille kohteet oli jo valittu talvisilla kiertomatoilla. Oskari uhkasi että jos antaa toisen salvva jonka on luvannut hänelle niin kyllä se kuolee, oli sellaista taikuutta

KM, A17, 725 (F1910)

”Vallan” perhe oli hyvin suosittu. Valla kengitti hevosia taloissa kulkiessaan. Hän oli myöskin välskäri, itse oppinut kotieläimiä parantelemaan. Hän sai yösijan missä talossa tahansa.

KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Perho

han också lifnärt sig hufvudsakligast med hästhandel och har han för öfrigt såsom en åtminstone oskadlig, men i vissa operationers anställande, till och med ganska fördelaktigt känd, praktikus i veterinärläkare yrke kunnat förtjenad. Såväl sina Krono som kommunala utskylder betalar han ordentligt.

KM, A17, 546 (M1907)

Sakkolassa oli kirjoilla 2 sukua ne kiersi kylästä kylään ei paljon oman pitäjän ulkopuolella tekivät hevoskauppaa salvoivat porsaita olipa joitakin hyviä valjassuutareitakin.

KM, A17, 169 (M1896)

Muitakin vaihtokauppoja harjoittivat mustalaiset, kuin hevosten vaihetusta. Heti taloon tultua miehet ottivat yhteyksiä isäntään ja aikuisiin poikiin. Vaihdettiin kelloja, saappaita, lakkeja ja jotain muitakin tavaroita, vieläpä rahakukkaroitakin.

KM, A17, 546 (M1907)

Toinen suku [...] pysähtyi välistä jos asunnon sai ja olivat töissäkin esimerkiksi Kiviniemen kosken rautatiesillan koko teko ajan oli isä ja vanhin poika siinä töissä.

Lindholm 1995, 74-75

Rackarens huvudsyssla bestod i att vara hästslaktare och huddragare och till hans övriga göromål horde: att döda och få hundar och Katter, få och/eller gräva ned självdöda djur, kastrera husdjur, sota, bota keratur, skära ned personer som hängt sig, begrava självspillingar och missdådare, piska tjuvar och biträda vid exakutioner.

KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Orimattila

Karl Gustaf J., Häradsrisare. Är äfven en son till förenämnde Alexander J., född år 1839, gift sedan nästvikit år med en bondedotter härstäd som icke är af zigenare släktet. Han har, med ägande å orten sedvanligt kristendoms kunskap, ordentligen begått H.H.Nattvard, bivistat gudtjensterna och Läsemöten, ordentligen fullgjort sine skyldighets till kommunen men har likväl ett med hänseende till bonigsort och verkningskrets ostandigt sinne, samt besöker flitigt de årliga marknaderna.

KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Mouhijärvi

Gustaf K. har här inom församlingen förhållit sig fredligt, innebar torplägenhet åtminstone ifrån år 1849 fortfarande, hvarvid han borde kunna lifnära sig och de sina; men saknar böjelse för drift vid arbete, såsom det påtagligen synes, af hänförelse att uppsöka sina stambröder, hvarföre han ock tidtals ännu är, jemte sina äldre barn, stadd på kringvandring, äfvensom andre kringstrykande Zigenare-horder hos honom ofta hafva sitt tillhåll.

KM, A17, 155 (F1907)

Kasvattivat heinää ja vähän viljaakin. [...] kuulin että maatyöt tekivät mustalaiset porukalla. Silloin kokoontui sinne toisiakin. Kun työt oli tehty, läksi koko porukka kiertämään. Ja tulivat taas työn aikana paikalle.

KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Ruskeala.

Karl A., inhysinge Eger försvarlig kristendoms kunskap. Har uppfört sig klanderfritt. Arbetar såsom timmerman och dagsverkare inom socken. Har ej aflägsnat sig från församlingen. Tycks helt och hållet skill sig från sina stamfödvanten. Är gift med en finska.

Wiipurin Sanomat no 239, 4 Oct 1899

Kirje Wiipurista. [...] Mustalaista halweksutaan. [...] On paljon wiimeaikoina puuhailtu mustalaisten hywäksi sekä koitettu saada heidän elintapojaan wakaantumaan, mutta useimmiten huonolla menestyksellä. Löytyy kumminkin sellaisiakin, jotka työtä tehden ja rehellisesti koettawat ansaita leipänsä, mutta nämä tawallisesti saawat osakseen samaa kohtelua kuin huonommat weljensäkin. Esimerkkinä tästä tahdon kertoa kuinka muuan mustalainen Johan Hörman, joka pienuudestaan saakka on työllä ansainnut leipänsä, sai turhaan pyytää työtä erään Wiipurin pitäjässä löytyvän howin pehtoorilta. [...]

Ch 4.3

KM, A17, 558 (M1894)

Meidän paikoissa oli suurin osa selaisia taloja joissa pitettiin mustilaisia. Jaakko Kaksonen, Juho Kokkonen, Sippo Nukarinen, Jaakko Orpana, Juho Sinkkonen, Juho Roininen, Juho Kormano, Sippo Immonen, Juho Kekarainen, Jaakko Kuismanen. Nämä nimet olivat kaikki minun kotikyläni lähinaapureita. Nämä kaikki olivat maalaistaloja.

KM, A17, 554 (M1906)

Heillä kai oli vakinainen piirinsä, jossa kiersivät. Näin he tulivat tutuiksi valkolaisten kanssa. [...] He yöpyivät taloissa, torpissa ja mäkituvissa. Kylässä oli sellaisia taloja, asumuksia, joihin mustalaiset saivat yöpyä, ja toisia sellaisia, joihin eivät saaneet. Yleensä he eivät viimeksi mainittuihin menneetkään. Näin heille muodostuivat vakinaiset kantapaikat, joihin samojen omistajien aikana saivat mennä.

KM, A17, 558 (M1894)

kun ne tuli pyytämään yöpymys joka vuosi ja kun Isäni kuoli jäi minulle sama taipumus auttaa köyhää kulkijaa ja antaa heille lepopaikka kun oli tilaa ja sopua. Ja kun joutuimme pois muuttamaan sieltä koti selta tänne Suonenjoelle niin olemme olleet tällä paikalla 16 vuotta tämä kuluva talvi oli ensimmäinen kun ei tullut mustalaisia pyytämään yöksi.

KM, A17, 166 (F1915)

Täällä päin on liikkunut niin sanottua Hemmon sakkia, Wallen sakkia ja Kassun sakkia, ja tämän Kassun sakin sukunimi oli C. C:n veljeksiä on ollut Erkki, Otto, Oskari ja Jalamari. Heidän vanhempansa ovat olleet Kassu ja Fiija. Ja kassusta nimitys kassun sakki. Erkin vaimon nimi on ollut Hulta, Jalmarin Maija, Oton vaimon kai Ruusa. [...] Nämä perheet joista edellä on kerrottu olivat tunnettuja ja jollain lailla tuttuja miltei kylämme jokaisessa talossa. [...] Vain harvoja poikkeuksia lukuun ottamatta mustalaisille annettiin yösija kylämme useimmissa taloissa.

KM, A17, 166 (F1915)

Kyllä mustalaisten kanssa keskusteltiin päivän asioista, ilmoista ja he kertoivat omia kuulumisiaan. Miehet olivat kovia hieromaan kauppaa, milloin hevos, kello, puukko tai mitä heillä sattui olemaan jotain sellaista tavaraa jota sai kaupata tai vaihtaa. Naiset kauppasivat pitsiä ja povasivat ja lapset lauloivat maksusta.

KM, A17, 457 (M1909)

Harvoin viipyivät enemmän kuin yhden yön, ja silloin täytyi olla hevoskauppasuhteita. Asumisensa he korvasivat povaamisella, eläinten leikkaamisella, kahvipannun tinaamisella ja pyytämisellä.

SKS, ROM-SF, 12

H: Nyt ku kaaleet ennen vanhaa kiersi ja puhuttii omista paikoista...

V: Nii?

H: Nii kiertikö ne niitä omia kyliä ja omia..?

V: No enimmäkseen kiertivät omia kyliä, minäkii kasvoin iha omissa paikoissa melekee, että se oli hyvi harvo ku käyti vieraila paikkakunnilla, ku se ol se yösija siellä, se oli nii, sitä ei tahtonu saada tuntematon yösijaa. Tutuissa paikoissa ol valamiit yösijat, ei tarvinnu ku mennä vaa, nii omissa paikkakunnissa kierrettii, nii eikä meitä pelätty ihmiset ei pelänny meitä, avosylin ne otti vastaa, myö rehellisesti eletti [...]]

Peasant delegates' complaints in the debates of the Diet, 1877Diet (cited by Vehmas 1961, 61; Pulma 2006, 79)

Mustalaisia pidetään parempina kuin oman pitäjän voutia, ehkä pappiakin, ja siitä on syntynyt heille helppo elinkeino, kun heille annetaan ruokaa, vielä vaatteitakin, yösiijasta puhumattakaan.

Ch 4.4

Kiertolainen 1/1907

Illemmällä muuttui ilma ankaraksi tuiskuksi ja rinnassani nousi yhä korkeammalle tuskan rajukuohut. Päätimme lähteä heidän peräänsä ja niin teimme. Kylän tanhuoiden lumikinosten läpi ajoimme talosta taloon, ihmisten ihmeeksi kysellen ”mustalaisia”. ”Owatko tehneet pahaa”, ”mitä ne taas owat tehneet”, kysyttiin kaikkialla. Ajoimme seuraamaan kylään ja aina waan kuultiin, että oliwat, saamatta yösijaa, jatkaneet matkaa. Kylän viimeisessä talossa oliwat he melkein puoliwäkisten pyrkineet yöpymään, mutta isäntäwäen jyrkkä kieltö oli yön tullessa pakoittanut heidät lähtemän Isonkyrön ja Laihian laitakylille, peninkulmia aawalle taipaleelle. Edemmäksi emme wouneet heitä seurata. Sydämmeni oli pakahtua, kun yön pimeässä loin ktseni aawalle aukialle, missä myrsky winkui ja lunta pyrysi. – Ensimmäisen kerran eläissäni tunsin kunnioitusta romaneja kohtaan. En olisi ihmetellyt lainkaan, waikka olisiwatkin tehneet wäkiwaltaa, sillä uskon, että moni muukin jo olisi turwautunut siihen.

KM, A17, 292 (M1911)

Pitkä-Mikki oli roikale sakkia. Heidä ei mielellään laskettu tupaan vaan pantiin ovet lukkoon. Tolffin sakki oli myöskin vähemmän suosittu. Monia mjoukkoja oli sellaisia, että heitä pelättiin, jos miehiä ei ollut taloissa kotona. Heidän nimiään ei aina tiedetty. Tuntemattomilta m estettiin tupaan, pantiin ovet lukkoon. [...] Pahat mustalaiset näyttivät olevan raakoja hevosiaan kohtaan. He olivat myöskin hyvin röyhkeitä ja omavaltaisia, jos pääsivät tupaan eikä talon miesväkeä ollut kotona.

KM, A17, 166 (F1915)

Mutta kyllä niitä oli vaan niin räiviä ja surkoamattomia ihmisiä jotta eivät ottaneet mustalaisia yöks, ei millään. Vieläpä komeilivat sillä jotta miten heillä ei kärsitä mustalaisia. Oli sellaista käsitystä jotta kuului niinkuin parempiin ihmisiin, ja hienompiin ja sivistyneimpiin, mitä ylpeampi on mustalaisille [...]

Wiipurin Sanomat no 74, 7 March 1899

Mustalaista ampui tämän kuun 7 p:nä eras Sawikummun isäntä haulilatingilla niin että yhdeksän haulia jäi ruumiiseen. Seikka oli lyhyenläisesti seuraawa: iso mustalaisjoukko oli saman päivän iltana saapunut n.k. Alapellon taloon mainitusta kylästä ja pyytäneet yösijaa. Mutta kun ei suosittu mustalaisia ja sitä paitsi heitä oli isojoukko, pyysi isäntä heitä poistumaan. Waan kun mustalaiset eiwät tuohon suostuneet, mutta uhkasiwat olla yötä sekä kun oli kowa pakkanen ja heillä oli lapsia, jotka oliwat kohmettuneet pakkaseen yöllä, meni talon emäntä naapureista apua hakemaan. Sieltä saapuikin iso miesjoukko, aseilla warustettuna wäkiwallantekijöitä pois häättämään. Sanasota syntyi silloin kyläläisten ja mustalaisten wälillä, josta seurauksena oli se että eräs isäntä laukaasi pyssynsä mustalaiswaaria kohti, yllämainitulla seurauksella. Mustalainen wiettiin heti lääkärin luokse, waan kun hän ei woinut yksin ryhtyä kaiwamaan haulia ruumiista, warsinkin kun joku oli sattunut keuhkoihin, määräsi hän miehen kuljetettawaksi Sortawalan sairashuoneeseen. Asiasta piti poliisikonstaapeli Olli Tiainen poliisitutkinnon 8p. tätä kuuta, jossa asian ilmoitti tulewan kihlakunnanoikeudessa käsiteltäväksi.

Nygård 2001, 143

Suuri ”mustalaissakki” pelotti 1800-luvun loppupuolella yksittäisten maalaistalojen asukkaita. Mustalaisten – valkolaisten normien mukaan tarkastellen – käyttäytymisen aggressiiviset puolet työntyivät etualalle heidän kohdatessaan väeltään vähäisiä yksittäistaloja. Jos sitten löytyi henkilöitä, jotka olivat valmiita kyseenalaistamaan heidän ”oikeuksiaan”, olivat konfliktit seurauksena.

Uusi Suometar no 11, 26 Jan 1872

Kiinnisaatuja Mustalaisia. Somerosta [...] Että tällä mustalaisparwella, jonka väkiwaltaisuutta yhteinen kansa on walittanut ja jota sanotaan epäiltävän erityisistä kirkko- ja hewoswarkauksista, ei ollut rauhallisempia aikeita, näkyy siitä että heillä, kun kiinni otettiin, oli, paitsi suuria puukoja, ampuma-aseita, kruutia ja tulihattuja kuin myös eräs nahalla päällystetty ruoska, jonka warsi oli noin kolme naulaa painawa pyssyn piippu, jonka kumpaankin päähän oli lyijyä walettu.

KM, A17, 366 (F1912)

Mustalaiset pelkäsivät olla ulkosalla yön, koska valkolaiset tekivät ilkivaltaa. Taloissa yöpyessä he voivat seurata, mm. talonväen toimintaa. Eivätkä paikkakuntalaiset tulleet juuri tekemään pahoja naapurien nurkkiin.

KM, A17, 606 (M1905)

Vanhemmat ihmiset kertoivat heitä ennen olleen jopa viisikin hevoskuormaa. Tämän arvelivat johtuneen siitä, että ennen oli paikkakunnalla ollut kovia tappeluja paikallisella väestöllä ja mustalaisilla, joten mustalaiset ovat kulkeneet suurin joukoin turvallisuus systä.

Karjalatar no 105, 17 Sept 1910

-Mustalaiset Nepolan salolla asuiwat tällaisissa majoissa ja ryösteliwät ja tappoiwat ympäristön lehmiä ja roswoiwat muuta omaisuutta. Se oli Luostanlinnan aikana 1860-luwulla. Seutulaiset näkiwät eräänä tyynenä kesäiltana sawun nousewan mustalaisten asuinpaikalta ja päättiwät siitä roswojen olewan tuolla kaukaisella salolla. He meniwät Luostanlinnalla wanginwartioina olwain kasakoiden pakeille ja pyysiwät heiltä lainaksi aseita siksi yöksi. Sanoiwatko he oikeaa tarkoitustaan, ei ole tiedossamme. Aseita he kuitankin saivat; meiwät sitten sawun osoittamaan suuntaan, löysiwät mustalaiset makuult ja tappoiwat heidät kaikki, muutaman kertojan mukaan neljättäkymmentä henkeä. Ruumiit he hautasiwat suohon tai Nepolan järween. Wain yksi oli jäänyt hautaamatta suolle. Mitään oikeusjuttua ei asiasta tullut, kun siitä ei kukaan huudellut. Wähän salamyhkäisesti asiasta wieläkin puhutaan, niin ettei tapettujen luwusta woi saada warmuutta. Mutta tapahtuneeksi tätä werilöylyä laajalti wakuutetaan. Se on ollut salolaisen alkuperäistä oikeudenkäyttöä ilkimyksille oikein suuressa mitassa, joskaan ei esimerkiksi suositeltawaa.

Ch 5

Kiertolainen no 4, 1907

”Miksi mä synnyin waaleana?”

”OI miksi mä synnyin näin tummana, kun en syntynyt waaleana, laulawat romanit usein. Mutta toisin ajatteli wiime talwena eräs romanipoika, joka usein sai ja saa wieläkin kantaa tuta romanien milestäniin ikävää ”parno” nimeä (parno merkitsee walkoinen). Eräänä päiwänä alkaa hän miettiä, miten hän woisi tulla mustaksi. Wiimein huomasi hän keinon ja päätti terwata päänsä. Mutta poika-parka pääsi hätinä alkuunsa, ennen kuin äitinsä huomattuaan hänen aikeensa kiirehti estämään. Hänen täytyi siis edelleenkin jäädä walkoiseksi. O.J.

Suometar no 42, 19 Oct 1855

- **Hirvensalmesta** walitta U.J:p M. että siellä on paha wastus Mustalaisista. [...]
Hirvensalmen mustalaisten määrää en woi paikallensa sanoa kuin ne kierrellessänsä owat sekoitetut talonpoikaisella huomudella,

Ch 5.1

KM, A17, (F1902).

Runeberginkadulla asui VR:n konduktööri S. ja hänen rouvansa sanoivat olevan mustalaisen syntyjään. Hän oli tumma kiharatukkainen ja korvissa helyt, mutta muuten pukeutui suomalaisittain ja ei heillä kulkenut mustalaisia. Heillä oli 2 tyttöä, Lempi ja Asta, koulumatkoilla tavattiin ja he sanoivat äitinsä osaavan mustalaisten kieltä.

SKS, RN 19/67

K: No jos ennen aikaan meni suomalaisen miehen kanssa mustalaistyttö naimisiin, ni hylkäskö heimo sen?

V: Kyllä, kyl se hylkäsen, ja eikä se enää tahto tulla... se tuns ittensä... että tuota, ei se tullut ennää, ja nytki se on nii että jos kuka on suomalaisen miehen kanssa pitää yhteyttä ni ei se oo tasa-arvonen sen kaa eikä ne pidä sitä siin väärtissä, että on omassa itsessään että hää pitää huolen itsestään ja omasta elämästään, et ei se enää sellaista kohtelua saa romaniheimolta et se on enemmän niinku syrjitty ja ala-arvioitu

KM, A17, 725 (F1910)

Tätä Veeruij joukkova ol usejampiki sakki, muummuassa Roopeij joukko, jonka naeset on jo kolomatta poloveja naimisissa valokolaiesten kanssa. He ovat hyvinvoipija. [...]

Kiertolainen no 5, 1907

Romaneja etsiessämme tapasimme maantiellä, markkinapaikan läheisyydessä, romaninaisten joukossa erään suomalaisen, waaleawerisen, punaiseen hameeseen ja romanisaaliin puetun naisen, jonka silmät oliwat itkusta punaiset. Kysyttyämme syytä hänen itkuunsa, saimme tietää naisen olewan erään laajalti tunnetun soittaja-romanin waimon. Toista vuotta he oliwat yhdessä eläneet. Nyt markkinoilla oli mies wangittu, hänellä kun ei ollut ”kirjoja” muassaan. Lupasimme puhua asiasta nimismiehelle. [...]
Nimismies kertoi waimon äidin talwella käyneen luonaan ja pyytäneen miestä wangitsemaan, sillä tämä oli muka kiduttanut ja lopulta tappanut hänen tyttärensä. Sanoipa hän myöskin miehen aikaisemmin pitäjässä olleen turmioksi monelle suomalaiselle tytölle. Hän oli näet kaunis mies. Koska waimo kuitenkin oli eläwänä paikalla, päästi nimies mies miehen wapaaksi suosituksellamme ja ehdolla, että hän muutamain tuntien kuluttua matkustaisi pois pitäjästä.
[...]

Kysyttäessä kertoi waimo meille miehensä häntä erittäin hywin kohdelleen. ”Ei moni suomalainen woi olla läheskään niin hywä kuin hän on minulle”, sanoi hän. Kun häneltä kysyttiin, miten ja missä hän oli tutustunut mieheensä, wastasi hän: ”tanssissa. – Mutta en minä rakasta hänen soittoaan, enkä tanssiaan; rakastan hänen hyvää sydäntään. Hänellä on hellä, jalo sydän.”

KM, A17, 714 (M1922)

-”Ku S:n iitu (iida) [...] men naimissii m kans ni ihmise sillo sanosiva: - Eik sekä parempaa saanu, waik niin kauni kirjois ol!

SKS, RN 19/67

K: Entäs sitte miten suhtauduttiin jos tuli vaalea miniä, suomalaisminiä?

V: Niin, se tuota, ei sitä paljon tullut, [...] ei ne sitä pitäneet vertaisena, ei ne mitään sellaista vaatineet mutta ei ne sitä pitänyt missään verossa, et se oli [...] suomalainen henkilö, et vaikka se olis kultaa tippunut, niin se ei olis tullut mieleenkään [...]

SKS, RN 23/68

V: [...] kaikki on sekasin! [...] ei ne oo enää mustalaisii jotka talonpoikasill miehille menee

K: no onks se häpiä?

V: on, on! Se oli ennen niin iso häpiä et kuulkaa jos mustalaistyttö män talonpoikaselle miehelle ni sitä ei enää otettu samaan seuraankaan [...] se ei ennää oo häpiä, mut ennen hävettiin

Ch 5.2

Kojonen 1899, 229-230

[...] kymmenestä tunnetusta kokeesta kasvattaa mustalaistytöjä ei yksikään ole onnistunut. Minkätähden? Kun ovat isommiksi tultuaan nähneet sukunsa halveksitun aseman, ehkä ajattelemattomilta ihmisiltä itsekin saaneet loukkauksia osakseen, ovat päättäneet jakaa kaikki kansansa kanssa.

KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Kuopio Moderkyrko landförsamling.

Katarina T., kallande sig numera med antagna slägtnammet L., född 1847. Födelsedagen okänd. Föräldrarne okände. Uppfostrad hos bonden Aron Jalkanen i Haminanlaks by. Admitterad till Herrans Nattvard 23.6.1853 med god bokläsning och förswarlig kristendoms kunskap. Tjenar för närwarande såsom piga å hemman No 12 i besagde by. Till frejden oklandrad.

Sedan hon under höstintern 1864 öfvergifwit sin tjenst och sällat sig till sina stamförwandter i Leppäwirta församling och med dem kringströfvat i närmare en månadstid, infann hon sig sjelfmant hos undertecknad, under bitter sorg erkännande sitt owärdliga uppförande, och har derefter förhållit stilla och i alla oklanderligt, särskilda gånger besökande presterskapet i församlingen i sin själsangelägenheter.

KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Isokyrö

[...] vid min hitkomst tvenne Ziguenare-barn, syskoner Herman Karlson Y., född 15.4.1838, och Maria Karlsdotter Y., född 14.9.1846, uppfostrades med årligt understödt af Höga kronan af en hederlig och välfrejdad bonde i denna Moderkyrko församling.

Men ehuruval denne sistnämnde fullgjorde sitt åtagande med allvar och omsorg samt ganska ordentligt förjdefis[?] deras undervisning dels hemma dels i byskolan, lyckades han icke desto bättre, än att, sedan båda med behjelpig bokläsning och kristendoms-kunskap blifvit admitterade till nattvarden och hvardera kort derpå blifvit skiljde från fosterfadren för att försörja sig sjelfva, begge befunnas så ostadiga, lata och ovilliga till allt ordentligt arbete, att ingen ville taga dem i årstjenst och de med fler svårgihet kunde lifnära sig genom tillfälligt arbete. Slutligen afgick brodern härifrån med flyttningsbetyg til Ala-härmä, der han enligt sin uppgift tillhandlat sig ett torpa, 1864 och syster följde honom dit kort derefter, utan att likväl ännu hafva uttagit flyttnings attest.

Kojonen 1899, 230

Eräs mustalaismies oli palvellut kuusi vuotta, mutta sitte taas lähtenyt mustalaisten matkaan. Kysymykseeni, eikö olisi ollut parempi renkimiehenä, saada säännöllisesti ruokaa, hyvät vaatteet pidettäviksi, puhtaan vuoteen nukuttavaksi ja ennen kaikkea ärjyn hevosen ajettavaksi, vastasi hän: ”Hyvä oli muuten, mutta kun kylän nuoret aina pilkkasivat minua sentähden, että olin mustalainen, niin suutuin ja läksin elämään mustalaisena, koska se kumminkin kaikissa tapauksissa olen.”

KM, A17, 165 (M1899)

Näitä mustalaisia pidettiin paikkakunnan mustalaisina ja nää teki töitäkin kesäisin muuunmuassa Katri oli taloissa piikanakin vuosikaupalla nuorena ollessaan ja hankki vielä mökin missä asui kunnes tuli huonoksi ja sitte meni vanhain kotiin [...]

Ch 5.3

KA, Senaatin talousosasto, KD 561/51, Sakkola

Enkan Margareta J. / 52 år / Hennes fader *Karl J.* bebrukade under 1820 talet en frälse hemmans del i Kelja by, troligen i den afsigt att hans barn, tvenne söner och en dotter skulle blifva bosatte jordbrukare, men sönerne blefvs stora skojare och blefvs slutligen hvardera ihjelslagne. Dottren Margaret blef dock tillhållen att lära sig läsa, gick klädd i den dräkt som allmogen brukar och visade alla tecken att öfvergifva zigenare-lifvet. Blef med nödig kristendoms kunskap admitterad. Men knapt hadde detta skett, så öfvergaf hon sina goda föresattser - gifte sig med en Zigenare *Wilhelm V.*, med denne lefde hon tillsammans några år, då han öfvergaf henne - tog sig en Zigenare qvinna till frilla och hon å sin sida började att föra ett vanligt zigenare lif. V. blef också för några år sedan ihjelslagen. Nu på gamla dagar lefver hon stilla, lifnärer sig med småttarbete åt bonde qvinnor och kanske litet signeri.

Tapio no 31, 30 Jul 1864

Näistä elatus-keinoista ja niistä seuraawista epä-järjestyksistä ei ota osaa edellä mainitut tilalliset perheet, waan moittiwat kowin sellaista, waikka eiwät uskalla tehdä wakaisia muistutuksia näitä vastaanakaan, näiden muiden koston pelosta. Näistä kiintonaisista, jotka owat jo hywällä tiellä muuttumassa wakinaisiksi ja ahkeroiksi eläjiksi, pitäwät talollinen Kalle E. ja torppari Taneli E. leppäwirroilla wanhimmat poikansa eräässä täällä olewassa walmistelewassa koulussa, jossa nämä pojat owat tunnetut ahkeruudesta ja hywästä käytöksestä.

Mustilaisia tästä läänistä arwellaan olewan noin satakunta henkeä, joista 3 perettä, nimittäin 1 Leppäwirroilla, 1 Iisalmella ja 1 kontiolahdella elättäwät itseänsä wakinaisella maanwiljelyksellä omassa talossansa, joiden lisäksi 2 perettä Leppäwirroilla elää maa-torpparina. Ne muut, joista kyllä eräs 3-weljeksinen yhdyskunta owat tilan omistajoina Pielawedellä, harjoittawat kaikki kiertolais-elämää, ilman muuta luwallista elätekeinoa, kuin miehillä hewois-kauppa ja hewoisten huusaus ja waimo-wäellä jotakin paikkakunnassa tawallista käsi-työtä. Usein owat he wäki-wieraina sekä harjoittawat petoksia paikkakunnan wäestölle, joka taas puolestansa heitä kohtelee pelolla ja inholla. -

Erittäin siitä kysyttyä, sanoiwat ne kuulusteltawat mustilaiset, että wähän kyllä on toiwoa niitä jo wanhemmalle ijälle ehtineitä mustilaisia saada wakinaiseen työn tekoon, waan että woidaan heitä pitää järjestyksessä ja lain kuuliaisuudessa ainoasti wapautensa menettämisen pelolla ja tuomitsemisella työntekoon ojennus-huoneissa, jota vastaan mustilais-lapset pitäisi, silloin kuin wanhempia ei woisi parantaa, näistä pois eroitettawan ja saatettaman talonpoikaisten maamiesten perheisiin, joissa niitä pitäisi opetettaman ja työhön taiwutettaman; kuitenkin pelkäsiwat he, että paikkakuntaan jällelle jääwät mustilaiset wäki-wallalla eli salaisesti pois ottaisiwat näin joukostansa eroitetut lapset.

KM, A17, 475 (F1904)

Paikkakunnalla talollisina asuvat m omaksuivat samoja tapoja kuin muillakin paikkakunnan talollisilla [...] Tämä Vihtori E:n perhe oli kehittyntä väkeä ja he omistivat K:ssa L:n talon ja tämän myytyään ostivat K:n. [...]. Täällä syntyi heille poika jolle pyytivät kummeiksi kylän opettajat [...] He kutsuivat kerran kylään minun äitini ja opettaja Mykkäsen. Tarjoukset olivat olleet samanlaiset kuten muissakin taloissa ja isäntäväki erittäin kohteliaita ja ystävällisiä. Tällä hetkellä ei kotikylälläni ole talollisia mustalaisia olen kuullut että heitä olisi Leppävirran K:ssa ja ovat sivistynyttä väkeä.

Maanmiehen Ystävä no 50, 11 Dec 1852

- "Ai Aleks", sanoi waimo, "pitääkö meidän ikämme tämmöistä elämätä pitää; emme tiedä huomennako wai tänä päivänä olemme wankeina. Woi parempihan toki olisi omituinen paikka, joku torppakaan, jossa eläisimme työtä tehden rauhallsiesti eläin ja opettain tuota tytärtämme lukemaan ja ihmiseksi."

- "Haal" Sanoi Aleks, "missähän arwossa tuota silloin oltaisiin, mitähän rauha tuota silloin olisi? Joo, kaikki pilkkaisivat mustalaisia ja nauraisivat heille, ja wielä omat seuralaisetki hyljäisivät meidät. Etkö ole usein katkeruudella hawainnut tätä ihmisten ylenkatsetta, joka pakoittaa mustalaista mustalaiseksi."

Ch 6

MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 15.7.1884

att Karl Gustaf E., som nu är uti sitt 22dra åldersår, är född uti Jääskis socken son till I Hiitola socken kyrkoskrifne Zigenaren Malakias Wilhelmsson E. och Zigenarqvinnan Albertina Ä., af hvilka fädren för elfva år sedan atlidit men modern ännu vore vid lif, utan E. dock med säkerhet kände om han blifvit döpt; att han efter fadrens död blott undantagsvis strukit omkring såsom öfriga Zigenare, utan varit, likasom äfven kronolänsmannens I Kexholms district polisförhørsprotokoll närman upptager, stodd I tjenst mest uti Pyhäjärvi socken, derifrån han sistlidne höst begifvit sig bort och under det han sysslat med kastrationsarbete anländt till denna socken kort fore vintermarknaden I Sordavala stad [...]

MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 25.11.1895

[...] vastaaja enimmäkseen äitinsä kasvattamana oppi lukemaan ja hiukan kirjoittamaankin, sekä oleskeli suurimman osan nuoruuden ajastaan ensimainitussa syntymäpitäjässään, jossa viimeksi oli kirjoilla [...], että vastaaja noin neljä vuotta takaisin muutti mainitusta syntymäpitäjästään Ilomantsin pitäjän Kivilahden kylään, jossa han on ollut ja vielä nytkin on hengille kirjoitettuna tilalle n.7 loiseksi [...]; että vastaaja yleensä on itseänsä elättänyt rehellisesti työtä tekemällä, ehk'ei vastaaja kuitenkaan ole pitemmän aikaa yhdessä paikassa työskennellyt muuta kuin yhden vuoden Enon pitäjän Nestorinsaaren kylässä, jossa hän sanotun ajan palveli erään Juhana Ihalaisen talossa.

MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisasiain pöytäkirjat, välikäräjät 25.11.1895

[...] ei pitänyt vähintäkään seuraa toisien mustalaisten eikä liioin muidenkaan ihmisten kanssa, jos ei nimittäin oteta lukuun niitä vastaajalle tuntemattomia ruokakauppiaita, joilta vastaaja osti ruokaa syödäksensä, ja niitä hotelleita, joissa vastaaja kävi väkijuomia nauttimassa; muistamatta vastaaja myöskään mitään sellaista taloa Sortavalan kaupungissa tahi sen lähiseuduilla, jossa hän olisi pitemmän aikaa majoillut, (ell'ei otettava lukuun niitä) joten siis vastaaja niin yonaa kuin päivänsäkin tuli viettäneeksi ulkona luonnossa [...]

MMA, Sortavalan kärjäkunnan varsinaisiasiain pöytäkirjat, syyskäräjät 15.10.1894, §191
[...] vastaajat, päästyään viime syyskuun 8 p:nä yöksi puhujan torppaan, varastivat yöllä avonaisesta etehissäiliöstä yhdet saappaat, miesten paitan, housut, naisten paitan, lankasukat, kussakan (vyön), uuden miesten paidan ja pumpuli-huivin [...]

Ch 7.1

Nya Vexjöbladet 24 Dec 1883

har för länge tider tillbaka nedslagit sina bopålar här och der I vår provins, och särskild tyckes Sunnerbo lida af hemsökelsen. Jag åsyftar harmed de af allmogen s.k. "rackarne", hvilka sjelfva benämna sig "nattmän" eller "vallackere" och befolka nästan hela byar, såsom *Berghem* I Kånna och *Båshult* I Göteryd m.fl. ställen. Från början vande vid att förrätta endast sådana sysslor, som folk I allmänhet föraktade eller af vidskapliga skäl fruktade att utföra, hafva vallackarne envist undflytt allt mera ansträngande kroppsarbete och uppehålla numera lifvet nästan endast genom tiggeri eller vid marknadstillfällen ofta med det, som är ännu sämre. De anse sig som en sorts privilegierade bettlare, hvilka hafva rät att af landtbefolkningen fordra bade sitt etet och sina husdjurs uppehälle. Särskildt vid jultiden farads de omkring från byt ill by, från gård till gård, medförande på hemfärden hela lass af matvaror, foder och klädesplagg m.m.

[...]

Vid hjarje stuga gores halt och en af de gamle inträder. I den mest gnällande ton framställas nu böner om allmrosor af för att göra packet emot, emedan våldsgerningar ofta af detsamma blifvit begångna, erhåller bettlaren alltid något af det begärda. Betecknande är härvid tiggares löfte att icke återkomma på så eller så lång tid, ifall den eller den gåfvan erhålles.

[...]

Denna människokast lefver helt och hållet afsöndrad ifrån och obelandad med ortens öfriga befolkningen. Icke ens den allra fattigaste granne vill pläga umgänge med "rackarne". De stackars människorna äro så till yttersta grad föraktade, att knappast någon vill lemna dem tak öfver hufvudet, då de färdas omkring, eller vara I sällskap med dem på en väg.

Till följd af ordningenmakts slapphet gent emot Vallackerna, är upplysningen bland dem också ytterst ringa. Få af de gamle torder kunna läsa I en bok och bland det yngre släktet är förhållandet troiligen icke stort batter. Deras pekuniära(?) omständigheter lära deremot icke vara synnerligen beklagansvärda. Tvärtom pastas, att många familjer äro, om inte rika, så åtminstone ganska burgna.

För att I någon mån rättfärdiga sitt kringflackande lif, hafva de på senare tider skaffa sig ett yrke, åtminstone till skenet: männen åtaga sig nemligen bösslagning och I likhet med Zigenarne förtenning af kopparkärl o.d., medan qvinnorna till någon del sysselsätta sig med korgmakeri.

Om dessa arma människor ursprungligen tillhört ett annat folk än vi, hvilket bade nämnet och deras afskylning från andra kunde göra troligt, är mig alldeles obekant; de synas åtminstone icke stå I något samband hvarken med Zigenare eller andra dylika kringstrykare och deras budfärg är alldeles lika med vår. Troligen komma de också så småningom försvinna och sammanblandas med den öfriga befolkningen, ithy att det icke är dem möjligt att vidare fortsätta med samma laglösa lif, som de hittills fört. [...]

SOU 1923:2, 334

Då de kringstrykande tatarfölje I allmänt ingalunda sakna medel till sitt uppehälle, har härav blifvit en följd, såsom av Konungens befallningshavande I Hallands län påvisats, att de icke kunna såsom lösdrivare behandlas, ehuru de stryka sysslosösa omkring utan att söaka arbete och på samma gång I de flesta fall underlåta att efter förmåga söka ärligen försörja sig samt föra ett för allmän säkerhet, ordning och sedlighet vådligt levnadssätt.

SLD, Protocoll vid allmän Socknestämma med Harplinge församling d. 6 April 1856.
Församlingen erkännde, utan gensägelse, att ofvannämnde Blomqvist ofta förut och nu helt nyligen farit, med hustru och barn, omkring och bettlat i Församlingen, att han tyckes anse sig hafva rättighet dertill [...]

Finspånge läns domsaga 1894 10/4 § 169, 1894 25/4 § 174; cited in Lindwall 2005, 20
[...] att hon sedan 15 år tillbaka i Östergötland, Södermanland, Närke och Kalmar län färdats tillsammans med en person vid namn Frans Oskar F. [...] och samlat lumpor samt försålt från Höfanäs inköpta så kallade selterkärl [...]

Lindholm 1995, 84

De hade egna små jakter, kosterbåtar, och besökte fiskesamhällen utefter kusten för att i första hand köpa skrot, men kompletterade även med de vanliga verksamheterna såsom: förtenning, lödning och försäljning av klockor och diverse småprylar. Som betalning för utförda tjänster och eventuell försäljning tog de gärna färsk, torkad och saltad fisk i utbyte.

RA, 1907-23 fattigvårdskommitteens arkivet, HV1, Töre

Varje år i slutet av augusti månad bruka två familjer – tattare – om tillhoppa 4 personer och 5-6 barn under sexton år vistas i Töre kyrkoby under några dagar, varunder de äro sysselsatta med förtenning av kopparkärl, försäljning av ståltrådsarbeten o.d. Familjernas manliga medlemmar bruka dessutom bedriva hästbyte. Från Töre fortsättes resan till de s.k. höstmarknad i Kalix kyrkoby.

Ifrågavarande familjer äro bosatta och kyrkoskrivna i Hedens by av Luleå församling. [...] Några olägenheter av tattarnes besök inom distriktet har ej försports, med undantag för bettleri, som möjligen bedrivits av deras kvinnor och barn.

Ch 7.2

Lindholm 1995, 87 (account of 'Hilding' born in the beginning of 20th century)

Far var förtennare, han var välkänd. Han hade aldrig bly i. Hans arbete såg ut som silver. Bönderna kunde inte förtenna själva så vi var alltid välkomna.

RA, 1907-23 fattigvårdskommitteens arkivet, HV1, Ale (Västra Götaland)

Zigenares och Tattarnas uppträdande är till stor förgelse för dis.tets befolkning, då den jämt riskerar att bliva bestulen på sina ägodelar, och den sällan, utav rädsla för hämnd, vågar neka banden mat samt foder åt deras hästar. Man kommer ej i tillfälle kunna meddela varning för lösdriveri, då de i regeln aldrig sakna medel till sitt uppehälle, utan tvärtom äro i besittning av kapital.

RA, Civildepartement, Länshövdingarnas femårsberättelser. EII baa vol 39

Dessa kringvandrande följen äro af den bofasta befolkningen bade fruktade och hatade. Å ena sedan vågar man därför knappast neka till deras pckande fordringar, å andra sedan är det högst få, som vilja eller våga ens öfver en nat hysa dem eller deras familjer, och i flere kommuner har öfverenkommelse träffats att icke, vid visst bestämdt vite, gifva dem nattherberge. Följden här af har blifvit, att de dem ena dagen kunna visa sig inom en socken, den påföljande träffas i en anna flera mil aflägsen från den [...]

EU78, 22829

Det har funnits t.ex. Torpare och Jämtasittare, som trivits bra tillhoppa med Tattare, så dom lånat dom hus och "hållit Tattare om ryggen", som föderna uttalade sig. Men så har dessa torpare och jämtasittare varit hållna "för dåligt folk" i orten.

SLD, Protocoll fördr vid i behörig ordning utlyst ordinarie Kommunalstämma med Färgaryds församling den 18de December 1883

§. 5 Som på Stämman anmältes att så kallade Tattare och Kringstrykande personer Ströfva omkring i Församlingen och att di hafva sina Logis hoss en del Torpare och Backstugsittare Så får Församlingen på det alvarligaste förmana att intet sådana personer få hysas inom församlingen den som detta gör är förfallen till att böta 10 Kronor [...] enligt förut upprättadt prottocol, är det sådan person som åtnjuter fattigunderstöd som hyser sådana Tattare mista understödet

Reminiscense cited in Lindholm 1995, 77

Under tiden som de bode här I Mårdaklev, hade man aldrig något som helst obehag av dem. De gingo eller cyklade omkring och sålde strumpor och klutar (...) Kommunen köpte till överpris för att bli kvitt dem inom socnen

SLD, Protocoll hållit vid extra Kommunalstämma med Rolfstorps församling den 25 Februari 1912, §1 & 2

[...] kommunen beveljade Sven Nilsson 500 kronor med vilkor att han återköper ifrågavarande hus och tomtlägenhet, och altså afskaffar personerna i fråga, ifall de äro ditflyttade, äfvenså utfärdar en förbindelse till kommunen att han ej hädanefters säljer tomter eller hus till tattare eller sådana personer som anses kunna falla fattigvården till last [...]

Bergstrand 1942, 129-130

Prosten Wennergren var noga med att de, som skulle bosatta sig I socken, voro ärliga, gudfruktliga och ordentliga mänsikor. Han vakade over, att inga tattare fingo bosätta sig i pastoratet.

Ch 7.3

EU78, 22439

Tattaren ... var oftast mörklägd, liten till västen, bruna ögon och "smidiger". Ingen vet om att en tattare gift in sig med bönder men det talas om att den eller den har "tatarblo i sig". Vilket anses vara ytterligare nedsättande.

EU78, 23877

[...] några äktenskapsförbindelser med dessa [tattare] och ortsbefolkningen är derfor icke känd. Inställningen från ortsbefolkningens sida gent emot tattarna var dessutom sådan att något närmare från tattarnas sida i dylikt syfte ingalunda skulle lett till något positivt resultat.

EU78, 23830

De gifte sig nog inom deras egna led, någon enstaka gång har man hört att någon tatterskona blivit gift med någon av ortsbefolkningen fast det var mera sällan. Och blev en sådan gift med en av ortsbefolkningen såvar det av ren kärlek, karlen blev förtjust i henne för att hon var vacker.

EU78, 22829

Tattarna äro ej så mörka, som Zigenare. "Dom äro oppblandade", sade fäderna. Obs! Men det kan förekomma någon blondina bland tattare; Obs! Men det tros, att dessa äro flickor av vårt folk; som sällat sig till någon Tattareliga eller, som barn blivit bortstulen och oppfostrad bland tattare. Tattare fortplanta sig helst inom sina egna led; men bland tattare liksom Zigenare finnas ofta unga skönheter. Finna dom rika pojkar bland ordsbelokningen, så gifta dom sig. [...] Det tyckes, som Zigenare liksom Tattare helst vilja vara inom sin egen stam. Men det är, som synes, "ingen regel utan undantag"

EU 52007 15/1, 24/1, 31/1 1961, originally cited by Lindholm, 1995, 112

Mamma och pappa gjorde alltid vad de kunde för att dölja sin härkomst, pappa var alltid “sadelmakare”, när vi kom till nya ställen. (...) Mamma brukade instruera oss barn om vad vi skulle svara på besvärliga frågor – våra lögner var taktiska och betingade av omständigheterna.

Appendix ii. Socio-historical terminology and translations

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| (Talon) Emäntä | lady/mistress of the house, housewife |
| (Talon) Isäntä | Head of the house, holder, farmer, master |
| Jyvätorppari /Spanmålstorpare | Tenant labourer (payed mostly in kind) |
| Lampuoti / landbo | Tenant farmer (with full allotment) |
| Loinen | Dependent labourer (without own dwelling) |
| Mäkitupalainen | Tenant labourer (with an access to a cottage through the work relationship with the freeholding peasant) |
| Mäkitupa | Cottage |
| Muonamies | Farm labourer (with own cottage) |
| Talonpoika / åbo | Freeholding peasant |
| Talollinen | ” |
| Torppari | Tenant farmer (with partial allotment) |

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