The Culture of the Finnish Roma

Edited by
Airi Markkanen and Kai Åberg

Studia Fennica
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We hope this book helps make visible the challenges of Roma people in the modern-day Europe, as well as highlights the importance of Romani research whether it is conducted by Roma people themselves or representatives of the majority population.

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Preface

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Roma studies form a special field of scientific research. They also bring together numerous scholars with a shared interest and aims at both theoretical and empirical knowledge formation of the current Romani life. It is important to learn, in Finland and in Europe more widely, about the lives of Roma today. In the past few years, Roma people have increasingly opened to the public and have been ready to discuss even issues that have previously been kept silent – mostly because of the conflictual nature of the relationship between Roma minorities and the dominant societal populations (Markkanen 2008; Törmä, Tuokkola & Hurtig 2014). However, even today Roma populations form significantly marginalized minorities all over Europe, which makes the research of their lives even more necessary.

This volume compiles and updates a wide array of contemporary Roma research done in present-day Finland, both by Finnish researchers, native Roma, and international scholars. There are writers who represent Finnish majority as well as Finnish Roma, and a writer from the Romanian majority. A great deal has been written about Roma in Finland, as will become apparent later in this volume, but there are not many histories written by Roma themselves about the experiences of their people. Consequently, Romani history has been written by and from the perspective of the majority and has thus been based on materials produced by the administrative apparatus of the majority (Markkanen 2003; Åberg 2015; 2019). This anthology, however, aims at reaching a wider and more authentic tone stretching towards different aspects of Romani people's societal and communal meanings and positions in the course of history, the significance of Romani language for an individual Roma, linguistics of the language, significance of mutual interaction between Roma and the researcher, and gender as a topic to be reflected on analytically in the Romani research.

The volume aims to be of interest to both academic readers and lay readers interested in Roma culture and Roma life in the past and in the present. However, compromises have not been made with respect to scholarly standards and academic appeal. The contents cover a range of topics and author positions; some are based on extensive fieldwork or systematic work in the archives, some are based on longitudinal ethnographies, others are drawn from the writer's own life experiences as a member of an ethnic minority, and some from a specific interdisciplinary professional expertise. Bringing to light the various sides of the Romani way of life, scholars from different fields include historians, linguists, anthropologists, and cultural and social researchers.

This anthology shows that there is a large group of Romani researchers in Finland. The variety of researchers benefits and enriches research. During recent years much

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has happened in Roma research. One of the main shifts is that research by Finnish Roma themselves has increased – research carried out by their own group. In the methodological sense this is a qualitative and thematic progression: more authentic and manifold Romani experiences can be reached via autoethnographies and other analyses of Roma people who themselves form a part of different branches of the academic community. Although the goal of Roma studies has been to create a general and covering picture of the history of the Romani population, many previous analyses have leaned on recycled materials that mythologize and stereotype Romani people (Markkanen 2003; cf. Okely 1983; Silverman 2012; Åberg 2015). Sarita Friman-Korpela, who is a Roma herself, states in her dissertation (2014, 12) that 'although Romani people have been objects of scientific studies and various socio-political procedures, it always comes down to one question: What is meant by the Romani people? In this volume, we respond to that question from different angles: from cultural, political, historical, religious, and also gendered points of view.

One of the goals of this anthology is also to bring knowledge of Romani life to the dominant societal majorities in Europe. Romani migration, poverty, and marginalization are complex questions that concern Finland and all of Europe (Saarinen, Markkanen & Enache 2020). The discussion about the Romani migration in Europe is based on images of Roma as problematic, poor, illiterate, unemployed, and criminal vagrants. They are conceived as outsiders and as new nomads, for whom the united Europe seems to find no space. Especially Roma children and women are excluded Others in many ways (ibid.). Finland has been one of the destinations of Roma from Bulgaria and Romania and some other post-socialist countries. They are treated as a pariah group in Europe. As the social inequality encountered by Roma in Europe has been generally accepted as 'normal', the position of Romani migrants in Finland as the most marginalized seems to have been normalized, enhanced, and perpetuated as well (Markkanen 2012; Saarinen, Markkanen & Enache 2020). We hope that wider understanding of Romani life will lead to more understanding treatment of these excluded Roma as well.

Roma communities face many confrontations today. Their form of life has changed a lot: the mobile way to earn a living has changed towards a more stable apartment and neighborhood life. Possibilities to meet other Roma communities are a bit rarer. Still, the song *Gelem gelem* – I roam, I roam – is sung as the Roma national anthem. When European Roma sing that song, they feel a sense of community. Roma sing *Gelem, gelem* during many of their festivals, such as the International Day of Romani people, the 8th of April. In Finland the International Day of Romani people is also a flag day and has been included in the Finnish University Almanac since 2016. All this means a shift from rejection to recognition as well.

Contents and topics of the volume

This volume is divided into two main themes. Part I focuses widely on issues of Roma history and language, and Part II concerns more individual Roma people in their social surroundings. The chapters within these themes are based on either academic research or personal life-histories and are presented in more detail below.

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The methodological composition of the chapters is manyfold containing ethnography, ethnomethodology, anthropology, archive analyses, thematical analyses of interview data, and grammatical investigation.

Part I discusses the history of the Roma and Roma studies. In Chapter 1 (*Introduction: A Roma Scholar's Journey into Roma Studies in Finland*), Marko Stenroos provides an introduction to Roma studies in Finland in a personal, autoethnographic manner. He elaborates on the core themes in Roma studies in relation to his personal experience, but also in relation to the chapters that follow. Stenroos particularly pays attention to Roma scholars' positions in academia and addresses the appropriateness of concept culture in current anthropology.

In Chapter 2 (*From Rejection to Recognition? A Brief History of the Finnish Roma*), Miika Tervonen and Tuula Rekola give a brief overview of the history of the Romani population in Finland. Despite having a presence in Finland for almost half a millennium, the Roma have been largely invisible in historiography. Yet their past offers a unique perspective into Finnish history and makes it clear that Finnish history has never been the monoculture it is often imagined as. Tervonen and Rekola focus on interaction, from minority politics to everyday life. They argue that throughout their history in Finland, the Roma have not been an isolated, homogenous, or static group. On the contrary, their history has been deeply intertwined with that of the Finnish society, highlighting patterns of exclusion and hierarchy, but also of social and cultural interplay, adaptation, and coexistence.

Part II focuses on the Roma language and linguistics. In Chapter 3 (*Romani Language in my Life*), Henry Hedman describes the Romani language in his life and the work he has done for it. A Roma who learned the language as a child and is an expert through his language research, he writes about it as his 'home'. He has been working on the language since 1978: 'It is my other mother tongue along with Finnish. When I am speaking Romani, I feel great spiritual affinity with my community and am closer to the topics I speak of. Even today I use Romani with my friends and the people close to me on a nearly daily basis'. According to field research on the Romani language, it is endangered, and urgent measures are needed to revive it. 'It is our responsibility as Roma to preserve the language, and we need to pursue this'.

Kimmo Granqvist introduces in Chapter 4 (*Themes and Methods in Finnish Romani Linguistics*) the research history of the Finnish Romani language, which has been under discussion by many scholars at different times. Much of the discussion is devoted to a trichotomy of perspectives and paradigms of the later history of Romani linguistics. In addition, different areas of research will be discussed, covering word lists and dictionaries, grammars, historical linguistics, dialectology, contact linguistics, studies of attrition and language death, language varieties, corpora and computational linguistics, discourse, and language sociology and sociolinguistics.

Part III discusses subjectivities and membership and begins with Chapter 5 (*Ambiguous Belongings and (Un)certain Paths: Pentecostal Kale Subjectivities in the Practice of Finnish Life*), where Raluca Roman focuses on the complexities of the sense of Pentecostal belonging that is present in a traditional Roma community in Finland, the Finnish *kale*. She introduces the dynamics of a Romani mobilization that reaches beyond the political strata of the community. Roman is a Romanian who worked and lived for over a year among Finnish Roma. She describes their beliefs and community, as well as being a mother, a Christian, a *kale*. At present, the majority of Finnish Roma

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of religious orientation belongs to the Pentecostal movement. The peak of religious revivalism among the Roma took place in the 1960s. In 1964, an organization known as the Free Finnish Evangelical Roma Mission was jointly founded by several non-conformist congregations, including the Pentecostal movement, the Baptists, and the so-called Free Church. This association has perhaps most visibly borne witness to the various stages of Roma religious revivalism in Finland. Although approximately 90% of Roma in Finland are members of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church – 'almost all Roma are registered Lutherans' (Markkanen 2003) – they regard the Pentecostal movement as their spiritual home.

Chapter 6 by Sirkka Mikkola is titled *Finnish Romani Women's Pathways to Work: Struggling for Full Societal Membership*. At present, an increasing number of Roma women are joining the labor market. Mikkola explores their experiences and analyses their struggles for full societal membership and acceptance. She discovers through the interviews of Roma women that a large number have repeatedly experienced exclusion and ostracism, making it difficult for them to stand up for their rights and find the confidence to pursue their desired career. Once a Roma woman secures employment, she is much better equipped to fight for acceptance from mainstream society. However, Roma women play a very important role in their own culture, which may conflict with the demands of work and what mainstream society expects from a working woman. This chapter demonstrates the struggle Roma women face with these contradictory demands to successfully combine home life with work and to achieve acceptance in both contexts.

The anthology ends with an Epilogue and Chapter 7 (*Travelling with Finnish Roma*), where Airi Markkanen depicts her time with Finnish Roma. She has been on the field with Roma for over thirty years. During this time, she has used a method of participant observation: multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork about the everyday life of Roma on a grassroots level, in their houses, flats and, as they call it in Finnish, *mökki* (cabin). Mostly their life is led in blocks of flats, in the poorest areas of the suburbs. Markkanen meets Roma at various locations and events, such as marketplaces, shops, trains, celebrations, funerals, and karaoke bars, or by travelling with them. She has encountered a life full of stories and emotions, but her approach has always included a certain cultural sensitivity. She also writes about violence against Finnish Roma women, looking at different forms of violence endured by the women in their own communities.

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Introduction

A Roma Scholar's Journey into Roma Studies in Finland

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This chapter offers an introduction to the book and an overview of Roma studies in Finland from the perspective of and personal experience by a Roma person, an anthropologist. Once at the seminar for the Ph.D. students in social and cultural anthropology at the University of Helsinki, I introduced a plan for the dissertation regarding implementation of the Finnish Roma policy. A professor in the audience commented that maybe it would be interesting to write an autoethnography of your study. At the time it felt like if I write an autoethnography from the position and with the perspective of my own ethnicity, it will risk the validity of my research and perceptions of me as a serious and knowledgeable anthropologist. The hesitation for an autoethnography stemmed from the insecurity for using the lens of Romaniness as a frame of reference. My ethnicity was often brought up even in the situations and contexts where it was not relevant. In the context of celebrating the spectrum of Finnish Roma studies in this book, I think it is appropriate to apply a genre of autoethnography. Hence, this chapter covers central themes in Roma studies in a very personal matter, but at the same time integrated to the chapters to follow.

'Are You Interested in Working in a Roma History Project?'

It was in 2010 when I received a call from my university department of social and cultural anthropology in Helsinki regarding the ongoing Roma history project at the Finnish Literature Society (SKS). The aim of the research project was ambitious: for the first time the 500 years long history of Roma in Finland were the focus of the historical interrogation. In other words, the project aimed to go beyond the whitewashed Finnish history and to bring Roma experiences under scrutiny – it was a process of decolonizing Finnish history writings. At the time I received the call, I worked for the multicultural association and was about to finish my masters' degree. I had not decided the theme of my masters' thesis yet and I thought this opportunity could be the easiest way to complete the studies. With my Roma background I thought I knew 'Roma culture' and hence it would be easier to write my thesis about Finnish Kale Roma than spend a year out of the country doing the fieldwork, often required in anthropology. I was partly right but partly very wrong about the easiness of Romani studies.

The easy part was of course knowing the local Roma customs and familiarity of the worldviews and mindsets in general. The hard part of studying one's own people derives from the academic divide of self and others; a self as a knowledgeable (white) scholar, the subject, and the people whose culture is under scrutiny are the objects. During the project, the setting of subject and object entered the academic

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conversations while the research themes were discussed, and the divide of us and them were manifested accordingly. The situation was new to me as during my studies in anthropology I was as distant as any other student to the cultures we studied. Now my position changed and suddenly I was drawn into the situation where the history and ethnic boundaries between Roma and non-Roma were so clear. I had to recalibrate my position to Romaniness and to the academic world. Within these structures from the discipline, a journey to Roma studies became personal. Of course, I am not the first one in this position; the journey is problematized in anthropology for instance by Lila Abu-Lughod as she argues that 'indigenous scholars' will challenge the premises of concept culture and ethnography (1991, 53). Similar viewpoints have been introduced by Kirin Narayan in her studies about India (Narayan 1993).

The eighties (incl. 1980s and 1990s) proliferated to reconsiderations and recalibrations of subject and object positionalities in anthropology. In this epistemological shift, the critical race theory and feminist anthropological theories emerged and reshaped the representations of 'Others'. This was the process of decolonizing anthropology as a discipline (e.g., Allen & Jobson 2016). The present trend of participatory action research (PAR) in social science is further challenging the divide of self and other as the knowledge production takes place in collaboration between subject and object (e.g., Hurtig 2008). Allen and Jobson further argue that we must still reconsider what anthropology can contribute to an insurgent scholar-activist praxis (Allen & Jobson 2016, 134). The Roma studies are still in the middle of the processes of producing 'decolonizing generation'. The efforts towards critical race theory and feminist approach are emerging in Central Europe as a branch of Critical Romani Studies, but there are still obstacles to find its space among the monopoly of old school researchers (cf. Mirga-Kruszelnicka 2018; Stewart 2017).

The fact that I was called up and offered a job from the Roma research project because of my ethnicity (and being one of few academic students among Kale Roma) reflects the epistemic change in social sciences and in Roma politics (in terms of nothing about us without us). This kind of practice simultaneously fosters the recognition and contribution of Roma scholars within Roma studies. The importance of participation of ethnic and visible minority groups is emerging both in the political spheres and in academia. However, there are many issues that can go wrong in participation, for instance if minority participation is solely a mean of co-optation (Kelty 2017, 581) and the contribution is not properly recognized. The invitation to participate in the Roma history project was an opportunity for me that, I assume, would not have existed few generations back. It was the beginning of my journey into Roma studies.

To follow in this chapter, I will start with the Roma history from the introspective point of view as it was also my point of departure for the journey. The elaboration of history and how Roma are seen in the Finnish history inevitably leads to the concept of culture and to the mutual boundary-making between Roma and non-Roma, the construction of otherness. It is noteworthy that equivalent boundary-making happens in both 'camps'. As I am critical on how the concept of culture is deployed, the following section of culture will lead to the concept of multiple social orders and I will ask whether social order is the concept that will complement the concept of culture, or even replace it in the core of anthropological interest. I will conclude this introductory

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chapter with the studies of Roma politics and participation while keeping in mind the chapters in this book.

Digging into Roma History in Finland

In the chapter 'From Rejection to Recognition? A Brief History of the Finnish Roma' Tuula Rekola and Miika Tervonen in this book are writing about Roma history as historians. I am an anthropologist and hence I leave the history of Roma to the experts. Nevertheless, in this section, I reflect upon my personal thoughts and subjectivities as I, as a Roma person, familiarized myself with the Roma history. During the school years, Roma history was not taught at schools and like many other Roma, my knowledge of Roma history was limited to the family narratives, for instance stories about my grandfather in the war. As the Roma family history used to be oral, my family stories did not reach that many generations back. Consequently, the concept of history among many Roma seems to be constructed and construed differently compared to majority Finns as Roma was mentioned, if at all, only in the footnotes in history literature.

In the beginning of my journey, I learnt about the 'hanging law' dating back to the year 1637. The new knowledge about the law and what it reflects reduced my interests for the period of first centuries that Finnish Roma habited Finland (under Sweden and later Russia). Hanging law meant that if itinerant Roma was met wandering, he could be hanged without a court order. The purpose of the law was to get rid of unwanted persons, but there is not any data indicating that the law was never executed (Rekola 2012, 24). However, it was 200 years after Roma arrived in Finland when their culture was first time described by Kristfrid Ganander in 1780 (Viljanen, Granqvist & Enache 2015). The over 500-year-old history of Roma in Finland is important and has its impacts on present day. One Roma activist elaborated in the Nordic seminar arranged in 2016: 'We have 500 years of oppression in our shoulders, and it still shows'. Another remarkable work has been written by Panu Pulma (in Finnish), a comprehensive work regarding Roma issues covering timeline from 1500s till Finland joined EU in 1995 (Pulma 2006). Pulma's book can be considered a sociohistorical guidebook for the Roma lives in Finland.

As I found the centuries long history of Roma a bit depressing, I focused more on the contemporary history. This was part of the history I could also relate to through the stories from my own family. Furthermore, I had an opportunity to supplement the existing literature with the collection of recorded interviews at the Finnish Literature Society as they have a remarkable collection of interviews on Roma memorizing and reflecting as far back as to the beginning of 20th century. Although I managed to skip the first centuries of Roma history, I had to face an equally disturbing and more timely debate on who are the Roma. There are similar unbalanced power relations embedded to this question of who the Roma are as those in Roma history: history is the narration of non-Roma and so are the prevailing narratives of Roma origin.

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Who am I and Where do I Come from?

'Who are the Roma' has been, and still is, a hot potato in Roma studies. This dilemma assumably originates back to the time when the linguistics became interested about the language Roma people spoke. Luckily, the debate during the last ten years have subsided but still there are, if not explicit then implicit, references to the old topic, namely who are the Roma. And the issue keeps coming back (see e.g., Tremlett, McGarry & Agarin 2014).

The question of who the Roma are is complex and multifaceted. The question also leads us to the heart of identity politics. Reetta Toivanen argues that as Roma in Europe have (too) diverse cultural, social, and linguistic backgrounds, it makes Roma fall in-between legal categories: Roma are not foreigners but not European/local enough (Toivanen 2020). Toivanen examines Roma positionality from the European legal frame of reference. Camilla Nordberg (2005) also examined Finnish Roma through the lens of nation-state and citizenship in her book 'Boundaries of Citizenship: The Case of the Roma and the Finnish Nation-state'. I consider these two approaches to examine who are the Roma enriching in academic sense. Whereas those elaborations that focus on Roma origin solely on cultural basis or without reference to the states and legal systems Roma live in, I consider less meaningful and important to the academic knowledge production.

The Roma falling in-between the legal categories also have an impact on Roma studies: Finland has groups of mobile Roma from Central and Eastern Europe which I do not know much about, and my studies cannot be directly deployed to them, although all of us are placed under the abstract ethnic category of Roma. The history of Finnish Kale Roma is different to the mobile Roma, and this is an unavoidable outcome of hundreds of years of inhabiting different 'host-countries'. The authors and editors of this book have worked with different Roma groups. Airi Markkanen, for example has worked with Finnish Roma from 1990s, doing fieldwork and her dissertation (Markkanen 2003) about Roma women's life course. Lately, she has been working together with Anca Enache and Aino Saarinen with the mobile Roma (see, e.g. Saarinen, Markkanen & Enache 2020). One ethnic category – Roma – indicates the challenges of definition in research. Many of the researchers prefer to place the group's name as prefix, like the Kale Roma.

A study was published in Spain where the genetic investigation through DNA and anthropological inquiry was combined interdisciplinary to answer the question, what it is to be Roma. The DNA samples were collected to find out the geographical origins of the Spanish Roma (Cortés, Martínez & Mesa 2019). To provide another approach, Tremlett with colleagues move beyond describing who Roma are and what they are doing. Instead, they ask: who defines who is Roma, when, and why? (Tremlett, McGarry & Agarin 2014, 727.) Their question is very pertinent and fundamental, and it requires us to decolonize our academic thoughts, it removes the exotism and romantism, not to mention patronage. In this sense, by asking who defines and why, the question becomes political, and a researcher is automatically entering into deeper and wider considerations of research ethics.

The scholarly camps in Roma studies can be divided into two. There is the school of mostly linguistics who emphasize the Indian origin based on the linguistic and folkloristic argumentation, Romani language as akin to Sanskrit (e.g., Matras 2004) in

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opposition to the so called 'Dutch school' consisting of historians and anthropologists, who disagree with the emphasis of Indian origin (Lucassen, Cottaar & Willems 1998; Willems & Willems 1997). Because the debate has continued so long, would it be time to ask what can be achieved around this topic? As Okely (1983, 1) points out, the issue of Roma origin provides more questions than answers.

I think Roma origin as a topic of debate is not productive. Yet, in my academic journey I learnt that in fact, identity politics are something we must deal with no matter what or which school in identity talk we place ourselves. The identity talk is pertinent especially in the current Roma politics and policymaking as I will show later in this chapter. However, it is notable that, as Annabel Tremlett (2014, 830–831) says, regarding identity and origin polemics, these two camps end up in a similar ideological place. The essentialism, strategic or not, is known in both camps. Sometimes the distinction between cultural identity and political identity is difficult to separate amidst Roma studies. The authenticity plays a role both in the Roma politics and in scholarly works.

An Authentic Roma?

As I started my journey in the Finnish Roma history project that covered 500 years of Roma living in Finland (see Pulma 2012), it is appropriate to cite the review of the book that was published after the research project was finished. The part of the review below is an example par excellence how, as Ian Hancock (2010, 17) aptly formulates: 'it is the vagueness regarding Romani identity that has allowed it to be so casually manipulated by outsiders'.

> Unfortunately, no clear distinction was made between respondents who were well integrated into the life and those associated with the Gypsy population only marginally by having been orphaned, adopted by non-Gypsy parents or institutionalized, e.g. raised by the Romani Mission. Some may be connected only by genetic heredity, without any native enculturation. Neither those adopted as children, the mission-educated, nor even those with only one Gypsy parent, are going to provide the same responses to questions as individuals with both Gypsy parents, and who have spent their entire life living the Gypsy life surrounded only by other Gypsies in their domestic sphere. As in other countries, the researchers gravitated towards the more acculturated, better educated individuals, who were also much more likely to talk to them. It is certainly appropriate to question just how well the information gleaned from the more marginal respondents is able to represent the traditional culture. (Salo 2015.)

The call for 'true Gypsy' in Matt Salo's text indicates misassumptions on Roma interacting only in one instead of several different social domains. Salo is wrongly assuming Finnish Roma community is closed. At the same time, this is an example of how antigypsyism works in the academia: the moment Roma scholars achieves academic qualifications they are claimed to be too distant from their community to study and write about them (see, e.g., Mirga-Kruszelnicka 2018). What a paradox. My argument here is that Roma interact in multiple social domains and Roma communities are just one of those domains.

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As I do not agree with the existence of the authenticity dilemma, question is what Roma academics bring to the field? When the Roma academics enter the field of Roma studies, the questions tend to change. The identity talk finds its place in the background, together with elaborations of culture per se. The identity issues and culture might be interesting (and are important too) to non-Roma scholars, but I argue that when more Roma academics will enter the field, new sets of study questions emerge. It is like Stewart says, Roma knows very well who Roma are (Stewart 2017, 135–136). Yet, there are no rules on how and on what basis this recognition is done among different groups, and hence the debate is almost solely political and academic with less relevance to 'ordinary Roma'. Nevertheless, when I was part of the origin/identity-talk, it confused me. I had no data or knowledge to represent my solid arguments in this matter. As I said few lines back, the knowledge of Roma (oral) history was limited to my own kin group. Lacking the knowledge of my history and hence the origin, I listened and watched others to elaborate and manipulate who I was and where I came from.

I did the commercial DNA test. It intrigued me that much at the time. However, this is an extremely dangerous path, and it is an ethical thing to ask why to play around with and manipulate other people's identity/ies. I am seriously suspicious of those anthropologists in Roma studies who take part in such studies.

Finnish Roma as Subjects of Study – Historical and Contemporary Outreach

The Finnish Roma are shunning away from outsiders wishing to study them, maybe more strongly in previous decades than today in 2020s. Distrust is a consequence of previous studies that Roma felt were misrepresenting them and produced harmful information. One example of the 'misunderstandings' is Martti Grönfors' study of blood feuding among Finnish Roma (Grönfors 1976). In the 1970s, this study was scandalous for two reasons: it revealed Roma justice system for wider audience, and secondly, Grönfors revealed the interlocutors' identities in the very first pages, breaching research ethics and doing injustice to his informants. Some of the Roma activists mentioned in the study never returned to Roma politics or Roma work after the study was published due to the enormous conflicts within the Roma group. However, at the time Roma community in Finland was more closed whereas today also sensitive topics are more openly discussed.

Whatever the case was in 1970s, today after 50 years, I consider Martti Grönfors' work really well written if we forget the ethical aspects of the study. In my dissertation (Stenroos 2020), I elaborated these systems that are, from the human rights perspective, considered 'harmful traditions', such as the avoiding system and moving permit (see also Berlin 2015). These systems are often seen as separate 'Roma systems' without connections and dependence to the surrounding nation-state systems. The interaction, linkage and adaptation to the surrounding social orders and environments are often characterized in a way of undermining the 'realness', for instance with a concept of bricolage (see, e.g., Okely 1996). I argue that a scholar with Roma background is more likely to deploy intersectional approaches and to focus on interactions and social dynamics of and between different groups and consequently avoiding getting stuck in the Roma bubble. The point of departure for Roma scholars comes from the

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involvement with the Roma community but equally from the (academic) familiarity of mainstream society.

Martti Grönfors was not the first researcher who published a study that interests anthropologists. Sarita Friman-Korpela (2014, 21) states that the problem with Roma studies in Finland is not the lack of it but instead the nature of it: Roma studies in 20th century follow the earlier texts produced about Roma by the governing non-Roma authorities and hence the earlier texts are full of wrong information that mystifies and creates stereotypes (see also Pulma 2006). Anna Maria Viljanen (Viljanen-Saira 1986) elaborates the unbalance between quality and quantity in the Finnish Roma studies and highlights the mystifying and patronizing tendencies of previous studies. In fact, Viljanen's work from the 1970s was one of the first studies I read about Finnish Roma (ibid.). I knew, of course, the Roma customs beforehand, but this was the first time when I understood purity and impurity in the anthropological sense, concepts that are considered key elements of Roma culture and customs (Markkanen 2003; Viljanen 2012). The 1970s was the first time when Roma cultural customs were explained based on theory of the anthropologist Mary Douglas in her book *Purity and Danger* (Douglas 1966). Viljanen, and at the same time Sutherland (1975) in United States, applied Douglas' theory to Roma.

My journey in Roma studies is like any 'native anthropologists'. The journey is aptly described by Narayan as inverse anthropology: 'In some ways, the study of one's own society involves inverse process: the things you know before you apply concepts and theories that you learn' (Narayan 1993, 678), like I did with the purity and pollution. Regardless of the above, the fieldwork also taught me that the things I presumed and thought I knew were not always correct and I had to modify my understanding about Roma. The diversity amongst Roma became more pronounced compared to my previous knowledge. In other words, the process was not only about applying concepts and theories, but it was also learning new things and shifting my overall perspective. I also learnt complex ways on how ethnic Finns perceive Roma, and those perceptions took me a while to process. Often, I was quiet and just listened to the talk about Roma without saying anything. I learnt what it was, in Narayan's words, to be a 'native anthropologist'. It was not always easy.

During the process of becoming anthropologist specialized in Roma issues, I also learnt that I was not so much interested in Roma culture or cultural customs per se. These old texts, as mentioned earlier, tended to repeat the same and wrongly informed ideas about Roma, bringing in the foreground different stereotypes and mystified ways of seeing Roma. Due to the troubled way Roma were depicted, they were seen as one coherent, almost homogeneous, and identical group – and I thought this is not right, the studies are not responding to real life. Probably stemming from my frustration on earlier writings, like Vehmas' book about acculturation and group characters of Roma (Vehmas 1961), I thought I needed to break down the stereotypes and subsequently I wrote my master's thesis about cultural in-betweenness and the diversity of Roma (Stenroos 2012). The master's thesis already indicated my forthcoming trajectory in Roma studies as I started to challenge the academic views of Roma group's homogeneity in Finland. The Roma history project was a good lesson for the importance of historical contextualization. I was at the right place at the right time to learn from historians like Panu Pulma (2006, 2012), Miika Tervonen (2005, 2012a, 2012b) and Tuula Rekola (2012).

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Hey, That's my Aunt! Roma in Archives

The home of Finnish Roma history project, the Finnish Literature Society (SKS) has a wide collection of different materials on Roma, systematically collected since 1960s. Regarding traditions and contemporary culture, since 1967, SKS has over 400 hours of recorded interviews. From the beginning of 1970s, there are also approximately 10 hours of recorded material collected across Finland that focused on cultural history. ROM-SF material was collected during 1998–1999 covering 114 hours of recorded archive material from 109 Roma respondents. Together with the National Archives of Finland, SKS has established a collection of archive materials called *Suomen romanien arkisto – Finitiko kaalengo arkiivos*. Kati Mikkola and Risto Blomster (2014) have elaborated how Roma have been included/excluded from the Finnish folklore since 1800s in the SKS' collection.

The material SKS has about Roma is remarkable. Those old tapes with the interviews where Roma reminisced even back to 1940s and 1950s brought to life the experiences of Roma, sometimes with painful sentiments about poverty, but sometimes also with humorous stories containing nostalgia about the good old times. Poverty is one of the themes dividing Roma scholars: whether the idea of 'group' in case of Roma is constructed through linguistics and historical connections, or whether poverty or cultural difference create the notion of 'a group' (Tremlett, McGarry & Agarin 2014, 728). Poverty as a basis of constructing a group identity dates to the question: 'Does membership in a group that has been poor for generations constitute grounds for belonging to a separate culture?' (Lewis 1966). The notion of poverty as culture was received with criticism almost instantly (1971), and in my opinion, it was well deserved (e.g., Vossoughi & Rodela 2020).

Nevertheless, it is not to deny that poverty and hunger were strongly present in Roma lives during most of the 1900s. It was just in turn of the 1970s when Roma started to achieve their civil rights (Selling 2022), despite their being Finnish citizens since Finland's independence (1917). A group, or society for that matter, is contextual and situational, as I have written elsewhere (Stenroos 2020). Thus, seeing group identity deriving from only one attribute is a misleading idea.

Together with Roma studies literature, the archive material was occasionally agonizing to read. I came across with the interview of my oldest aunt (who had passed away several years earlier) and her husband. There was also a photo of them in the collection. It was weird. The agonizing thing was not only the poverty of the time, but also the general attitudes towards Roma. Reading and listening to the stories about going from (Gadje) house to house, looking for temporary work or just to place to stay overnight revealed the unbalance of structural power relations. I remember one story about a family who in the middle of cold Finnish winter tried to find a place to sleep and as they were denied the access to any rooms, they continued their trip in the freezing temperature, and horse perspired so much that it was covered with ice-sticks. Although those times during the war were hard and poor for all Finnish people, they were extremely hard for the Roma. Today, when I read about antigypsyism, and the critics of the concept for that matter, I can place it within historical context. For many Finnish Roma of new generations, those stories are distant. This implicates two things: the experiences of current generations are not the same as previous generations and

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secondly, in terms of Roma politics, the new generations bring new themes and new emphasizes.

The concept of antigypsyism, although an old concept, is reemerging in the academic and political debates, and therefore I will return to antigypsyism in the section of Roma politics in this chapter. Before moving to Roma politics, it is necessary to interrogate the concept of culture and its meaning especially to Roma scholars. I will elaborate why the concept of culture may be controversial and why the alternative of multiple social orders might be a more fruitful approach in Roma studies.

Roma Culture?

Is there such thing as Roma culture? The question itself is a provocative one and has a different meaning if we elaborate it in academic debate or in public, vernacular setting. Hence, the concept of culture is at the very core of anthropology and yet, at the same time the concept is very political – not always serving a purpose it was initially meant for, to separate culture from the (biopolitical) race. Consequently, the culture may have become an anti-concept. My reservations for the usage stems from its political implications.

During the fieldwork, we arranged a dialogue meeting for Roma activists, youth workers, and teachers about working with young Roma. While we planned the event, Roma insisted using the term young Romani person (*nuori romani*) instead of Roma youth (*romaninuoret*). To place the word Roma (referring to culture, ethnicity) first would strengthen the stereotype of seeing Roma as homogenized and essentialized. Whereas placing the word indicating the age first (young) would address young Roma as individuals who deal with the issues common to adolescents, and who should be met as individuals, not as representatives of their culture. Roma workers made an important point on how to address the Roma. When the attribute of culture is erasing other relevant and intersectional attributes, such as age or gender, discourse tends to dehumanize the individual, predominantly in the case of stigmatized ethnic minority group.

'Quite often the word culture blurs rather than elucidates the facts to be explained.' (Trouillot 2003, 115). The concept was detached from its theoretical and intellectual premises and used in a political domain, especially within the identity politics, and deployed harmfully, parallel to what happened with the concept of race. Said otherwise, the concept of culture became a tool for (far)right-wing supporters. In the chapter 'Adieu culture: new duty arises', Michel-Rolph Trouillot sees that the conceptualization takes its significance only in the (historical) context of its deployment, and the concept of culture took its racialist bend (outside academia) while diminishing its potentiality to explain the context of its deployment (ibid., 2003, 98–100). Although Roma activists did not know their Trouillot, the experience they had guided them to shift the indicator of culture towards the end to emphasize age instead of culture or ethnicity. The concept of culture is hence situational and contextual and should be deployed accordingly. Chaudhuri-Brill (2016, 323), on the other hand, is not saying adieu to culture but instead calls for anthropologists to contribute to the public discussions on the concept of culture.

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Culture matters, like Trouillot (2003) acknowledges, but its capability to explain things is limited. While we are engaged with the social milieus that encompasses several simultaneously manifested cultural traits, it becomes more interesting to focus on social orders, i.e., how individuals, although having their customs, values, and group identities, intermingle and interact with multiple different social domains adjusting their social and cultural performances situationally and contextually. People are living among multiple, interconnected, and overlapping porous social orders (Gershon 2019). Norman Long (2003, 190) defines social domains as follows: 'The concept of "domains" helps to identify areas of social life that are organized by reference to a central core or cluster of values which, even if they are not perceived in the same way by everybody, are nevertheless recognized as a locus of certain 'rules', norms and values implying a degree of social commitment.' The approach of multiple social orders comes into the picture when we are looking at actions that take place in different social domains. It is challenging for the ethnographer to distinguish all the social domains and social orders that people is involved with, especially when the fieldwork among people are often temporarily limited. The advantage of 'a native anthropologist' is to faster grasp the relevant social orders and see the interactions, dynamics, and multiple agencies of individuals within those relevant domains.

In Finland, among Kale Roma, the Pentecostal faith (free-church movement) is rapidly increasing. Pentecostalism among Finnish Roma have been recently studied by Raluca Bianca Roman (2016) and Lidia Gripenberg (2019). However, the pioneering work about religion as part of the cultural identity was studied already in 1996 by Tuula Kopsa-Schön (1996). Although the study was published in mid-1990s, she conducted the fieldwork during 1980s. In addition to above mentioned studies, there are circa 3000 Finnish Kale Roma living in Sweden and their religious life was studied by David Thurfjell (2013) in Sweden.

The religious domain constructs an important form of social order. Yet, this domain exists parallel to the 'traditional' social order that has been studied especially by Martti Grönfors (1976) and Jenny Berlin (2015). Here we have two important and relevant social domains of Roma social life and interactions. Nevertheless, one important domain is missing: the Finnish nation-state. Within this domain of nation-state, especially Roma politics is a subject of interest. Roma policy from the perspective of Roma education is studied by Henni Helakorpi (2020), and Sarita Friman-Korpela (2014) studied Roma politics in Finland from the historical perspective. Now we have identified three relevant and important social domains and social orders and henceforth we are in multiple social orders, which I argue, in comparison to the limitations of the concept of culture, is free from essentialist racialization. At the same time, the approach of multiple social orders enables to avoid the trap of homogenization by bringing in front the multiplicity of Roma agency in different domains.

Studying multiple social orders is a new approach, a new mindset for the ethnographers both theoretically and methodically. For Ilana Gershon, the idea that people live among multiple social orders is an assumption, a point of departure for the study. Gershon distinguishes four other assumptions involved in this type of approach. First, social orders exist in interactional moments. Meaning, which system of social order is at display at the given moment might not be on display next moment. The understanding of situational character enables the elaboration of

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multiple identities and hence the identities become fluid. Our identity never consists of only one attribute. Second, ethnographers try to figure out how people circulate across different social orders. The word circulate is important here: while circulating across porous boundaries of social orders, the table is never clean from the other interactional moments just left behind, but always something is circulated. What exists in the moments of congregational life of Roma is circulated to workplace, for instance. The moments determine the depth and scale of circulation. Third, the circulation often embeds conflicts: this is the moment when ethnographer can observe power in action whilst people try to manage the circulation. And forth, the boundaries of different social orders are not given, they are negotiated, tested, and situational. The negotiations make room to determine who or what belongs and what or who does not. (Gershon 2019, 485–489.)

In this volume, Raluca Bianca Roman writes about *Ambiguous Belongings and (Un) certain Paths: Pentecostal Kale Subjectivities in the Practice of Finnish Life*. Roman's chapter is an excellent example of how the approach of multiple social orders can be deployed. Once a Roma person is in the process of converting into Pentecostal faith, s/he is expected to leave the old sinful life behind. This includes the traditional songs: when person is in faith the expectation is no traditional songs will be performed. Performing traditional songs may cause anxiety for individual as a reminder of the old sinful life. However, there are those interactional moments when traditional songs are asked for or requested, and hence conflict at the personal level occurs. When the ethnographer scrutinizes the moment of performing the traditional songs and the anxiety involved, the circulation across different social orders is manifested and the power is at display between interactions. The circulation is scaled up and down. It takes place in short moments like singing a song but similarly, in these different social orders which ideas, values, objects, and people encounter in a larger scale and also in a more severe manner, as in the case of moving permit (see Berlin 2015). The practice of avoidance or asking for a moving permit is part of the 'traditional' system of maintaining order among Kale Roma. Among converted, religious Kale Roma, it is not considered an element of the religious order. Yet, circulations and negotiations take place regularly, and this is what makes social orders situational and contextual.

The core concept in examining social orders are power relations and hierarchies. Roma are often described as a marginalized and discriminated group without access to European power structures (e.g., Marin Thornton 2014), as being silenced and without a voice. The fellow and companion of marginalization is poverty. These are the attributes given to Roma in many academic writings. Many articles start by saying 'Roma are the most marginalized and stigmatized group in Europe'. By deploying the methodology from the social orders, we can ask where. Where are Roma the most stigmatized, marginalized, and powerless? Marshall Sahlins (2002) argue that anthropologists tend to exaggerate the importance of power and consequently culture is seen as an outcome of power relations. Still, power is a pronounced feature of Roma culture (culture understood in generic terms) that is manifested in the everyday routines. For Michael Foucault (Foucault 1980; Foucault & Rabinow 1984), power reaches into different stratifications of society; power is everywhere.

I argue that seeing Roma as marginalized and powerless is due to examining only one social domain, one system of social order, namely the bureaucratic one. Sarita Friman-Korpela (2014) argues that over the last few decades Roma politics has shifted

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from the politics of targeting Roma (i.e., assimilation) towards politics by Roma, meaning Roma are now at the position of making decisions about policies that target them. I disagree. Deciding about the frame of Roma politics is not in the hands of Roma, it is in the hands of institutions of neoliberal governance like European Union and Finnish state bureaucracy (cf. Trehan & Sigona 2009; Voiculescu 2019). Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland commissioned a study about Roma participation in decision-making processes in Finland and Baltic/Nordic countries in spring 2021. The study (unpublished by the time of this chapter) indicates that although policies on Roma in Finland are framed by governmental actors, Roma participation is well structurally organized in comparison to other border countries.

Amidst state bureaucracy, a form of hierarchy in terms of socioeconomic stratification, power position, and prestige have emerged through NGOization (Trehan 2009) as access to state institutions (e.g., Advisory Board on Romani Affairs under Ministry of Social Affairs and Health) is guaranteed for the Roma NGOS by the decree (Finlex 1019/2003, 2003). But as said, the borders of social orders are porous. Many Roma NGOs in Finland have also a religious mission, explicit or implicit. Consequently, the social domain of religious order is overlapping and interacting with bureaucratic order. The unit of belonging among Finnish Roma is the kin group. Although some of members in the kin group might follow the rules and values of religious life, not all the members follow those rules, but instead they may follow the orders of traditional justice system (cf. Roman 2017). Hence, within a kin group there may be a conflict between different social orders. Similar conflicts may occur in Roma policymaking within the bureaucratic space.

Based on my study, I argue that the 'traditional' system of social order is where power is decentralized amongst different families in different locations across Finland. The Pentecostal network of social order is more centralized with fewer actors and involving also among younger generations (not the oldest of the family). These two domains are ruled by Roma whereas the third, state and bureaucratic system of social order is determined by others (Stenroos 2020). In my study, the Roma culture is of course part of the entity, however, it is not the point of departure, nor does it overshadow other issues. Expanding from the religious and traditional domain, I scaled the bureaucratic nation-state into the equation and this addition, non-Roma led or ruled domain, offers an interesting and multilayered twist to the dilemma of circulation across different social domains. The domain of Roma politics is a fascinating mixture of traditions, religion, power hierarchies, identity politics and most of all, the governmental and institutional 'goodwill'. A will to improve is a process that has taken for three decades now without any significant improvements and hence offering delicious but occasionally painful stage for the observations of different social domains.

Roma Politics in Finland and Beyond

To examine the current bureaucratic power and the state domain of social order, it is necessary first to have a brief look at the trajectory of Roma politics in Finland. The history of Roma participation reaches back to the struggles of Roma movement in the 1940s, after Second World War. The Roma Advisory Board was established already in

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1956 by the governmental officials and pastors from the Gypsy Missio (today Romano Missio) and they strongly targeted Roma with assimilating practices, for instance by establishing children's homes for Roma children (Ahvenainen 2014; Tervonen 2012b, 188–89). The first Roma run NGO was established in 1953 by Ferdinand Nikkinen called Romanengo Staggos. The NGO tried to change the assimilation politics of the time but failed as they did not have any governmental or political supporters (Hinkkanen 2013; Stenroos 2019).

The next Roma association was established in 1967 as Finnish Gypsy Association (later Roma Association) by Ferdinand's son Reima whom I interviewed before he passed away. This time Roma NGO had governmental and wider non-Roma supporter group and managed to change politics in the Advisory Board by becoming officiating members. This was an era of global civil rights movement and Roma movement in Finland also benefitted from the political sentiments of the era (Pulma 2006).

Although there was a change in Roma Advisory Board's structure as more Roma persons got involved, Roma issues were still a compromise between different stakeholders. When Finland joined EU (1995) and EU's Roma strategies in the beginning of 2000s took the central role in Roma integration and inclusion, Finland as a member state followed the EU's strategic guidelines. Regardless, the first Roma policy was published in Finland already in 1999, a decade before EU recommended each member state to implement Roma policies (Suonoja & Lindberg 1999). In March 2021, EU Roma politics shifted their approach, as the previous integration strategy turned out to be insufficient in many sectors (cf. Rostas 2019). The current EU strategy is called EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion, and participation and with the new approach, it is expected to patch up the failures of previous strategies (cf. Rorke 2018; Sigona & Vermeersch 2012; Trehan & Sigona 2009).

With new approach in EU's strategy more emphasis is laid on antigypsyism (Alliance against Antigypsyism 2016; Guy 2009). This means that attention is drawn to the structural and institutional discrimination through equality, participation, and inclusion (Bhabha, Mirga & Matache 2017; McGarry 2017). Jenni Helakorpi (Helakorpi 2020; Helakorpi, Lappalainen & Mietola 2018) who studied Roma policies in Finland, Sweden, and Norway in educational institutes, concludes that the actual measures in Roma policies previously targeted solely Roma and neglected the relationship between Roma and rest of the society. International Roma associations (ERGO Network, ERRC, ERIAC) influenced the shift in current Roma strategy and this time Roma concerns were seriously well thought-out. Also, COVID-19 fostered the shift in Roma strategy as the pandemic revealed and manifested great inequalities of Roma in Europe (see also Stenroos, Musta & Skogberg 2023).

My journey as an ethnographer in Roma policy processes started in 2016 when I joined a European Social Fund project regarding Roma inclusion in Finland. Basically, the focus during this two- and a-half-year long project was Roma education and employment. The time I worked for the project was also the time I conducted fieldwork and collected ethnographic material. I was already involved in the planning phase of the project with some other Roma across Finland. My fieldwork covered a relatively long period, but I believe the benefit of longtime engagement is that an ethnographer can observe changes in dynamics, mindsets, and approaches in a wider spectrum. In the beginning, there were big plans about how we improve the situation of Roma by strengthening their educational trajectory and supporting them in finding

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employment. Employment is seen as a crucial tool for the Roma inclusion. In this book, the chapter of Sirkka Mikkola scrutinizes Roma women's paths to work and calls to redefine and to expand the views of what is understood by work.

We were 21 workers with Roma background from the 30 workers altogether. Our big plans did not work out as we planned; we had challenges in mobilizing Roma to participate in our planned activities. It happened just like James Scott, an anthropologist and political scientist, described: plans to modernize and develop do not work if the history, culture, traditions, values, and hopes of the target group are not taken into consideration (Scott 1998, 2009). Towards the end of project, many of us changed the approach from providing readymade social service packages, and we started to ask people what they want and how they want it (cf. Metsälä 2019). I often told other workers that I felt it strange that I am here to educate another Roma. The Roma participation arranged in this matter, in my opinion, increased polarization among Roma communities. The Roma activism and Roma associations are needed to implement Roma strategies, but at the same time, these arrangements strengthen the socioeconomic and political stratifications within the groups (cf. Trehan 2009).

The effective and meaningful participation of Roma is strengthened by the new EU Roma strategic framework as well as by the Council of Europe in protection of national minorities (see Weller 2004). No matter if we look at the local level of one EU-project or at the level of European institutions, Roma participation is a challenge with structural, political, and racialized (otherness) issues hindering equal participation (ERRC 2015; McGarry & Agarin 2014; Rövid 2012). Participation as a tool to improve democratic processes is a century old practice (Kelty 2020) and has already been an interest for academic inquiry for decades (e.g., Pateman 1970). To put participation forward with a priority status in the European level Roma politics stems from the unsuccessful attempts of improving Roma situation in a similar manner as what we did in the EU-project – without asking people what, why and how – and it did not work. In the light of participation, I suggest it would be worthwhile to elaborate multiple social orders for better outcomes. Efficient and meaningful participation require a balancing of power relations, and it is not an easy task on the nation state level, especially when the history of wrongdoings needs to be recognized (see also Vermeersch & van Baar 2017).

During the fieldwork I was particularly interested in the interaction between Roma workers and so called 'ordinary Roma', those who are not activists. I also focused on how the plans and actions were received among Roma and what kind of thoughts were at display in the planning processes. These ethnographic interests took me to the notion of multiple social orders. My inspiration for the study stemmed from the need to explain why I did not think Roma as powerless as many authors in academia have labelled them. Now I know the answer: Roma are powerless in some systems of social orders, not all.

Anthropology, Romani Studies, and Activism

A Roma background in academia, Roma studies stimulatingly sets the frame for the question about activism. The themes elaborated in this chapter, Roma authenticity, Roma scholars and 'nothing about us without us' make me wonder, as a Roma scholar,

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am I automatically seen as a Roma activist? Is there something wrong with that? Is it confining me as a scholar? I wrote in the beginning of this chapter that I was not very keen on autoethnography as I did not want to be identified solely as a Roma activist. One Roma activist said to me; 'with your knowledge about Roma issues, it makes you activist no matter you want it or not'.

In 2019, Society for Applied Anthropology hold an annual meeting in Portland, Oregon USA. During the meeting a question of 'Are you an anthropologist or activist?' was addressed several times. The participants concluded that the either/or matter of framing their work was too limiting and outdated. The anthropologists concluded: 'As social scientists who study a multitude of pressing global issues, we do not have the luxury of choosing one identity over the other. For us, anthropology and activism are not mutually exclusive, but rather necessarily entwined.' (Willow & Yotebieng 2020, 1). The boundary between generating knowledge and using it is when anthropology of activism becomes anthropology as activism (Willow 2020, 87).

My journey in Roma studies brought me to embrace all my contextually performed identities, valuing all of them equally. The context and multiplicity are something all of us scholars should pay attention to. Next chapters will provide more detailed insights into Roma studies in Finland. It is an interesting journey.

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From Rejection to Recognition?

A Brief History of the Finnish Roma

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Introduction

Despite a presence of almost half a millennium, the Finnish *Kale* Roma population has been near-invisible in Finnish historiography until recently. Yet, their past offers unique insights into the history of Finnish society and makes clear that it has never been the monoculture it is often imagined as. While the history of the Finnish Roma highlights deep patterns of social hierarchy, exclusion, and racialisation, it also points to what has in other contexts been called 'convivencia' or 'coexistence': trajectories of social, cultural and religious interplay between distinctive yet overlapping communities.

In this chapter, we aim to give a brief overview of the history of the Roma population in Finland with a focus on interaction, whether in minority politics or in everyday life. This perspective is a part of a critical turn since the 1990s against earlier essentializing views in which the diverse groups commonly labelled as Roma were perceived as static and clearly bounded 'traditional' cultures detached from the rest of the society (e.g., Lucassen, Willems & Cottaar 1998).

In focussing on interaction, we do not by any means imply a lesser importance of another, parallel story: the one formed by centuries of shared traditions and experiences within the Finnish Roma families and communities. Nor is it possible to bypass a third parallel history: that of marginalisation, racialisation, and outright violence against the Roma by the crown and the church, the later nation-state, and members of the majority population at large.

However, we want to highlight that in Finland (as elsewhere), the Roma have not formed an isolated, static, or homogenous cultural 'island'. Nor have they lacked agency in relation to the surrounding society. The fortunes of the Roma families have been intertwined with those of the local village communities and wider economic development, with each generation actively adapting to changing possibilities and constraints. There have been identifiable subgroups in different regions, with their own customs and characteristics, as well as cross-border ties and a trickle of newcomers from outside Finland. The family histories of the Finnish Roma thus reveal for example Hungarian, Danish and Russian forefathers and -mothers, as well as a broad spectrum of different occupations and social positions (cf. Tervonen 2012b).

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The chapter is largely based on our respective doctoral theses (Tervonen 2010; Rekola 2018) and work done as part of the project *History of the Finnish Roma* (Suomen romanien historia, 2010–2012). For us as 'gadje' (non-Roma) historians, studying the past of the Finnish Roma has presented several challenges. Perhaps the most fundamental have been dilemmas of research ethics and positionality, in working on a field in which those whose cultures and histories are being studied continue to be exposed to daily racism and exclusion, while those doing the studying continue to be mostly from the majority population (e.g. Kwiek 2009).

A more practical but equally essential issue concerns the availability and nature of historical source materials. Before the 19th century, archival sources are scarce both in quantitative and qualitative sense. The history of the people labelled in contemporary documents usually as *tattare* and/or *zigenare* has to be pieced together painstakingly from a diversity of sources near-exclusively created by the majority population. There are very few possibilities to access any kind of independent Roma 'voice' before the 20th century. As in the case of court records or vagrancy hearings, what is available in archives is also inherently biased, presenting conflicts rather than the normal flow of everyday life, and foregrounding points of views of actors (e.g. priests, bailiffs, landowners and governors) with an institutional bias against Roma and other itinerant people. Moreover, archival materials can potentially be socially selective in ways that are difficult to ascertain. They tend to shed light only on the life of those explicitly labelled by the authorities as *tattare* or *zigenare*—which often meant people perceived as problematic in one way or another. Families and individuals who were sedentary, engaged in what were seen as 'honourable' occupations, or otherwise seen as 'unproblematic' could thus disappear from the picture (cf. Rekola 2012; Tervonen 2010).

From the late 19th century onwards the trickle of sources turns into a flood, as Finnish nation-building led to a new kind of public problematisation of the Roma, leading to parliamentary investigations, legislative initiatives and near-daily attention in the press. Yet on the local level, Roma individuals and whole families could still be missing from parish and tax registers, making them largely invisible in many of the sources commonly employed in social history. Moreover, the perspective of the Roma themselves remained elusive in most archival sources. Exceptions to this are formed by folklore collections and oral history, the first of which date back to mid-1800s, and latter have been collected in Finland since the 1960s. These materials offer possibilities still far from exhausted by historians (Blomster & Mikkola 2014; Tervonen 2016).[1] From the early 20th century onwards and particularly in the post-World War II era, the political and religious activism of the Finnish Roma began to produce sources in which Roma appear directly as actors seeking to shape their position in the society, as well as the society itself (see for example Sarita Friman-Korpela 2014; Blomster & Raluca 2022; Raluca & Blomster 2023).

1 Even these materials are not free from uneven power relations, however. Blomster and Mikkola (2014) have illustrated the inclusions and exclusions inherent in the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society; while also oral history materials can reproduce stereotypes through their framing and question patterns and offer the interviewees positionalities reducing them into representatives of culturally defined 'other' (Tervonen 2016).

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A final challenge which we want to mention is one posed by terminology. Besides the dilemma of using the ethnonyms 'Roma' or 'Romani people' as catch-all terms for a multitude of communities with divergent histories and cultures, there are potential pitfalls of anachronism in straightforwardly projecting these terms into the past. In which sense can we talk of 'Roma' in 17th century Finland, for example, when such term or its variations might not have been used – as far as we know – either by the authorities or (all of) those labelled as *tattare* or *zigenare*? Despite enduring ethnic differentiation, the terms *zigenare* and *tattare* could also at times be used by the authorities in a broader sense, denoting mobile people more generally, not just 'ethnic Roma' (cf. Rekola 2012, 2018; Tervonen 2010). Moreover, cultural boundaries are not set in stone: throughout centuries, there have been individuals crossing them through intermarriage, adoption, or through employment as farmhands or -maids, for example (e.g., Tervonen ibid., 157–190). The question of who exactly we are talking about is thus often a necessary one to make in interpreting history, and sometimes harder to answer than it appears. As we have wanted to be transparent about terminology, we have left in many parts of this chapter the original wording of the historical records visible for the reader. As a general rule, the historical terms *tattare* and *zigenare* are thus used when referring to information derived from early modern authorities, whereas the words 'Roma' and 'Romani' are used in the modern context when the intended reference point is usually reasonably unambiguous.

Arrival and Early History

People defined as *tattare* appear in the written sources of Scandinavia from the early 16th century onwards. References to them in these early sources are extremely fragmentary and have led to speculations about their early history in Scandinavia and Finland. It should be stressed that, instead of enabling a coherent reconstruction of their past, these scant sources allow us to catch only sporadic glimpses of it.

A part of the so-called *tattare* may have arrived in Scandinavia from the British Isles where Denmark had close dynastic and commercial relations. In 1505, James IV of Scotland recommended that his uncle, Hans, the King of Denmark, receive a group of pilgrims, led by a count from Little Egypt, Antonius Gagino. In 1512, a group with the same leader appears to have stayed in Stockholm. In Sweden, the North-German terms *tattare* and *tartare* were applied to refer to these travelling people while the term *zigenare* appeared alongside them during the 17th century, becoming increasingly common during the 18th century. (Rekola 2012, 18.)

The presently known sources do not reveal how the people referred to as *tattare* first found their way to Finland, the eastern part of the Swedish Kingdom. While many presumably arrived from the western part of the kingdom, some may have arrived from the Baltic littoral. The first known references to *tattare* in Finland date back to 1559 when Johan, the duke of Finland, ordered Joen Vestgöthe, the bailiff of Kastelholm (situated in the Åland Islands), to stop *tattare* from trading inappropriately and to arrest them. Some *tattare* were held in prison in the Turku castle on the southwestern coast of Finland in the 1580s. In 1597, a group of over 100 *tattare* were said to have travelled in eastern Finland from where the bailiff of Savonlinna, Gödik Fincke, hoped to expel them to Sweden. (Rekola 2012, 18–19; Rekola 2015, 22.)

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The hospitality with which the 'pilgrims' were received in Stockholm, in 1512, soon turned into an expulsion policy. This change took place at a time when a centrally administered monarchy was formed in Sweden. During this process the state's administrative structures were developed in tandem with the strengthening of the army. Tighter social control was aimed at more efficient exploitation of the population through tax collection and military recruitment. In different parts of Europe, the reorganisation of poor relief led to a repressive attitude towards people regarded as vagrants: as local authorities took over the coordination of poor relief they began to differentiate between the 'local poor' and the 'alien poor', refusing relief from the latter. In consequence, work obligation and decrees against vagrancy were imposed (Lucassen 1998, 56–61; Lucassen & Willems 2003, 293–294). In Sweden, too, vagrancy control was strengthened in the period following the Reformation from the 16th century onwards. The Swedish Crown found foreign vagabonds particularly suspicious. As the Roma were regarded as a mobile and foreign group, they were specifically targeted by legislation. (Pulma 2006, 20–21; Montesino 2002, 38–39.)

The so-called 'hanging law', enacted in 1637, can be regarded as a culmination of the expulsion policy. In this statute (*Placat om Tartarnes fördrifwande af landet*), *tattare* and *zigenare* were ordered to leave the kingdom within three months and ten days. If found in the kingdom after this, the men were to be hanged without any legal proceedings and women and children were to be deported. The order was moderated in the beggar statute of 1642 which decreed that only those '*Zigeuner* or *Tattare*' who had proven guilty of a theft or a misdeed could be punished by death without any legal proceedings, whereas others were to be expelled from the country. The principles of the beggar statute were renewed on later decrees up until 1748, when the 'execution order' was finally abolished. (Rekola 2012, 20–24.)

However, the statute of 1637 clashed with the Swedish legal system, according to which death sentences passed by lower courts could not be executed without the confirmation by the Court of Appeal. Perhaps due to this contradiction, the law was apparently not implemented. 17th century sources indicate that people categorised as *zigenare* or *tattare* were allowed normal court procedures when being accused of crimes. Although they could be expelled from boroughs or a province, they were only seldom deported from the kingdom which was the original intention of the legislation. Quite the opposite, several sources demonstrate that they received travelling permits and protection letters from authorities. (Etzler 1944, 70; Pulma 2006, 24–25; Rekola 2012, 24–26.)

In the 1660s, there was an attempt by Count Per Brahe to settle over a hundred *tattare* down in Salo parish and Pielisjärvi. In Pielisjärvi, located in the northeastern Finland near the Swedish–Russian border, they were expected to settle on untenanted farms and guard the border. However, crop failure and severe living conditions in the wilderness made them quite soon to leave the region and search for a better livelihood. (Rekola 2012, 26–29.)

Although 17th century sources concerning people categorised as *zigenare* or *tattare* are highly fragmentary, they nevertheless cast some light on their role and status in society. Court material of this period indicates that violent conflicts between *zigenare*/*tattare* and the majority population were rare. The material also shows that unknown *tattare* were sometimes used as scapegoats: they were blamed for crimes that someone else had committed. This indicates that the former were generally regarded as

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itinerant people whose identities were not expected to be known. On the other hand, a picture of interaction emerges, as the court records include references to horse trade or sale between *zigenare*/*tattare* and others, demonstrating a level of trust between the parties involved. Hence, although people categorised as *zigenare* or *tattare* were in a sense considered 'foreign', judging from the court material, they nevertheless had a particular role and space in local communities. (Rekola 2012, 30–33.)

Towards Incorporation: Roma in Eighteenth-Century Society

During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Roma were categorically rejected by the Lutheran Church. In 1560, priests were prohibited to baptise, marry or bury those considered as *tattare*. In the eyes of the Church, they were a people without religion, with no wish to learn the Christian faith. The Church was also irritated by their alleged skills in witchcraft.[2] However, this policy changed in the Church Act of 1686 which explicitly invited priests to baptise the children of *tattare* who requested it. (Etzler 1944, 58–60, 77–79; Pulma 2006, 21–22.)

Over the course of the 18th century, also the state policy towards the Roma started to be characterised not only by rejection but also by a pursuit of incorporation. This change took place during a labour shortage following the Great Northern War (1700–1721). Vagrants began to be considered as a resource that could be mobilised for the benefit of the Crown, and workhouses were established to exploit this workforce. In the latter part of the 18th century, vagrants were used in the construction works of the Sveaborg and Svartholm fortresses that began, in 1748, on the southern shore of Finland in order to strengthen Finland's defences against Russia. This development was not specific to Sweden, as forced labour was increasingly used as a means of controlling vagrancy in different parts of Europe (Jütte 1994, 176–177; Pulma 1994, 29–32, 41).

During the time of this new population policy the division between 'domestic' and 'foreign' *tattare*/*zigenare* became a constitutive feature of the policy towards them. According to the statute passed in 1748, the *tattare* who had lived in Sweden for some time were no longer threatened with expulsion, although they were to be punished with forced labour if found roaming. Only the ones who had recently arrived in the country were to be deported. While also other foreign categories such as 'Jews, Savoyards, ropedancers, comedians, and other jesters' had been ordered to be expelled in 1741, the statute of 1748 defined that only *tattare* and *zigenare* be deported. In the latter part of the 18th century, the principles of this statute became established in the policies concerning the Roma and other vagabonds. (Rekola 2012, 36–38; Rekola 2018, 63–64; Montesino 2002, 50–52.)

From 1748 onwards, hence, general vagrancy legislation applied also to 'domestic' *zigenare* and *tattare*—yet in practice, legislation seldom directly determined their treatment. Even before 1748, the regularly repeated expulsion orders had been rarely implemented. Nevertheless, two centuries of targeted legislation and the gradually established close connection between the categories *zigenare*, *tattare* and vagrant

2 It is nevertheless noteworthy that *tattare* were apparently not accused in witchcraft trials, neither in the Finnish nor in the Swedish part of the kingdom (Etzler 1944, 67).

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influenced the way in which Roma were perceived by the authorities. Indeed, early 19th century vagrancy interrogation protocols and the prisoner lists of the Sveaborg fortress show that people categorised as *zigenare* or *tattare* were targeted by vagrancy control more intensively than the rest of the population (Rekola 2018, 94–95).

Military needs played a vital role in the process in which institutional connections were formed between Roma and the rest of society. Vagrancy legislation was influenced by a constant lack of men in the military during the era of Sweden's expansion in the 17th century. Convicted vagrants could be drafted to the military, and 17th century sources demonstrate that also people categorised as *tattare* or *zigenare* found their way to regiments. Over the course of the 18th century, military occupations became ubiquitous among the Roma men. (Hammarskjöld 1866, 51, 55, 60; Ståhlberg 1893, 5; Rekola 2012, 34, 48–52; Rekola 2023, 242–244.) The army also influenced the migration of Roma from Sweden to Finland, as the construction of the Svartholm and Sveaborg fortresses after 1748 led to a major concentration of the military in southern Finland. In the mid-18th century, most of the enlisted soldiers originated from the western part of the kingdom since the artillery was the only enlisted unit allowed to draft in the Finnish provinces until 1764 (Screen 2007, 163; Hirn 1970, 97–98, 108).

It is difficult to assess how many of the Roma soldiers were forcibly drafted on the grounds of vagrancy, and how many of them joined the troops voluntarily. It seems, however, that military career could appeal to them as an attractive alternative: it provided protection against vagrancy convictions and, at the same time, enabled the practice of itinerant occupations during army leaves that could last for months at a time. Indeed, supplementary economic activities were often a necessity for Roma soldiers, many of whom served in enlisted regiments where a pay was too low for a livelihood (cf. Magnusson 2005, 255, 293). Although military service in enlisted regiments provided legal protection, it did not guarantee a long-term secure status since former soldiers often became suspected of vagrancy. After a ban on recruiting *zigenare*, in 1805, many discharged Roma ended up in forced labour. Hence, while binding Roma to society in various ways, military policies also positioned them on the socio-economic margins and strengthened their ethnic label which was closely associated with mobility and idleness. (Rekola 2023.)

Military needs influenced the use of Roma labour not only as enlisted soldiers and workforce at the fortress construction sites but also as saltpetre boilers. Saltpetre was used in the production of gunpowder, and it formed, in Finland, mainly in the soil underlying cowsheds and stables. The forming of saltpetre was aided by softening the soil and mixing to it rotting refuse and, eventually, saltpetre was separated from the soil by leaching the soil and boiling the obtained solution. The status of saltpetre boilers was comparable to that of enlisted soldiers. (Rekola 2012, 56–57.)

Although the military played a vital role in the lives of many Roma, legal status could be acquired also through channels not connected to the military sphere. In the latter part of the 18th and the early 19th centuries, some Roma worked as travelling glassware sellers, as did many *resande* (Travellers) on the western side of the kingdom (Heymowski 1969, 40–47; Minken 2009, 272; Svensson 1993, 84). Glass factories found itinerant Roma suited for the job, perhaps in part due to the fact that Roma often had horses, which were needed on trade trips. Not unlike the military career, this activity provided Roma an official status which enabled the practise of other itinerant activities, such as horse trade or handicrafts. Nevertheless, the travelling of Roma

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glassware sellers remained a problematised issue throughout the period. (Rekola 2012, 54–55; Rekola 2018, 146–151.)

In eighteenth-century sources, Roma were often described as itinerant people who were not interested in or capable of doing agricultural work. Yet on closer examination, these administrative sources reveal that several Roma served as maids or farmhands or had a status as a tenant farmer. Roma tenant farmers did not always live fully sedentary lives; on the contrary, this status could enable the practise of itinerant occupations by providing legal protection and a shelter. Although the combination of itineracy and sedentarism varied case by case, the mere fact that Roma were taken as tenant farmers points to relatively deep local ties and the demand for their skills in local communities. (Rekola 2012, 58–59; Rekola 2018, 157–167.)

In the western part of the kingdom, some people categorised as *zigenare* or *tattare* had attained legal status by acquiring burgher rights in small towns as early as the 17th century. In complaints concerning them, they had been increasingly referred to by trade names, such as clasp smith (*häktmakare*) and wiredrawer (*tråddragare*). (Etzler 1944, 74, 85; Minken 2009, 289–296; Wilstadius 2010, 13–15.) While the discovered references to Roma burghers are rare in Finland, an individual case has been found from the latter part of the 18th century when the family of burgher Carl Palm resided in Naantali, a small town on the southwestern coast of Finland. The history of this family indicates that ethnic status was fairly persistent even in the event of upward social mobility. Many descendants of Carl Palm made their livelihood as soldiers, farriers, and glassware sellers, and the travelling of this family was constantly problematised. (Rekola 2012, 62–68; Rekola 2018, 211–240.)

Combining various economic activities was often a necessity for the Roma, given that most of these activities alone did not guarantee them a livelihood for the entire year. Glassware was sold in winter and saltpetre boiled in summer while enlisted soldiers were poorly paid and had long unpaid leaves. Indeed, several other activities that lacked official status, such as horse trade, shoeing or gelding horses, or making or repairing reeds, were often indispensable for the subsistence of the Roma. This variety of occupations points to frequent interaction between the Roma and the sedentary population, despite the regularly repeated complaints concerning the travelling of the former. Court cases from the late 18th and early 19th centuries also contain multiple indications of functional relations between Roma and non-Roma and demonstrate the rarity of inter-ethnic violence during the period. It is nevertheless paradoxical that, while Roma labour was used in different spheres, their work was constantly made less visible in discourses which strongly focused on their itinerancy and associated it with work-shyness. (Rekola 2018.)

Change of Rule

As a result of the Great Northern War (1700–1721), Russia acquired from Sweden the areas of Ingria, Estonia and Livonia as well as the southern part of the Käkisalmi province and the western part of the Karelian Isthmus. After the Russo–Swedish War of 1741–1743, Sweden had to cede yet another part of south-eastern Finland to Russia. During the 18th century, the Roma population appears to have increased significantly in the 'Finnish' areas under Russian rule, which became called Old Finland after 1809

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when Russia had taken over the whole of Finland (Rekola 2012, 74; Rekola 2018, 14–15). The area of Old Finland was incorporated into the grand duchy of Finland in 1812.

The changing of the ruler from the King of Sweden to the Emperor of Russia had probably even greater consequences for the Finnish Roma than for the peasantry in general. The tenure army was abolished and the number of enlisted regiments was considerably reduced, entailing a change for the economic patterns of the Roma. While no longer threatened with forced recruitment, they could no more turn towards the army in search of a 'legal protection' either—at least to the same extent than before. Convicted vagrants were still subjected to forced labour in the Sveaborg workhouse and the spinning houses of Turku and Lappeenranta. Moreover, the Russian Army became a temporary threat for the Roma, in 1842, as the emperor ordered that the sons of detained Roma women be sent to the so-called cantonist battalions in Russia, where Jewish youngsters were also forced. To prevent their sons from being taken, Roma sometimes dressed them up as girls. The order was repealed in 1861. (Pulma 2006, 48–50; Rekola 2012, 76–77.)

Although military service ceased to be an option for the Roma, military experience could open up new occupational possibilities in the civilian society. Especially in the latter part of the 19th century, many Roma served as municipal whippers, and Roma may have familiarised themselves with tasks related to corporal punishments while serving in the army. This would resemble the development in Denmark, Norway, and German regions where some Roma or Travellers held positions connected to police work in which military experience was valued (Minken 2009, 288). In this way, hence, the influence of military service on the lives of the Roma may have reached far into the 19th century.

Nation-Building and the Rise of 'Gypsy Question'

As a grand duchy of the Russian empire, Finland retained the 18th century Swedish legislation equating all '*zigenare*' ('Gypsies') with vagrants. Administrative acts passed in 1852 and 1865 reaffirmed the status of the Roma as a targeted category, to be treated more severely than others.[3] The Roma were thus in principle seen and treated as an illegitimate population, in a way that was a direct continuation to centuries of earlier exclusion. As of the 1860s, the Roma also started to attract new kind of public interest. Development of Finnish language press and the reconvening of the Diet in 1863 created national-level political forums. As nationalists sought to turn the grand duchy into a nation, matters of identity became politicized. 'The Gypsy question' – alongside with the so-called 'language question', 'Jewish question' and 'Sami question' – was repeatedly discussed in the Diet from 1863 onwards. The clergy demanded more efficient measures to subjugate mobile Roma to religious teaching and 'orderly' life; while the representatives of the peasant estate – in practice, the welthiest section

3 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.)

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of non-aristocratic landowners – made complaints about the alleged disorder caused by travelling Roma parties.

In 1864–1865, local priests were ordered to compile information on the '*zigenare*' in their parishes, producing information of varying accuracy on some 750 persons, including 230 children and 39 non-Roma spouses. Even as the real size of the population was estimated to be roughly twice this figure, the Roma clearly constituted a minuscule population – less than a per mill of the Finnish population – making the constant attention paid to them all the more striking (especially in times of recurrent famine and crisis; Tervonen 2012a, 139–147).

In the 1880s and 1890s, easing of the old Swedish vagrancy law and liberalisation of the social and economic regulations affected also the position of the Roma. The concept of legal protection was removed from legislation, absolving the necessity of either owning or renting a homestead, or working for those who did. Regulations targeting the Roma were removed from the Vagrant Act in 1883, and the concept of vagrancy was limited to 'ill-mannered lifestyle'. The degrees left considerable discretionary power to the local authorities, however. In practice, the bailiffs generally continued their efforts to expel mobile Roma and other unwanted people from their jurisdictions. At the Diet, meanwhile, the peasantry continued to press for targeted laws restricting the mobility of the 'Gypsies'. While the majority of the Diet rejected these proposals, the Senate founded a special committee to consider ways to address the 'Gypsy Issue' (Pulma 2006; Tervonen 2010 & 2012a; Virolainen 1994).

The so-called Walle committee convened in 1895–1900 and used as its key expert the renowned Finnish 'Gypsologist' Arthur Thesleff (1871–1920). It saw the presence of a distinctive Roma culture as a problem in itself and proposed the rooting out of the Romani language as a remedy. It recommended the establishing of state boarding schools in which Roma children would not only be taught religion and civic virtues but would also be prevented from speaking their own language. This was seen as eventually leading to the desired eradication of the Romani culture. The committee proposed the establishment of a special Gypsy office to overtake mandatory registering and the founding of boarding schools, tasked with 'disciplining [the Roma children] before the innate racial type has become an individual character'.

However, the Committee's proposals amounting to full-scale forced assimilation were deemed as too expensive and politically untenable. This was especially so in the context of Finland's struggle at the time to maintain autonomy in the face of imperial attempts at 'russify' its Grand Duchy. When the Russian empire collapsed and Finland gained independence in 1917, there was consequently no national level Romani policy. The poor, agricultural country went through a devastating civil war in 1918 which left it a deeply divided, and the Roma were too small a group to become again a national level political issue. While racial theories increasingly set the tone of official language and conceptualization of the Roma minority, this did not produce concrete eugenic policies during the inter-war period.

Instead, the Roma became a target group for Christian domestic missionary work. The Gypsy Mission (*Mustalaislähetys,* known since 1996 as the *Romano Missio*) was established in 1905 by Oskari Jalkio (1882–1952). With small resources and meagre number of volunteers, it tried to reach out to the Roma population and founded the *Kiertolainen* journal. It strove to sedentarise and assimilate them, reflecting a model in use in Norway. Despite Jalkio's paternalist goal to sedentarise and assimilate the Roma,

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he also worked from the start with Kale activists such as Aleksander Åkerlund (1893–1944), Antti Palm (1874–1939) and Sofia Schwartz (1887–1932), who did not always share his goals. Indeed, a small grassroots Roma movement formed in Karelia, with the singer, speaker and Poet Ida Blomerus (1890–1953) acting as a central organizer in attempts to improve the conditions of the Roma (Roman and Blomster 2023).

From House to House: Everyday Life and Interaction

In the latter half of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, there were roughly 2500–3000 Roma living in extended family groups that were spread across the Finnish countryside. More dense populations existed in Karelia, near the Russian border, and in the Ostrobothnia region. Majority of the Roma were itinerant for most of the year. The scarcity of rural retailing and the need for seasonal labour and specialized services created a demand for peddling, mobile labour and services. Particularly important were horse-related livelihoods (gelding, horseshoeing, and -trading) that also provided possibilities for a legal protection as parish gelder or shoer. Some Roma men acquired similarly a protected local status through working as 'parish whippers'. There were numerous other occupations, including farmhands, tenant farmers and also a small number of independent farmers.[4]

Despite this occupational diversity, it is clear that most Finnish Roma families led itinerant lives on the margins of the society, moving from house to house, and making ends meet as best they could. A basic structuring fact in the lives of most was dependency on daily exchange with the land-holding peasants for food and shelter. Like the Swedish *Resande* ('Travellers'), the Finnish Roma did not live in habitable caravan wagons, and only used tents and campsites occasionally during the summertime. For greater part of the year, most Roma were thus completely dependent on accommodation provided by the sedentary rural inhabitants, particularly during the winter, when even a single night spent outside could be deadly.

To meet this need, the Roma relied on regular exchange with the peasants along well-established routes. Despite images of random 'wandering', a Roma family's mobility was thus typically concentrated over an area of two to three parishes. Within this area, the Roma were no strangers, nor even 'customary strangers' (a phrase used by Bernard & Rao 2004). The ties between the Roma and their hosts/customers could be strong, and even 'inherited', as particular Roma families visited same peasant houses from one generation to the next. The basis of these networks was in economic activities of the Roma such as lacemaking, household work, horse-trade and horseshoeing, castrating animals, fortune-telling, etc. They were flexibly combined with a multitude of others – as well as with the telling of news and gossip – and practiced in a way that helped to establish steady relationships with the indispensable peasant houses (Tervonen 2010, 136–141).

For the most, this 'makeshift economy' worked: through the 19th and early 20th centuries, itinerant Roma were as a rule able to find shelter in 'their' peasant houses. The daily necessity of finding accommodation also produced risks, and the

4 In contrast with other Nordic Roma and Traveller groups, there were apparently no tinkers among the Finnish Roma (Pulma 2006, 69–73; Tervonen 2010, 91–127).

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co-existence with sedentary rural inhabitants demanded goodwill from both sides. There were rare but highly publicised cases in which this goodwill broke down, such as the lethal fight between peasants and itinerant Roma in Alajärvi in 1888, described by Toivo Nygård (2001). Cases such as this attracted wide attention and coloured later understanding of relations between Roma and non-Roma. However, an analysis of late 19th century and early 20th century court records suggests that inter-ethnic violence between the Roma and non-Roma was in fact exceedingly rare. In light of the position of itinerant Roma families' position in local communities, this makes sense. The Roma needed to take care of their reputation, balance of trade and good relationship with their network of friendly houses, as, for the Roma, this could be literally a question of life and death (Tervonen 2010, 148–155).

World War II and the 'Great Change'

The closing of the Russian border in 1918 severed the traditional cross-border ties of the Roma in eastern Finland, and the depression of the 1930s undoubtedly made life very hard for many. Still, in the Roma's oral narratives, the 1920s and 30s are often remembered as a 'golden era', with livelihood presented as better than in the following period of war and structural change.

World War II did indeed affect the lives of many Finnish Roma families fundamentally. Hundreds of Roma men fought in the Finnish forces both in The Winter war (1939–1940) and the Continuation war (1941–1944), experiencing comradeship and sharing of faith with their fellow non-Roma soldiers. This experience was not reflected in life outside the military or in postwar experiences, however. As the wars ended with Soviet victories, Finland had to cede vast territories to the Soviet Union. In the eastern province of Karelia, about 410,000 persons, or c.12 per cent of Finland's population had to be evacuated. Significantly, among the evacuees were nearly half of Finland's Roma population. Their resettlement in new areas was a failure, leading to social misery which continued for years, if not decades, after the war (Pulma 2006, 161–163).

While the wars were still being fought out, the control of vagrancy was harsh, and every citizen was obliged to participate in the war efforts. Disregarding the contribution of the Roma men fighting on the front lines, a law was passed in the parliament in 1943 which again automatically identified all Roma as illegitimate vagrants. Alongside special work camps for those seen as 'work-shy', special 'gypsy work camps' were also planned. Between 1942 and 1944, there were short-lived attempts to gather itinerant Roma into special work camps at Kihniö, Padasjoki, Vieremä and Lappajärvi. These camps were not resourced for their task, however, and only a small number of individuals were forced into them for short periods of time. The largest of the camps, Lappajärvi, held 24 persons in forced labour in the first half of 1943. At that point, the turning of the war against Germany changed the political outlook, and the Finnish authorities decided to scrap the plans for Roma work camps altogether. While majority of the Finnish Roma thus avoided internment into specifically *ethnicity*-based camps, many were nevertheless forced to *'normal'* work camps on the basis on the 1936 and 1943 Vagrancy Acts (Pulma 2012, 160–161).

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A major problem for the Roma was confiscating of horses for the army. At the same time, many became refugees and were cut off from their former established routes and familiar houses. In conditions of wartime rationing, access to food and other basic supplies was tied to one's place of residence and to the files of relief authorities. Many Roma consequently had difficulties in obtaining their rationing cards. Yet the authorities routinely treated them as suspects of rationing card misuse (Pulma 2012, 157–158; Tanner & Lind 2009, 129–135).

In the immediate post-war period, the Finnish economy retained its largely agricultural character, enabling many Roma families to continue making a mobile livelihood at the countryside. Slowly, however, the pattern established in earlier centuries began to fall apart. Besides the loss of Finnish Karelia in the war, economic modernization rendered many of the Roma's previous economic 'niches' obsolete. The rise of industrial mass product-based retailing, professionalization and formalization of services (for example, the appearance of licensed veterinarians), and the mechanization of agriculture made horse-based occupations slowly redundant and affected the possibilities for mobile livelihood. Despite chronic shortage of housing and interference of local authorities, many Roma families were thus scrambling to find homes in which to settle down (a development that had begun partly already before the war). This became increasingly a necessity, as the diminishing need for the Roma's traditional services meant a worsening access to the peasant houses (Tervonen 2012c, 166–185).

Finding apartment was exceedingly difficult for many, however. The situation was worst in the Helsinki metropolitan area with acute shortage of housing, where visible Roma slums with make-shift housing rose. In 1954, only a fifth of the Roma were estimated to live in 'somewhat satisfactory' housing conditions. Matters were often made worse by municipal authorities and neighborhoods seeking to prevent homeless Roma from settling into 'their' area. In worst cases, Roma families were evicted in violent Pogrom-style attacks, which took place in Kemijärvi in 1951, in Vehmersalmi and Huittis in 1955, and in Pankakoski in 1956 (Lång 2010; Tervonen 2013, 171).

During the 1970s and 1980s the Finnish Roma population was strongly urbanising. For an increasing number of families, there was a shift from local exchange networks to anonymous money-based economy. While offering new possibilities of work and education, the dependency on urban labour- and housing-markets also exposed the Roma to new forms of daily discrimination. In 1969, 90% of the Roma in Vantaa were thus found to be sheltering in conditions seen as 'unfit for living' by the municipal authorities (Siltanen 2015, 5). Perhaps even worse, the Roma also experienced frequent police harassment and outright violence (Grönfors 1979).

In this situation, many families began looking for opportunities for a better life outside Finland. In 1954, the Nordic countries created a common labour market and a regime of passport-free border crossings, and as a result Finnish Roma started emigrating to Sweden in growing numbers. By the early 1980s, there were an estimated 3,100 Finnish Roma living in Sweden. A strikingly high proportion of the Finnish Roma thus sought to escape poverty by moving to Sweden. The move proved challenging for many due to lacking language skills and scarcity of available housing around cities such as Stockholm. Still, it frequently paid off: many of the migrants quickly found work on the booming Swedish labour markets, and often experienced

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an unprecedented move from improvised housing or buildings scheduled for demolition in Finland into modern spacious apartments in the newly built Swedish housing estates (Tervonen & Jeskanen 2012).

From Assimilation policy to Recognition

The Finnish state's Romani policy became more active in the post-war decades, partly as a reaction to the visible slums that had formed on the outskirts of the biggest cities as a result of the failed resettling of Karelian Roma. In 1953, the Government instituted a Gypsy Affairs Committee to study the situation of the Roma and propose measures to improve it. Yet the framing of the problem remained racist and focussed on the goal of assimilation. The Roma were seen as a problem because of their lifestyle and 'childlike' character, and were to be settled, enrolled in the population registers and to take up paid work. With financial backing from the Finnish state and City of Helsinki, the Gypsy Missio reactivated and established new children's homes for the Roma. A policy of taking children into public custody became an important part of the state and municipal Romani policies and could in practice act as a substitute for 'normal' welfare policies vis-à-vis the Roma living in improvised housing. The children's homes, meanwhile, were (for the time being) hostile towards the Romani culture, and no Romani language was allowed to be spoken (Pulma 2006, 163–166).

Reacting to the economic plight and forced assimilation, Roma activists began to organise and make demands for improved circumstances. Ferdinand Nikkinen (1894–1971), a pioneer of the Finnish Roma activism, had organized already in 1946 a letter to the Finnish government, signed by 364 Roma, which criticised heavily the monopoly position of the Gypsy Missio in the Finnish Roma politics, and demanded similar welfare services as the rest of the population was enjoying. Nikkinen, who was a professed atheist, pacifist and socialist, was also involved in the founding of the *Romanengo Staggos,* or the Romani Union (Romanien liitto) in 1953. It sought to improve the societal position of the Finnish Roma through education, rooting out of prejudice, and cultural and vocational activities, rather than through Christian missionary activities. (Friman-Korpela 2014, 75–79.)

The Finnish state remained all but indifferent to the Roma activists during the 1950s. Romanengo Staggos was heard but did not get representation in the 1953 'Gypsy committee'. The ambitious assimilatory recommendations of the committee also met the same political indifference as earlier proposals of the Walle committee. The Finnish Romani policy remained in the hands of the Gypsy Missio and the municipal authorities. A State Advisory Board for Romani Affairs was set up in 1956, with heavy representation of the Missio, and was charged with the task of coordinating the Romani issues between different authorities.

During the 1960s, political pressure began to mount against the old assimilation policies. International developments such as civil rights and anti-apartheid movements began influencing also Finnish debates. Yet only the ethnopolitical organising of the Roma and their allies forced a real change of direction. A decisive turning point was the founding of the *Suomen Mustalaisyhdistys ry* (Finnish Romani Association) in 1967. The association's activists included radically reform-minded and often internationally networked Roma and their majority population allies, with

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prominent members including for example Voitto Ahlgren (1944–1994), Reima Nikkinen (1944–2018), Anneli Sari (b.1947) and the journalist and associations first chair, Kari Huttunen (1939–2004) (Söderman 2006, 11). The association was highly successful in gaining public attention and wrenching the political initiative from the Gypsy Missio. The Romani Association was fiercely critical of the passive Advisory Board and the Missio's children's homes. The public confrontation resulted in the dismissal of the old Advisory Board and the establishing of a new body in 1968. The new Board included representatives of the Roma and quickly prompted a series of legislative reforms. Among the most important were the banning of discrimination of the Roma in 1970, and two targeted housing laws (1970, 1976) that subsidised municipalities for improving the housing conditions of the Roma and obliged the municipalities to improve the housing conditions of the Roma to a satisfactory level (Pulma 2006; Siltanen 2015).

Developments in Finland and Sweden began to be linked on many levels (Pulma 2006, 185–189). In 1969, the Nordic Council obliged the Finnish and Swedish Governments to take joint action to solve the acute social problems of the Roma. This led to intergovernmental cooperation involving representatives of the Romani organisations. In 1972, the *Finnish Gypsy Association* was founded in Stockholm, and quickly became one of the most active Romani organisations in Sweden. In the following year, Finnish Roma took initiative in the founding the Nordic Romani Council that involved also Swedish, Norwegian and a few Danish delegates. Active pressuring led the Swedish *Riksdag* to implemented in 1976 a policy reform that gave the Finnish Roma the same rights that Swedish and foreign refugee Roma had concerning, for example, mother tongue teaching and curators' services (Pulma 2006, 185–189; Friman-Korpela 2014).

From early 1970s onwards, the targeted housing laws, better access to work, education and social security, as well as migration to Sweden began to have a positive effect on the situation of many Roma families (e.g., Siltanen 2015). As material conditions improved, the focus of Romani activism begun to shift to issues of culture and education. The word 'romani' was taken into public use at the end of 1980s; according to Paavo Lounela (1940–2022), the priest, secretary general of the Advisory Board, it was adopted from the pioneering Roma activists who had used it in the *Kiertolainen* magazine in the beginning of 20th century (Lounela 2006, 40–41). The government agencies began to regularly employ Roma experts, who gradually started to take a leading role in matters concerning them. One milestone was the selecting of the long-time Roma activist, pastor Väinö Lindberg (1938–2022) as the head of the Gypsy Missio in 1991 (with the organisation subsequently changing its name into *Romano Missio* in 1996). Another was the appointment of the teacher and activist Miranda Vuolasranta (b.1959) as the Secretary General of the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs in 1998. While the expert officials with Roma background started to become the main channel of national Romani policy, the role of the Romani organisations grew in some respects relatively weaker (Friman-Korpela 2014).

The joining of Finland into the European Council set in motion what Friman-Korpela (2014, 131–132) has called a 'human rights boom' in Finnish Roma politics. In the 1990s the Roma were officially defined as an ethnic minority, with the ensuing special rights, which was also in line with Finland's international commitments. Finland ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1994

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and declared that it undertook to apply the general principles listed in Chapter 2 to the Romani language as well as other non-territorial languages in Finland. At the same time, a Roma Education Unit was set up by the National Board of Education to develop and implement a nationwide schooling programme for the Roma community and to promote the Roma language and culture. Since 1996, The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland (KOTUS) has conducted research on the Romani language. In 1995 Finland became a member of the European Union and has actively worked for European Romani policies. In 1998, Finland ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Protection of Minorities, and affirmed the position of the Roma as one of Finland's historical minorities.

From the 2000s onwards, Finnish Romani politics has faced many old and some completely new questions and challenges. The development of the factual social position of the Roma population in Finland has been lagging behind the legally defined minority rights. New generation of Roma activists and non-Roma allies have sought to challenge discrimination in public spaces, schooling, and labour markets, and to expose painful problems such as continuing ethnic profiling by the police (e.g., Weiste-Paakkanen, Lämsä & Kuusio 2018; Keskinen et al. 2018). There has also been an arrival of completely new groups of Roma into Finland from Eastern and Central European countries. From late 1990s onwards, small groups of Slovak, Polish, Romanian and Bulgarian Roma sought asylum in Finland, but were – with exception of a small number of Kosovar Roma – rejected. Later, the expansion of the EU in 2007 enabled Romanian and Bulgarian Roma to engage in circular migration into Finland and other Nordic countries. As elsewhere in Nordic and European countries, the public and policy reception of the newcomers, labelled 'Roma beggars' in the media, has been largely negative (e.g., Tervonen 2021). Yet in 2020s, it is apparent that the Roma migrants are turning from temporary visitors into a permanent (if transnational) part of the Finnish society. While they have little previous connection with the *Kale* Roma who have been living in Finland for nearly half a millennium, they are thus forming a new chapter in the history of Roma communities in Finland. Unfortunately, it also looks likely that this new history will be overshadowed by similar exclusion and racialisation that the Finnish Roma have struggled for centuries to overcome.

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Language and linguistics

II

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Romani Language in my Life

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Introduction

In this chapter I describe the position of the Romani language in my life from childhood until the present. Romani language is my second mother tongue along with Finnish and I have been working with the Romani language since 1980. My working history as a teacher of Romani language started in the 1980s. I have also worked as a translator, translating texts such as the Gospel of Luke and the Catechism. I have written several textbooks and dictionaries as well as conducted field studies on the use of the Romani language in different domains. I have also actively participated in the maintenance and research of the Romani language in the Institute for the Languages of Finland.

When I am speaking Romani, I feel a great spiritual affinity with my community and closer to the topics I speak of. Even today I use Romani with my friends and the people close to me on a nearly daily basis. According to a field study concerning the Romani language, Romani is an endangered language, and urgent measures are needed to revive it. It is our responsibility as Roma to preserve the language, and we need to try to do so (Hedman 2009, 13). I concur with all my heart with the expression from the Native American tribe Tohono O'odham about one's own language. The following statement is by Christine Johnson, a Tohono O'odham elder, for the American Indian Language Development Institute in June 2002: 'I speak my favorite language because that's who I am. We teach our children our favorite language because we want them to know who they are.' Her thoughts impart love and appreciation towards her own language. She also realizes the responsibility of preserving this language as well as transferring it to the next generations to help them strengthen their identity. With a similar attitude of heart, I have worked for my own people and for our own language (Haboud 2009, 12–13).

Aim of this chapter is to discuss the history of the use of the Romani language from a personal and Romani teacher's perspective from the 1950s till today. I also discuss how the teaching of the Romani language has developed since the early 1980s. I will also touch on some taboos in our language related to our culture, such as when it is appropriate to use different sayings in Romani. Most people do not know anything about the rich culture of the Roma. Here, I will describe some of the Roma cultural taboos regarding proper dress codes and washing obligations. The churches have also created new kinds of challenges for language use, such as Romani language services with liturgy and hymns in Romani. In the final parts, I will cover the status and the language planning of the Romani language, and finally I will look at the international and national laws which protect Romani. I will conclude by reflecting on the future of the Romani language.

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The Romani Language in my Childhood

I was born in 1952, the year of the Olympic Games in Finland. I was raised by my Roma parents and my grandmother Amanda in Riihimäki. Our neighborhood was called Scarcity Hill among the common people as it was inhabited by several families working in the glass factory. My parents owned a small, detached house, which my father had built there. The house was small; it had a room, a kitchen, and a sauna. However, there was room for quite a surprisingly large number of people. Particularly during the town fair people visited in such numbers that there was hardly a spot on the floor to sit.

There were four of us siblings and two children of relatives whom my parents and my grandmother Amanda took care of. In childhood, the parents spoke Finnish and Romani with each other and with other Roma. Grandma lived with us and spoke fluent Romani, which she used daily. Romani was spoken when children were not wanted to understand the content of the speech. The Romani language was also often used in situations where the main population was present. Father could give behavior instructions in Romani language to us children.

At school, we didn't speak Romani at all, and it wasn't taught. With the neighbor's children, situations arose where our family's own and foster children could use Romani words where appropriate, e.g., *tinali rakli, tinalo raklo* ('funny girl, funny boy'). We children adopted the Romani language, even though our parents and grandmother did not really teach it. We learned it naturally. Language skills increased with age, through the language bath.

Especially in wintertime many relatives and friends would come to us and stay long periods of time, enjoying our 'full board'. Even in the 1960s, most Roma did not own or rent a flat. If no relatives' homes were available, they would look for abandoned railway carriages or shipping containers. Some would have to stay in the forests 'at the tent camps' if they did not find a better place. My father, too, knew how to build a tent frame from narrow willow branches, which was topped with spruce branches, paper bags, or other covers to form a shelter to sleep in. In my childhood I remember spending several nights in that kind of paper tent.

Taboos in Language and Culture

I was accustomed to the Roma code of conduct already as a child. I learned to address my grandmother as well as other elderly people formally. Hands had to be washed before supper. These traditions of the Roma concept of cleanliness and respect for elderly people were also internalized. Wearing traditional Roma clothing was a sign of one's identification as a Roma. It was not appropriate to be 'half-dressed'. One had to always wear either a cardigan or a vest over the shirt; this rule still applies. Neither the Finnish word for shirt (*paita*) nor the Roma equivalent for it were allowed; the word to be used was *bai* 'sleeve'.

My parents spoke the Romani language, but my grandmother Amanda truly mastered it. She used deep and wise sayings in Romani that stuck in my mind. *Ma tšekkar tšungra aro ǩaani katta tu mote pil paani!* which means 'Don't ever spit in a well you have to drink from!' *Duural hin alti duural ta rankani hin alti rankani*: 'It's

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always a long way to far away and beautiful is always beautiful'. *Pherdo kissik na dela gooli*: 'A full purse doesn't make noise'.

My grandma used to speak the Romani language almost without using any Finnish words or phrases. In addition, she would pronounce the Romani language so that the sibilant *-tš* sounded pleasant and melodious. Her speech was an example of the Karelian dialect. Karelian Roma considered their speech to be the 'authentic' Romani language. They used the sound *j* in the word *jeeno*, 'a man', whereas the west coast Roma used the sound *s* instead *seeno*. In written language the phonetic symbol in the word would be *dž* (*džeeno*). The Karelian Roma considered the west coast Romani dialect to be incorrect. As a child I learned the Karelian dialect, which is also called the Eastern dialect of Romani.

Even though we had our own house, we children used to travel with our parents all over Finland in the summertime. Usually, we stayed at relatives' and acquaintances' homes, but at times we had to resort to help from the main population. When travelling from one place to another, we lodged overnight in Finnish homes where friendly people took us in. My father's outer appearance was not very dark, so he usually was not recognized as Roma, which made it easier for the rest of the family to be allowed to stay. Occasionally the hosts were taken by surprise after perceiving from my mother's appearance and the traditional velvet skirt she wore that these people were 'gypsies'. They nonetheless usually let the Roma family stay, as long as it did not cause any inconvenience, and at times they even invited us to visit them again.

Finding a place to stay was sometimes difficult. Father often advised us children in the Romani language: *Aaȟȟen kaan rankanes, te laha lotiba*, meaning 'Behave yourselves so we can spend the night', or *Ma tšalaven tšii ta ma staaven trystales aro huusa beȟȟen it stedos*, meaning 'Don't touch anything or walk around the room, sit down in one spot'. The main population responded rather suspiciously to the use of the Romani language and lodging overnight was permitted on the condition that Romani was not spoken. When a person does not have a flat of their own, that person is at the mercy of others. The only way to discuss family matters and feel at home is to use one's own language. The situation was difficult. This led to tiptoeing around and avoiding our own language, whenever its usage was not allowed.

Our father advised us children while trading: *Rakkaven kaan vaure kentensa, te me vojuvaa tšeeres tšyöpi*, meaning 'Chatter with the other kids so I can do some trading'. While we chatted with the children of the house and took them to play a bit further away, my father was able to make his deals without distractions. Around World War II many Roma in Finland were still peripatetic, which made them dependent on help from the rural population. The Roma offered different sorts of services on their part in rural communities, such as providing medication for horses, manufacturing and repairing harnesses, making lace or counterpanes, or trading horses.

My father Viktor made our family living by selling different articles and even exchanging horses. All were involved in earning a living. The children were taught from an early age to 'go hawking', as they would say among the Roma. So, I also went around from house to house with my uncle selling, for instance, enamel pots, brushes, and a variety of things that my father had obtained for us to sell. My uncle advised me in the Romani language *Jaa tu kaan vaagos arre, ta me vaa to paalal*, meaning 'You go now in first and I'll follow you'. A small boy with curly hair was welcomed more easily, and my uncle used it as an aid in trading. Often the result was that the young boy's

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stuff would remain unsold while my uncle would take his things out and push the boy aside. *Jaa nikki dotta*; 'You move aside now'. One had to respect an older person, and it was not allowed to argue with them. In different situations it was a necessity to learn to understand the Romani language and grow up to speak it more and more often.

I used to wonder every now and then how people would pronounce the same Romani words so differently. For instance, some Roma pronounced the word *phallo*, 'closed', with the phoneme /f/, /h/, or even /v/. My grandmother stated that the right way to say it was with /ph-/. I obtained a good knowledge of the Romani language and often asked for her advice regarding words and grammar when working in the field of teaching in the years to come. I used to ask her in the Romani language, *Sar tumen phennenas dauva lausos?* or 'How would you say this sentence?'

As a Romani Language Teacher in Sweden and Finland

After studying theology in Dallas, I returned to Finland in 1978 and soon moved to Sweden, where my parents lived at the time. The rise of the Swedish government's Roma policy made it possible to teach the Romani language in primary schools also for Roma children who moved from Finland. Finland was lagging Sweden, and it was not until 1989 that the Romani language was officially taught in primary schools in Finland. In Sweden, I lacked a formal teacher's qualification, but I obtained it later in Finland. I could speak well Romani. At that time, when there were no textbooks for the Finnish Romani dialect, I had to prepare the learning materials for the lessons myself. The content of the teaching was more vocabulary related to practical colloquial language and grammar.

Living in Sweden from 1978 I had to familiarize myself with the Romani grammar and vocabulary for the first time. I taught the Romani language to Finnish Roma children in six different schools in the districts of Stockholm. I had altogether 40 young Roma students whom I had the opportunity to teach. The children were active, and I had to use all my skills to maintain their attention. The parents responded positively to their children being taught the Romani language. Preserving one's own linguistic roots and the Finnish Roma identity was important, particularly when they were living in a foreign country, where learning the new main language, Swedish, was difficult for the parents. Thus, most of the elderly Roma socialized mainly with the other Finnish Roma, and the language of communication was predominantly Finnish, but partly the Romani language as well. Whenever there was a topic that was not intended for the Swedish Finns' ears, the use of the Romani language increased.

The children learned Swedish in addition to Finnish, and used it to communicate with other youngsters. When the children wanted to talk about things, they did not want their parents to hear, they used Swedish, and thus the knowledge of the Romani language grew to a lesser extent. There was a great need for teaching the Romani language in schools so that the children could gain basic language knowledge.

Working in education in Sweden, we had no textbooks at our disposal. There existed some old manuscripts and vocabularies in the Romani language I could use. A well-known Roma activist in Sweden, Aleka Stobin, arranged for me to gain access to copies of Arthur Thesleff's vocabulary and grammar models. Most of Thesleff's vocabulary was very interesting and useful for creating my teaching material.

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However, our present grammar had changed so much compared to Thesleff's Finnish Roma grammar that I couldn't use it as such. Thesleff used verb tenses in a different way than Roma speak today. For example, Thesleff's forms for the future tense are *Me rakkavavaa* (I will tell), *tu rakkaveha* (you will tell) and *jou rakkavela* (he will tell). The Finnish Roma nowadays use the same model for the present tense, except of the first 'Me rakkavavaa', where 'me rakkavaa' is used in the Finnish model. Concerning Romani words there was one collection of over 3 000 words, which was compiled by a linguistic professor named Aalto and some older Roma who knew Romani very well. The booklet was called a normative vocabulary and was additional material that I extended by interviewing older Romani speakers. This was nearly the extent of the material available back then from which I prepared my lessons.

I realized how important it was to obtain and prepare teaching material in the Romani language. Even though I already knew Romani, I was not certain of its written form. As a teacher I had to delve into grammar: learn the cases, verb tenses, moods, and orthography. One problematic issue in teaching was the lack of a syllabus. I lacked a guideline for teaching a language to different age groups. The task had to be completed, but I still wonder if my pupils took anything home from the 'high-level' grammar lessons.

After returning to my home country from Sweden, I took part in a class that was organized for Roma interested in learning the Romani language in Jyväskylä in 1981. Our teacher was a Rom Viljo Koivisto, who is considered a pioneer in the field of the Finnish Romani language and whose achievements are compared to what Mikael Agricola (1510–1557) did for the Finnish language. The outcome of the course was a success, remarkable from the standpoint of learning the literal Romani language. Nearly twenty students from all over Finland took part in it. Koivisto taught us the history of the Roma as well as the Romani language. He also outlined a clear picture of Romani grammar. I gathered plenty of material to utilize in future teaching. Some years later Koivisto (1987) published a textbook with grammar for Romani studies based on the lectures he gave during the language course in Jyväskylä. Further, Kaarlo Nyman's (1980) grammar was compiled during the classes in Jyväskylä. Nyman's grammar was logically written and consisted of a large extent of information with example sentences. The summary of the grammar in question has also been helpful in my own teaching.

In the late 1980s I was asked to work as a full-time teacher in a basic course in the Romani language in Helsinki at the vocational school in Konala. About thirty students participated in the courses, enthusiastic about learning the literary Romani language so they could later pass it on and teach it to others. These courses generated basic material needed in Romani language teaching for a grammar book called *The Teacher's Guide* published in 1996 by The Finnish National Agency for Education the publishing house. Viljo Koivisto (1982, 1987) and Miranda Vuolasranta (1995) had written a few textbooks earlier. Many of the participants of those courses later had a chance to teach Romani to Roma pupils in primary schools in the late 1980s. This progress was highly appreciated in the field and lifted the status of the language.

I have worked as a teacher of the Romani language and Roma culture at the University of Helsinki in the Faculty of Arts, Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian, and Scandinavian Studies since 2012. This work has enabled us to educate new teachers in the Romani language. Several students from the main population have

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received a professional education concerning Roma culture and history. This has increased the knowledge of the Roma lifestyle over the centuries in Finland. Another teacher for Roma-related issues is university lecturer and professor Kimmo Granqvist. Students can choose courses in the Romani language and Roma history as a secondary subject. In 2020 about 60 students with a Roma background completed the basic studies in the Romani language along with the students from the main population. The goal is to expand Roma Studies into a major subject in a few years, if the number of students is sufficient.

Since 1980 I was working in an adult community college (*kansalaisopisto* in Finnish). I had the chance to work as a prison teacher for Roma prisoners in three different prisons. The prisoners were pleased to have the opportunity to study their own language. They felt more respected than before due to their Romani studies. There was a surprisingly active correspondence through letter writing in the Romani language inside the prison. The Roma prisoners were allowed to write letters to their spouses and relatives in Romani. It was no surprise that the prisoners were eager to learn more since there was a clear demand for it. In addition, the guards could not understand Romani, so the prisoners could write and talk about events and things they wanted to keep a secret from outsiders.

Church Services in the Romani Language

The first bilingual Roma church service of Finland was held in 1995 in the Maaria Church in Turku. The Church Diaconia and Social Institution (*Kirkon Diakonia ja Yhteiskuntatyö*) organized a seminar in the same context, where the general secretary of the organization, Juhani Veikkola, apologized for the anti-Roma sentiments of the Church over the centuries. Archbishop John Wikström preached the sermon in the service, and I interpreted it. I translated ecclesiastical texts and liturgies into Romani and led several services in the following years in the Roma language all over Finland and Sweden. In Sweden the first service in the Romani language was organized in a Lutheran church. In the context of the Church Assembly, Archbishop K.G. Hammar gave a speech that I interpreted along with the liturgy. Roma attended from all over Europe. At this event the Swedish Lutheran Church admitted to being discriminatory towards the Roma. Simultaneously, the bilingual service elevated the status of the Romani language. I believe these bilingual services have brought Roma people closer to the Lutheran Church. Furthermore, the situations in which the language is used expanded into spiritual areas.

After the services in the Romani language in Turku, I was elected as the executive director of the Gypsy Mission (later *Romano Missio*, or *Mustalaislähetys* in Finnish). I was the first director with a Roma background in the nearly 100-year-old organization. The work to promote the Romani language continued; throughout its existence, the Gypsy Mission has made great efforts to promote the status of the Romani language. The founder of the mission, Oskari Johansson (later Jalkio), learnt to speak the Romani language when travelling on the carts of the Roma. He, for instance, translated songs and parts of the Bible into the Romani language and wrote for a magazine called *Romano Boodos*. In its early years, in Oskari Jalkios' time, the magazine's name was still *Kiertolainen*, later *Kotitiellä*, and after that *Romano Boodos*. Around that time,

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I published two books in the Romani language. One was the teacher's guide and textbook (Hedman 1996) *Sar Me Sikjaaa Romanes – Miten opetan romania* ('How to teach Romani') and the other was *Luukasko Evankeliumos* ('The Gospel of Luke'), published by the Finnish Bible Society (Hedman 2001). The gospel in Romani was sent to over 2000 Roma; for the first time the Finnish Roma had a chance to get to know the Gospel of Luke to such a large extent in their own language.

The Status and the Language Planning of the Romani Language

The language maintenance and research work related to the Romani language have been taken care of by the Institute for the Languages of Finland (Kotus in Finnish), which has two research positions for Romani languages. I have held one of those positions as a researcher in the Institute for the Domestic Languages of Finland since 2002. The Romani research posts moved to the University of Helsinki in 2012. Since then, the Institute for the Languages of Finland has formed the Romani Language Board, whose task is to develop and maintain the Finnish Romani language. The board has developed a common orthography and grammatical recommendations for teachers and language users. Most of the representatives on the language board are Roma, thus creating a trusting atmosphere among Romany society.

I have worked as a vice-chairman on the Romani Language Board, which functions within the Institute for the Languages of Finland, and since 2015 I have served as the chairman. Since its foundation in 1997, the Romani Language Board has improved the position of the Romani language. In 2009 the members of the board planned a collective agenda concerning language policy, which was attached to the agenda of the National Policy on Roma in Finland. This agenda was formulated by the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs. The language policy agenda includes six main goals and nearly 150 recommendations on measures (ROMPO, 28). One of the most important points is that the position of the Romani language should be solidified through a language law, which would enable the gathering of the scattered single statutes under one law. At the same time, the language law would oblige a stronger commitment to enhance the position of the Roma language, by producing, for instance, TV programs in the Romani language and about Roma culture by the national broadcasting company YLE. At this moment the only existing Roma program on YLE's schedule is a weekly 15-minute radio spot (*Romanikielen kielipoliittinen ohjelma*, 17). No weekly program is produced for the Roma on TV, as there is, for instance, for the Sami and the Russians.

However, the position of the language is better than it used to be. Education and materials are an aid in learning the language, but the most effective way to learn it is to speak it at home with one's children. If this does not happen, the language will slowly die. To prevent its extinction, the Romani language must also be taught in schools and at language clubs. The media can be used as an instrument that gives us a chance to revive the language. The Romani language is our treasure and a possession that we must cherish as a valuable pearl; we shall not let it die.

I conducted a large national field survey concerning the Romani language that was published in 2009 (Hedman 2009). Only a few similar studies had been conducted before. The first was conducted in 1964 by Raino Vehmas. He was interested in

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language knowledge, attitudes towards the Romani language, and its standing. The second survey was conducted by the Social Services Department of the City of Helsinki in 1979, and the third was my own field research mentioned above. The research shed light on the poor status of the Roma language. As many researchers have stated earlier, if less than half of the speech community uses the language and unless it passes to the next generation, the language is endangered. The interviewees' own evaluation of their knowledge of the language showed that only one-third of the Finnish Roma know the Romani language well. The same number use their language only in certain situations. It is alarming that about seventy per cent do not know the language well nor use it daily. Only about twenty per cent of Roma children in basic education are taught the Romani language in schools; over eighty per cent are denied the opportunity to be taught the Romani language at school (Hedman 2009).

The Romani Language amidst Changes

Compared with the research conducted in the 1950s, many fewer good speakers of Romani exist today. In the 1950s, 69 percent of Roma adults regarded themselves as able to speak Romani almost perfectly or well, and almost 90 percent were able to function with the language (Vehmas 1961). These evaluations were based on self-evaluation. Slightly more Roma speakers mastered the language well in the countryside, but the language skills in the cities and in the countryside did not differ markedly, although in the countryside there were approximately twenty per cent more who regarded their language skills as excellent compared to the cities. The survey also shows that the language skills of young Roma have become significantly worse (Mustalaisasiain neuvottelukunta 1981, 100–101; Suonoja & Lindberg 2000, 37).

From this stage the trend has gone downwards; in the 1960–1970s parents noticed that the young only knew only some of the Romani language. The changes in living conditions and the cultural transformations over almost 40 years have inevitably led to a weakening of the use of the Romani language. A people that had had to wander over the centuries had now settled down and begun to acquaint themselves with a different kind of lifestyle. This major change in living conditions takes several generations before the transformation is completely mentally internalized. In the middle of all this 'chaos', the Romani language was somehow forgotten. The Romani language had been only a spoken language, used in oral communication. It had not been captured in a literary form. Its usage and the knowledge of the language lessened, particularly among youngsters. The vocabulary diminished and degenerated. Can we even imagine what the meaning of a language is to each one of us? It is a sad fact that when a language disappears, we lose the human wisdom and life experience that are part of its intrinsic beauty. In a certain way we lose an entire system of explaining the world—the history of a people. In the 500 years of Finnish Roma history, the state and the church have had two goals: first to exclude the Roma from society and the church, and secondly to forcefully assimilate them by completely rooting out their language and culture (Pulma 2006).

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A Language Protected by Law: Pondering the Future of the Language

In recent decades, the value of the Romani language has finally been recognized and taken into consideration in law making. The right of the Roma people to have their own language is defined in the constitution. The language rights have somewhat expanded the use of the Romani language, for example, through education. At the same time, it was truly understood that without the protection brought by the law, the language would disappear completely. So, after many meetings and discussions, and with the aid of background material, the significance of the Romani language has begun to be understood. Measures have been taken to revive it. The turning point was reached in 1995; the most important law of Finland, the Constitution, considered the right and significance of the Romani language. The fundamental rights reform written into the constitution went into effect in the beginning of August 1995. Clause 14 § 3 of the constitution decrees that 'the Sami as an indigenous people and the Roma and other groups have the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture'. The decree is also thought of as a universal protection law for minorities, obligating the authorities to allow and support, for example, the development of the Romani language and culture (Finlex 1999).

In 1995, an alteration in the day care law came into effect, according to which the educational goals set out in the day care law also include supporting the Romani language and culture. The education law was also altered in the beginning of 1995, enabling Roma pupils to study the Romani language as their native language. The same decree is included in the schooling law that came into effect on 1st January 1999 (*Romanikielen kielipoliittinen ohjelma*, 7). These laws do not, however, directly oblige municipalities to arrange teaching of the Romani language. The teaching of the Romani language is usually funded by a continuing education grant from the Ministry of Education.

The law concerning the responsibilities of the Institute for the Languages of Finland was also changed on 1st November 1996 so that its mission statement now includes the research and maintenance of the Romani language. The law concerning the national broadcasting company was changed on 1st January 1999 so that the duty of public services includes the production of Romani language services. Finland has also ratified many international treaties that have had an impact on the status of the Romani language. On 1st February 1998 the framework convention for the protection of national minorities came into effect in Finland, where Finland named the Roma as a traditional minority group. The European charter for regional or minority languages went into effect in Finland on 1st March 1998, in which Finland named the Romani language as a traditional minority language (CoE 1998).

When I was working as a researcher of the Romani language in the Institute for the Languages of Finland, the idea of reviving the Romani language and the founding of language clubs was born when I was visiting the coastal towns of Western Finland, from Turku to Oulu. I interviewed dozens of Roma and found that to revive the Romani language, we must make use of elderly speakers in language clubs.

This trip was the beginning of the first project towards reviving the Romani language, funded by the Finnish Cultural Foundation and the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland. The project was administered by the Finnish Roma

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organization *Elämä ja Valo* ('Life and Light'). The project was carried out between 2005 and 2008. The aim of the revival project was to motivate the Roma to speak and use their language. The most significant accomplishments of the revival project include the founding of six language clubs in different parts of Finland with large Roma minority populations. The elderly Roma have visited the clubs and spoken the Romani language exclusively. The use of the Romani language has increased because of the project. The project also established the first language nest in Lahti, where Roma mothers congregate daily to drink coffee and to speak the Romani language. A language nest is a day care center meant to support a linguistic minority or indigenous children, at which the children from the very beginning always speak in the minority language (Pasanen 2003). At present the operation of language clubs and language nests is administered by the working group for Roma education under the Ministry of Education, which funds the clubs and language nests.

Language dies if it is not used. One possibility to expand its usage would be to broadcast television programs in the Romani language. In my opinion there should be a national revival program for the Finnish Romani language that would also support the language policy goals in the Finnish Roma policy program.

The Finnish Romani language differs from the many European Romani dialects. Mutual understanding is difficult because of a variety of reasons, such as loan words and the influence of the majority language, which can influence the language's pronunciation and even the grammar. The final moments of the Finnish Romani language are at hand. Together we have been pondering whether we are the generation that lets the language die. No, we can neither afford to do this nor do we have the right! We owe it to our grandparents to not let the language disappear. So let us work towards this. There are many opportunities; we just must make use of them.

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Themes and Methods in Finnish Romani Linguistics

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Introduction

This chapter is an attempt to present a critical, thematic and methodological overview of the work that has been conducted on Finnish Romani Linguistics since the 18th century. The need of an overview is emphasized by the fact that the number of monographs and research papers on Finnish Romani had rapidly increased during beginning of the 21st century and the variety of methods used has rapidly grown.

The research history of Finnish Romani has been discussed at different times by most scholars who have studied the language (e.g., Bourgeois 1911; Brandt-Taskinen 2001; Granqvist 2007, 2010c; Karttunen 2011; Karttunen 2011; Pirttisaari 2002; Thesleff 1899, 1901; Valtonen 1966, 1968). Most descriptions of the research tradition are relatively short sketches that list the researchers and their main works in chronological order. The most detailed analysis of early research is included in Pertti Valtonen's licentiate thesis 'The development of the Finnish Romani language in the light of the notes made at different times' (1968, 16–61). Valtonen provides short biographies of each one of the scholars from Kristfrid Ganander (18th century) to Axel Kronqvist (1950s) and very detailed accounts their work on Romani, including structural properties of the language and its social status (Brandt-Taskinen 2001, 10). The sixteen pages long analysis of famous Ganander's prize essay 'Undersökning om De så kallade TATTARE eller Zigeuner, Cingari, Bohemiens, Deras Härkomst, Lefnadsätt, språk m.m. Samt om, när och hwarest några satt sig ner i Swerige' (1780) and the nine-page discussion on Henrik August Reinholm's materials are extensive (Valtonen 1968, 16–27, 37–45).

In an overview of the history of Finnish Romani linguistics, Granqvist (2010c) postulated a trichotomy of perspectives/paradigms of the later history of the Romani linguistics (since the latter half of the 20th century). A historical standpoint was accentuated a long time in Romani linguistics, emphasizing the relationship of Romani with Old Indo-Aryan and Middle Indo-Aryan languages, and showing a lesser interest in the synchrony of the language. At the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland, much emphasis was put on lexicography and data collection during the 1980s and the 1990s. The areas of emphasis were Fennistic, and they were also well suited to the highly material-oriented profile of the Research Institute. The connection of Finnish Romani linguistics with the Fennistic tradition was broken at the beginning of the 21st century when the core linguistic study of Finnish Romani using modern methods was initiated.

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Simultaneously with that, phonology and morphosyntax became areas of emphasis, but much work has been conducted even outside these core areas. The study of Fennoromani (a Finnish Para-Romani, a variant of Finnish) is a new area at the margin of Romani linguistics. ROMTWOL (Granqvist 2002, documented in 2005) was one the few attempts to formalize the Romani grammar into a computational model that was first thought to be useful as tool for corpus linguistics. A few recent papers have dealt with discourse and politeness strategies of the Finnish Roma. On code-switching has been prepared one unpublished paper (Granqvist 2000) and one master's thesis (Kovanen 2010). A few accounts have been also published on language sociology and sociolinguistics, discussing the knowledge of Romani, domains of its use, and its institutional status. While the history of Finnish Romani linguistics is well-documented, there has been little methodological discussion except for what has been included in individual studies to describe and motivate the chosen methods.

Wordlists and Dictionaries of Finnish Romani

The first document of Finnish Romani, Kristfrid Ganander's famous prize essay documented about sixty Romani words. Adolf Ivar Arwidsson (1791–1858) took notes on the language of the Roma he had met in 1817 in Padasjoki. His notes were published by Bugge (1858) as a part of his paper 'Vermischtes aus der Sprache der Zigeuner', which was included in the yearbook *Beiträge zur vergleichenden Sprachforschung*. In 1854–1855 A. Schiefner had written down 77 words that belonged to Finnish and Russian Romani (Thesleff 1899, 386). K. J. Kemell (1805–1832) compiled a glossary of Finnish Romani. After his death, the glossary was burnt as an ungodly work, but Thesleff (see below) later created his own dictionary (1901) based on a draft of Kemell's glossary. Henrik August Reinholm (1819–1883) was an archaeologist and folklorist who made extensive notes on the Roma and their language when he was working as a prison preacher in Viapori and at a spinning house in Turku. Reinholm's notes are currently in two folders (number 87) titled 'Finlands zigenare' at the Finnish National Museum. Folder 1 contains old publications, newspaper scraps and one sheet of paper written on both side. Folder 2 contains 892 hand-written pages (Sirkku Dölle, p.c., 19 January 2004.). Reinholm's extensive but mixed data were compiled into a glossary containing approximately 2,000 words, which were also included in Thesleff's (1901) dictionary.

Arthur Thesleff (1871–1920)[1] has been regarded as the most famous name within the study of the Finnish Roma (Valtonen 1968, 46). Because of his assets, Thesleff was elected president of the Gypsy Lore Society for three years in 1901. Most of his work was, however, ethnographical, or sociological. His only accomplishment in Romani Linguistics remains his dictionary *Wörterbuch des Dialekts der finnländischen Zigeuner* (1901), which was published in the series Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae and was the first printed dictionary of Finnish Romani. It concentrates mostly on the sub-dialect spoken in Western Finland and therefore contains numerous Germanic/Scandinavian loans but few borrowings from Finnish. It comprises 7574 lemmas, but, according to Valtonen (ibid., 48), the number of roots is about 2100. The dictionary

1 https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/4731.

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nevertheless covers almost the entire known lexicon of Finnish Romani, the size of which Thesleff (1901) himself estimated to be about 2200 roots. Thesleff's estimation does not differ much from those published later (2000–2600 roots depending on the source) (Granqvist 2007, 250).

It was said that Oskari Jalkio (Johansson) (1882–1952), who founded Suomen Mustalaislähetys (Romano Missio), was the only *gadžo* 'non-Rom' who mastered fluently the Finnish Romani language (Valtonen 1968, 51). Jalkio also collected a glossary almost as extensive as Thesleff's dictionary. The manuscript of Jalkio's glossary is owned by Romano Missio. Axel Kronqvist (1871–1956) compiled a dictionary of the western sub-dialect of Finnish Romani at the beginning of the 1950s. According to Valtonen (ibid., 54) there existed two copies of the dictionary: one was owned by a private individual in Helsinki and the other by Romano Missio. A more recent glossary of Finnish Romani was collected by Yrjö Temo. His Finnish–Romani wordlist, containing approximately 5000 words, was donated to the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland in 1984.

Pertti Valtonen published an etymological dictionary of Finnish Romani in 1972. Valtonen's etymological dictionary covers about 1,800 roots and provides numerous examples. In addition to being an etymological dictionary, it is one of the best general-use dictionaries of Finnish Romani. Pentti Aalto edited Sjögren's word list based on the language of the Roma of Ingria (Aalto 1982). At the Research Institute for the languages of Finland, the main area of emphasis was lexicography until 2001. Most of the resources for Romani were allocated to assisting Viljo Koivisto[2] in compiling the two dictionaries. From lexicographical point of view these dictionaries were very simple, nearby word-list-like. Koivisto's (1994) Romani–Finnish–English dictionary comprises approximately 5500 lexical entries, most of which are declined. About 30 percent of the lexical entries are collocations. Its 5800 examples are a valuable source for the research of Romani grammar, even though they are simplistic and uniform. The second edition of this dictionary was published in 2005 by the National Board of Education.

Viljo Koivisto's (2001) Finnish–Romani dictionary still is the largest dictionary of Finnish Romani. It comprises about 23000 lexical entries, but my rough estimate is that at least 70 percent of the lexical entries are transparent collocations translated from Finnish compound words; the choice of lexical entries should have done more critically in many cases, because many words are either marginally used or old-fashioned. No examples are provided of the use of the Romani lexical items. At the time of this writing Viljo Koivisto is preparing in co-operation with the National Board of Education a new, large Romani–Finnish dictionary that combines the data from his two previous dictionaries and contains additional lexical entries. The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland has in addition published a few papers of lexicographical content, minor glossaries (Granqvist 1997; Jussila 1997), and a reverse lexicon of Finnish Romani (Granqvist 1998). In 2004, the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland participated in the ROMLEX project lead by the University of Graz. ROMLEX is a lexical database that contains data representative of the variation in the lexicon of all Romani dialects. It almost completely coverage of the basic lexicon of the Romani language. A dictionary of Finnish Romani neologisms was published

2 https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/9175.

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by Henry Hedman in 2016; it contains approximately 3,400 new lexical items usable on several different domains.

Romani and its Grammars

Most of the early accounts on Finnish Romani aspired to describe the vocabulary. Many of them also provided furthermore some information about the structure of Finnish Romani, such as declension patterns. Ganander's prize essay contained complete present tense paradigms of the verbs *drabav-,* 'to read'*, and sa-,* 'to laugh', as well as a few preterite forms in 1.sg. Adolf Ivar Arwidsson's notes contained more complete declension and conjugation examples than those of Ganander. The case paradigms of the nouns *djeino* 'man' and *(i)samuna* 'pipe' comprised both primary cases nominative and oblique (called accusative in Bugge 1858, 144) and three secondary cases: dative, ablative and genitive. Some of secondary case forms were, however, incorrect, and overlapped with the oblique. Arwidsson's verb paradigms consisted of three synthetic tenses – the present (e.g., *me bachhava* 'I beg'), the preterite (called imperfect in ibid., 146) (*me bachtom* 'I begged'), the pluperfect (called perfect in ibid., 146) (*me bachtomas*) – and a periphrastic future (*me sote bachha* 'I will beg') that consisted of the auxiliary *sote* 'should' and subjunctive. Included was also the imperative (*bachhaba* 'beg!').

Henrik August Reinholm's (1819–1883) mixed data were compiled into a glossary containing grammatical notes on nominal and verbal inflections and approximately 2000 words. He was the first one to also present pronouns inflections. His case labels followed rather Finnish grammar tradition: as a result, some of Romani cases got multiple labels: the oblique (e.g., *gress* 'horse:OBL.SG'), for instance, was called by him both allative and adessive, the ablative (e.g., *gres-ta* 'horse:OBL.SG-ABL') was called both ablative and elative. Adessive, on the other hand, also corresponds to both dative (*man-ge* 'I-DAT.SG') and locative (*man-de* 'I-LOC.SG'), too, which had already begun to amalgamate. He also included a number of analytical cases expressed with PPs, such as the illative (*ar khangari* 'to church'), inessive, (*ari stania* 'in stable'), and caritive (*bi gresgo* 'without a horse').

Reinholm's notes were also the first ones to include complete paradigms of the copula *s-/h-* 'to be' in the present and preterite tenses; some of the preterite forms are of particular interest: the 1.sg. form *sommahe* 'I was' retaining the conservative Early Romani allomorph of the remoteness marker *-ahi* instead of the usual *-as*, is similar to ones attested in some of the contemporary Southern Central dialects. The 3.sg. form *sasasi* 'he/she was' is interesting, as being one of the few examples of 3.sg. in Finnish Romani combining both the person ending *-as* and the remoteness marker. Reinholm provided distinct paradigms for primary verbs and reflexive verbs. The tense system comprised in indicative the present tense (*me djabb-á* 'I sing-PRS.1SG.FUT = I sing'), imperfect (*me djabb-ás* 'I sing-PRS.1SG.REM = I sang/I would sing'), preterite (*me djabb-id-umm-as*, *-ommas* 'I sing.PRT-1SG-REM = I sang/I have sung/I had sung') and an analytical future based on the auxiliary *moste* 'must' instead of Arwidsson's *sote* (*me moste djabb-á* '('I must sing-PRS.1SG = I will sing'). No analytical past tenses were yet included in the paradigms, although perfect forms consisting of a copula and an athematic participle occurred in Reinholm's own notes. Subjunctive (Reinholm's

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conjunctive) (*me djan-a te djabb-á* 'I know-PRS.1SG.FUT COMP sing-PRS.1SG = I know how to sing') and imperative (*djabb!* 'sing! (sg.)', *djabb-en!* 'sing-PRS.2PL = sing! (pl.)' were also included.

Arthur Thesleff (1899, 391) emphasized the conservative character of Finnish Romani compared to other Romani dialects in Scandinavian and even Spain. Furthermore, he discussed language contacts and contact induced changes and loan adaptation patterns in Finnish Romani. At end of his dictionary *Wörterbuch des Dialekts der finnländischen Zigeuner* (1901) he published the most extensive by then nominal and verbal paradigms. In these were included 18 nominal classes (15 thematic and 3 athematic ones) and 9 verb paradigms. Thesleff's case system was complete and comprised both primary cases nominative and oblique (accusative) and all secondary cases including even the vocative, even though was already in Thesleff's time highly volatile. Thesleff's case paradigms were notably the first ones, in which analogical changes characteristic for Modern Finnish Romani manifested themselves: the suppletive suffix *-mnas* was lost in the inflection of abstract nouns in *-ben* (*cha-mnas-k-o* > *chāben-es-k-o* pro 'food-OBL.SG-GEN-M'), nom.pl *fōr-e* 'town-NOM.PL' was mentioned besides *fōri*. Case inflection of adjectives was discarded from his paradigms, while evidence of it was still found in written sources from the latter half of the 20th century. Thesleff's verb paradigms distinguish in indicative between the present tense (called future by Thesleff, *phurjuvāva* 'I get old'), and preterite (Thesleff's perfect, *phurjudom* 'I got old'). The old imperfect (*phurjuvas* 'I got old') and synthetic pluperfect (*phurjudommas* 'I had got old') were called Potentialis I and II by Thesleff, probably reflecting their non-indicative status at the turn of the 20th century. Thesleff was the first one to mention the athematic participles in his paradigms.

Oskari Jalkio (Johansson) (1882–1952)[3] largely replicated Arthur Thesleffs' paradigms at the end of his glossary of Finnish Romani but mentioned nevertheless the Finnish-like initial stress and the loss of definite determiners and referred to the decline of the vocative. Based on Jalkio's data, Bourgeois wrote a small grammar of Finnish Romani called *L'esquisse d'une grammaire du romani finlandais* (1911), that was intended for foreign students of the language. He also pointed out the loss of definite determiners except when combined with prepositions (*praalo phuu* 'on earth', *api enga* 'on a meadow') in the same way Jalkio did. Bourgeois provided more data of paradigmatic leveling of nominal inflections than Thesleff (1901), e.g. the variation in obl.sg *kent-os* ~ *kent-es* 'child-OBL.SG', *ras* ~ *raien* 'lord.OBL.SG', NOM.PL. *kent-i* ~ *kent-e* 'child:OBL.SG', and in obl.pl *ran* ~ *raien* 'lord.OBL.PL'. He was the first one to adopt the case label "oblique" and to mention about more transparent feminine inflections that had begun to gain ground: *butti-ja* pro *but-ja* 'work-NOM.PL', *butti-jen* pro *but-jen* 'work-OBL.PL.' and about the extension *-on-* in the oblique of athematic adjectives and pronouns. His verb paradigms comprised the indicative tenses present–future (*v-a-a* 'come-PRS.1SG-IND'), preterite (perfect, *av-j-om*/*j-om* 'come-PRT-1SG') and the synthetic pluperfect (*av-j-omm-as*/*j-omm-as* 'come-PRT-1SG-REM'), while Jalkio's materials published in *Kiertolainen*, *Maailmankiertäjä* and *Vaeltajakansa* (there were issued by the Gypsy Mission. (Mustalaislähetys), today's Romano Missions, the publisher of *Romano Boodos*) about the same period included multiple occurrences of analytical perfect and pluperfect. The old imperfect (*v-a-as* 'come-PRS.1SG-REM') now

3 https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/9271.

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explicitly is a conditional. Bourgeois probably was the first one who used the modern term "subjunctive" to refer to forms such as *te v-a-a* 'COMP come-PRS-1SG'.[4]

The first academic theses on Finnish Romani were compiled in the 1960s by Pertti Valtonen at the Institute for Asian and African Studies at the University of Helsinki. His master's thesis discussed the Indo-Aryan words in Finnish Romani (Valtonen 1964) and his licentiate thesis the diachrony of Finnish Romani in the light of notes from different time periods and his own fieldwork (Valtonen 1968). His licentiate thesis contains a concise grammar of Finnish Romani. A lot of discussion is devoted to Finnish influences on different levels of languages. It was the last account that referred to case inflection of adjective attributes and probably the first account that mentioned the modern analytical past tenses perfect and pluperfect. Valtonen also had started to prepare a PhD thesis on Indo-Aryan elements in Finnish Romani, but he never finished it.

The structure of Finnish Romani became subject to intensive study along with the 'linguistization' of Romani studies in Finland at the beginning of 21st century. At the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland, the perspective was shifted from the traditionally Fennistic lexicography and data collection into core linguistic work, when linguistically trained actors took over responsibility. During the same period, Romani also gained a foothold at the Department of General Linguistics at the University of Helsinki, which had already before that long shown an interest in studying minority languages such as Sign language. Along with what I wish to call 'linguistization', the knowledge of Finnish Romani and number of publications and presented papers have increased dramatically. Since 2000, two master's theses have been prepared on Finnish Romani grammar (Brandt-Taskinen 2001; Pirttisaari 2002), one large monograph has been published (Granqvist 2007) and others are forthcoming or under preparation, two university-level textbooks of Finnish Romani were published (Granqvist 2011, 2012c), more than thirty scientific articles have been published, and some eighty papers have been presented in national or international scientific forums.

Methods of experimental phonetics (FFT-spectrograms, FFT, LPC, F0) have been used to shed light on the sound system and prosodic features, and models of nonlinear phonology such as autosegmental phonology, feature geometry and Optimality Theory have been utilized to describe the phonological system of Finnish Romani (e.g., Granqvist 1999a, 2004, 2007). Helena Pirttisaari (2002) applied in her master's thesis on Finnish Romani participles a synthesis of IA, IP and WP morphologies. She was the first one to apply a structuralist model and Natural Morphology (Dressler 1977, 1985; Mayerthaler 1981; Wurzel 1984) to Finnish Romani. A functional-typological paradigm was adopted in her work (Anttila 1972; Coseriu 1974; Givón 1985a, 1985b; Greenberg 1966; Haiman 1985; Martinet 1962; Pirttisaari 2002). The same models were used as well as in her later publications (Pirttisaari 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2005). Granqvist (2006a, 2007) applied Stump's (2001) and Spencer's (manuscript.) Paradigm Function Morphology to Finnish Romani. The work leading to a syntax monograph described was initiated in 2007 and is still on-going. The study of Romani syntax is conducted within the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1993, 1995). Several theoretical issues are related to case stacking in secondary/oblique cases encoded by

4 Digitalized original manuscripts in The Finnish National Library's *Zingarica*-collections: https://fennougrica.kansalliskirjasto.fi/handle/10024/85841.

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agglutinating suffixes of historically postpositional nature to oblique suffixes which derive from Old/Middle Indo-Aryan case markers, and to suffixaufname[5] in the genitive.

One of central themes of the early 21st century was thematic/athematic dichotomy of the lexicon and grammar. A peculiarity of Romani is that thematic (pre-European, oikoclitic) lexical items belong to different declension classes than the newer athematic ones (European, xenoclitic). The dichotomy had been discovered in European Romani Linguistics already by the end of the 1970s but became more widely discussed at the turn of the 1990s (Bakker 1997; Boretzky 1989, 1994; Elšík 2006; Hancock 1995; Kaufmann 1979; Matras 2002), but its partial significance for Finnish Romani was only late realized in Finland. Pirttisaari's master's thesis (2002) was the first account of Finnish Romani to discuss more thoroughly this dichotomy and its partial loss.

As part of the currently on-going project 'Finnish Romani and other Northern dialects of Romani in the Baltic Sea area' (2013–2016), led by university lecturer, docent Kimmo Granqvist and co-funded by the University of Helsinki and the Kone Foundation Language Program, a comprehensive descriptive grammar of Finnish Romani will be published. The grammar will focus on the morphosyntax of Finnish Romani, but it will also describe the phonetics as well as descriptive and historical phonology. Also, as part of the project, Zuzana Bodnárová (Charles University Prague) worked on her PhD thesis on Hungarian Vend Romani at the University of Helsinki in 2014.

A significant progress was achieved in specifying the picture of contemporary Finnish Romani and understanding and explaining linguistic variation and structural changes in diachrony. For instance, the number of documented nominal inflection types increased into 45 (25 thematic and 20 athematic ones) in Granqvist (2007), but all but sixteen of them were shown to result from modern analogical changes due to loss of various linguistics oppositions. Attempts to compile a scientifically adequate grammar met for many years difficulties partially due to the reluctance of the Roma members of the Romani language board.

Historical Linguistics and Dialectology

Thematically close to the study of the Romani grammar is the study of its history. For a long time, a historical standpoint was accentuated in Romani linguistics, emphasizing the relationship of Romani with Old Indo-Aryan and Middle Indo-Aryan languages. In Finland, many studies have emphasized the conservative nature of Finnish Romani compared to many other Romani dialects. While Ganander was nondependent and indiscriminate in his etymologies, he was still able to trace several lexical items back to their Scandinavian and Greek etymons, and to postulate the Asian origin of the Roma. But he failed to point the Old Indo-Aryan origin of Romani lexical items such as *De!* 'give!' and *dives* 'day', which he assumed to originate from Latin. Reinholm, who possessed remarkable linguistic insights, compared Romani words with Sanskrit lexical items, e.g., the word *beresch* 'year' with skt. *warscha* [*varṣa*] (Valtonen 1968,

5 Suffixaufnahme refers to forming a genitive construction, whereby a genitive noun agrees with its head noun.

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42). Bourgeois (1911) and translating his work in Finnish Jalkio (1913) mentioned the genealogical relationship of Romani with Prakrit and Sanskrit as well as other New Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Marath and Gujarati.

The historical-comparative paradigm that had been established in Europe during the 19th and early 20th century had a strong impact on studies of Finnish Romani still in the latter half of the 20th century. The most prominent name of Finnish Romani linguistics in the 1960s and the 1970s was Pertti Valtonen, who had studied Indo-European linguistics at the University of Helsinki. His main works, a licentiate thesis (1968) and a PhD thesis that unfortunately remained unfinished, were dominated by the same kind of methodology that Sampson (1926) used in his grammar and dictionary of the Romani of Wales. Valtonen's licentiate thesis described diachronic changes in Finnish Romani in the light of the documented history (since 1780 onward) but was focused on more recent developments comparing Thesleff's (1901) paradigms to results based on his own field work. His unfinished PhD thesis was largely a description of historical phonology and morphology of Romani, in a strikingly similar way as in Sampson (1926). The emphasis was on early historical developments on Indian soil.

The focus has been also on developments that have taken place from the 15th century onwards in Northern Europe and later in Finland. These are interesting from the point of view of contact linguistics and Romani dialectology. Valtonen (1968, 213–240) compared Finnish Romani with the dialect spoken by the Swedish Tattare but also discussed the relationship between Finnish Romani and Romani dialects spoken in Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Britain. The position of Finnish Romani in the group of Northern dialects has been discussed by Bakker and van der Voort (1991), who considered the place of Finnish Romani within the family of Romani dialects controversial.

The historical standpoint has not been completely abandoned in modern Finnish Romani Linguistics, either, even though the research is better characterized as study of variation with orientation in General Linguistics (Granqvist 2010c). Both Pirttisaari's master's thesis (2002) and Granqvist's monograph on phonology and morphology of Finnish Romani (2007) contained lots of etymological information and many references to diachronical developments starting from Old Indo-Aryan languages.

At the beginning of 2000s, Henry Hedman coordinated the data collection for the Romani Morphosyntactic database. The RMS database project was launched by the University of Manchester in 1998 with the aim of compiling a comparative description of Romani dialects in electronic form. Finnish Romani data were collected by Katrim Hiietam and Helena Pirttisaari. Some of the Finnish Romani data were inputted in the database by the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland in 2010.

Using the RMS database to gain access to more data on Sinti and the Northeastern dialect group, more systematic accounts on the position of Finnish Romani within its own group of Romani dialects in different time have been presented by Granqvist, dealing with lost features in Finnish Romani (2010a) and Finnish Romani in the periphery of Northern dialects (2010b). The relationship of Finnish Romani with Northwestern and Northeastern dialects is included in Tenser's and Granqvist's (2015) paper. The choice of the diacritic features studies follows a commonly adopted method a recent Romani dialectology (cf. Elšík 2006; Matras 2005; Tenser 2008). Thus, following the ideas of Thomason and Kaufman (1988) and Chambers

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and Trudgill (1998, 99), grammatical features are considered more relevant than phonological or lexical ones in studies of closeness of dialects, because grammar is borrowed more reluctantly and as a result of a longer and more intensive contact than phonological features or lexicon that are more easily borrowed from language to another (Tenser 2008, 267). Furthermore, according to a scale that uses synchronic similarity to analyze diachrony, proposed by Matras (2005, 9) and Elšík (2006, 99), an innovation that is shared in different dialects is a stronger proof of their closeness than the loss or retaining of a feature that used to be shared. A common innovation presupposes diffusion, which requires a direct contact between the speakers; diffusion is not needed to able to retain a feature that already exist in the dialect. (Tenser 2008, 268.)

In 2012 and 2013, Granqvist published two articles discussing the history of Finnish Romani (Granqvist 2012b, 2013b). Granqvist is preparing a monograph that is intended to contain a more complete presentation of the historical development of Finnish Romani starting from Indian soil but emphasizing the documented history of Romani in Finland (since the end of the 1800th century until today) and several dialectologically/typologically diacritic features in the interaction of the gradually growing and heterogeneous Roma population of Finland and under the pressure of the dominating Finnish language. The diacritic features studied are partly conservative ones and partly innovations; some of the conservative features are Early Romani option selections.

Contact-Induced, Language-Internally Motivated Changes in Finnish Romani

The contact of Romani with Finnish has been one of the areas of emphasis in Romani linguistics in Finland along with the study of grammar. The contact of Finnish Romani with Scandinavian and other Germanic languages and Finnish has been referred to in every account on since Ganander's prize assay. The Russian contact influence has been denied since Thesleff (1899, 393).

Ganander (23 §) was able to correctly point a number of Finnish and Swedish loan-words. The number of Swedish loan-words was considered several hundred by Thesleff (1899, 392). Bourgeois (1911, 4) argued that as many as 50 percent of the Finnish Romani lexicon is of Swedish origin. A similar estimation was published later by Valtonen (1979, 122), who argued that up to 45 percent of the total vocabulary is of Swedish origin. Thesleff (ibid., 391) was the first one to point out the Swedish-induced selective palatalization of *k*, *kh* and *g* into *tš* and *dž* in front of *i*, *e*, e.g. *kerko* > *tšerko* 'bitter', *kermo* > *tšermo* 'worm', *kher* > *tšeer* 'house'. *š* > ɧ sound change that gradually spread out from west to east was widely discussed by Ariste (1940, 215).

The Finnish influence was regarded by Thesleff (1899, 393) as insignificant: according to him, the fluent speakers of Romani used very few Finnish lexical items. The picture that Finnish did not influence significantly the Romani was maintained by Bourgeois (1911), according to whom Finnish Romani had not borrowed anything from Finnish; the Finnish influence was regarded by him merely phonological. Jalkio, who published Bourgeois' grammar as a Finnish translation in *Kiertolaisen kesälehti* in

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1913 commented on several changes induced by the contact of Romani with Finnish, for instance, the loss of definite determiners and partial gender loss.

Paul Ariste (1940, 206–207), on the contrary, considered the Finnish influence to be far more extensive than was assumed by Thesleff and Bourgeois. Pekka Sammallahti (1972, 31) regarded the Finnish loan-words as occasional but emphasized on the other hand the manifold structural influence of Finnish. Massive lexical borrowing was seen by him hamper the use of Romani as a secret language, but retaining the Romani grammar was not necessary for this purpose. Valtonen (1979, 122–123) pointed similarly out that 'Finnish has a far-reaching effect upon Romani in so far as phonology, morphology and syntax concerned. – – In morphology one may notice the borrowing of declensional and conjugational endings from Finnish into Romani'. A detailed analysis of Finnish structural influence was included in his licentiate thesis (1968, 153–154, 169–172, 246–256). Matti Leiwo (1970), too, discussed the polarization of Romani consonants due to the Finnish interference.

More recently, focus has been on making the picture of contact-induced changes more precise and understanding the causation of changes. The Finnish influence on Romani phonology has been discussed in most detail by Granqvist (2007) and on morphosyntax by Granqvist (2013b). In some of his papers, Granqvist has applied van Coetsem's (1988, 2000) framework, in which transfer phenomena are divided into borrowing and imposition. A central finding published by Pirttisaari (2004) emphasizes the significance of bilingualism and the morphosyntactic similarity of Finnish Romani with Finnish despite Romani morphology and characteristic features of Romani are preserved. Granqvist (2008, 2010a) spoke similarly about shared abstract structure of Finnish Romani and Finnish. The phenomenon of metatypy (Ross 2007) – copying Finnish structure using resources of Romani – has been referred to at least by Pirttisaari (2004) and Granqvist (2008, 2010a). Granqvist's and Pirttisaari's (2003) paper of lexical stratification in Finnish Romani was a seminal paper dealing with phonological and morphological loan adaptation.

In addition to contact-induced changes, another type of language changes that have been subject to lots of the discussion in connection with Finnish Romani Linguistics and Romani Linguistics in general, constitute changes that are language-internally motivated. Elšík and Matras (2006, 35–43), who looked at language change in Romani dialects from point of view of markedness, defined several criteria for asymmetries: loss/increase of complexity, erosion, differentiation, extension, extra-categorical distribution, exposition (and borrowing). One of the internally motivated changes most thoroughly discussed in connection with Finnish Romani is the development of a 'new infinitive' because of simplification of the subjunctive paradigm. Brandt-Taskinen (2001) explained in her master's thesis this typological change as a spread of the least marked 3sg form into the entire paradigm. However, the relevance of markedness has been denied in internally motivated changes, too. Following the ideas of Haspelmath (2003, 2006), Granqvist (2007) mostly discarded the concept of markedness due its polysemy, but instead sought to explain changes other factors such as the easiness of language production and processing, frequency of use, distinctiveness and parsability. For the nominal paradigms, he (2007, 378–386) claimed that frequency of use is the sole factor that explains the directionality of the tendencies of change without controversy, while other factors such as type frequency

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(Bybee 1985; for Finnish Romani Pirttisaari 2003, 2004b) in fact seem to lack explanatory power. While two thirds of Finnish Romani nouns belong to athematic paradigms, morphological exponents that belong to thematic paradigms are more likely to generalize.

The subdivision of Finnish Romani into western and eastern sub-dialects was already noticed by Ganander (1780). Most of the known distinctive features of sub-dialects (except for the *š* > ɦ sound change induced by the contact with Swedish and possibly the regional variation in the realizations of *dž*) were due to different (phonological) contact influences of Finnish dialects: *a terminus ante quem* for these are Reinholm's notes from the 1860s. Many lexicophonetic features that distinguish the sub-dialects from each other have been listed by Valtonen (1968, 246–50). A few dialect maps representing the main differences between the sub-dialects were presented by Granqvist (2002a) in a conference paper; some of the results have been published in Granqvist (2002b, 2007). The maps were created based on spoken Romani material at the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland.

A much more precise picture of Finnish Romani dialectology and in general the dialectology of Northern Romani will be provided as part of the currently on-going project 'Finnish Romani and other Northern dialects of Romani in the Baltic Sea area'. One of goals of the project is a dialectological atlas of Northern Romani dialects used in the Baltic Sea area (covering Germany, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Finnish Romani in Sweden, and Northern Russia). The atlaswill be an approximately 250-page English-language manuscript with feature distribution maps of Northern Romani dialects, including the following linguistic domains: phonetics and phonology, morphology, lexicon, and lexical phonology. Commentary sections will address specific map categories, isoglosses, and inter-dialect relationships.

Attrition

The attrition of Romani has been paid attention to at least since the end of the 19th century (e.g., Ariste 1940; Granqvist 1999a, 1999b, 2002b, 2007; Leiwo 1999; Pirttisaari 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005; Sammallahti 1972; Thesleff 1899; Valtonen 1968). From language-internal point of view attrition has been discussed most thoroughly by Valtonen (ibid.), who postulated the concepts of 'upper' and 'lower' style analogically with 'Deep Romany' and 'Poor-Romany' in Smart and Crofton (1968 [1875]) and the language of the 'baro vandringan' and the 'tikno vandringan' in Iversen (1944, 17). In Valtonen's (1968, 253) binary opposition, the 'upper' and 'lower' styles differ from each other as for phonological features and the number of Finnish loan-words. He had furthermore specified twenty features characteristic for the 'lower' style: generally speaking, the extent of Finnish interference is higher in the 'lower' style at every level of language than in the 'upper' style, the structure has been simplified (e.g., the case system has been reduced, and the verbal paradigm exhibits more syncretism and analogical changes, the prepositions are used to a lesser extent, new innovations have emerged). Valtonen (1968, 252) considered the 'lower' style to be language of young and peripatetic Roma, but Gilliat-Smith (1967, 57) estimated, on the other hand, that the 'upper' style only was spoken by 1/300 by all Finnish Roma. (On 'lower' and 'upper' style as notions, see also Pirttisaari 2002, 21.)

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The strong attrition of Romani is considered evident by Vuorela and Borin (1998, 61) in the current situation, in which Romani is used as means of everyday interaction to a continuously diminishing extent. In line with Valtonen (1968), they pointed out similarities of the phonological system with Finnish among the young Roma, the loss of the inherited case inflection and spontaneous borrowing from Finnish. They argued that knowledge of Romani is a continuum, in which the degree of preserving original Indo-Aryan material and the amount of Finnish interference correlate with speaker's age, place of residence and other variables. According to them (Vuorela & Borin 1998, 69), the amount of linguistic variation, on the other hand, correlates with the knowledge of Romani, so that the language used by the older Roma varies less than Romani spoken by the younger Roma with less solid insights in the language.

Granqvist (2013a) largely confirms Vuorela's and Borin's (1998) view of gradually increasing variation, while competence in Romani has decreased among the Finnish Roma. Granqvist's analysis uses similar speaker profiles as Paunonen (2005) applied to describe spoken Finnish in Helsinki and Pirttisaari used for Romani in 2005. The speaker profile-based analysis provides a much more pessimistic view of the changes that have taken place in the Romani language competence of the Roma than the surveys based on self-evaluation. There is a significant amount of variation both between the speakers and within the idiolects. A large language internal variation is typical for minority languages in general. When the language is endangered, the language skills vary a lot between speakers and every speaker creates his or her own individual grammatical system. A massive variation is a symptom of crisis in a language community. (Paunonen 2003, 239–242.) Both attriters and competent speakers can be found in every age group except perhaps the children, but the qualitative change is huge compared to Romani samples from the 1960s. Forms considered ungrammatical by most Romani language masters are frequent; these error types were largely absent from Romani in the 1960s.

Finally Finnish Romani has been characterized as moribund in some recent studies (Pirttisaari 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 178; Vuorela & Borin 1988, 69). According to Krauss' (1996) criteria that are based on language acquisition by children, Finnish Romani would have been expected to have died for long time ago, which, of course, is not the fact (Borin 2000, 75; Vuorela & Borin 1998, 60). Krauss' criteria do not work with Finnish Romani because of the different mechanism of acquisition (at school or as a conscious process as a part of growing up) (Borin 2000; Vuorela & Borin 1998, 60–61).

Fennoromani and Roma Finnish

Vuorela and Borin (1998, 61) were probably the first ones to claim that Finnish Romani is gradually changing from an inflected language into a variety of Finnish, in which lots of Romani-based lexicon is inserted into the Finnish morphosyntactic frame. I call this language form "Fennoromani" analogically to Angloromani of Britain and the Scandinavian Scandoromani, which are well-known Para-Romanis in the Northern Europe (Hancock 1992; cf. Vuorela & Borin 1998, 68; Matras 2010, 27–30; on Para-Romanis also Pirttisaari 2002, 16–17). The term Fennoromani was introduced by Hancock (1992) and is referred to by Vuorela and Borin (1998). I thus

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distinguish Fennoromani (Finnish) from inflected Romani. Many Roma interpret Fennoromani simply as a mixed code, occasionally even as an attempt to produce Romani.

The contact varieties of Finnish and Swedish are being studied most extensively by Mirkka Salo (2015, 2016, 2017) as part of the project 'Finnish Romani and other Northern dialects of Romani in the Baltic Sea area'. Salo's PhD thesis (2021) deals with the use of Romani-based lexicon and structures in Internet discussions with Finnish as a matrix language.

Currently Finnish Romani is living a intermediate period, during which in many idiolects inflected Romani, Fennoromani (Para-Romani/Finnish) and Finnish are intertwined. Characteristic for the discourse of the Roma is also the co-existence of these language forms so that those more fluent in inflected Romani may mix all of them, while those less fluent in Romani tend to use at least Fennoromani and Finnish. To conclude, Fennoromani has developed into a cryptolect through a similar process as other Para-Romanis as assumed to (Hancock 1992; cf., Matras 2010: 27–30; Vuorela & Borin 1998, 68).

Romani-based lexicon has its important function as a strengthener of group-internal solidarity. Romani-based lexical items that are incorporated in Finnish discourse tend to be incomprehensive for outsiders in a similar way as in other Para-Romanis and group-internal vocabularies. One central function of the Romani-based vocabulary is exactly to hide from outsiders the most important or sensitive content of the interaction for instance when warning others, guiding their behavior or doing business (Hedman 2009, 32–33). Similarly to other Western European Romani dialects and Para-Romanis, Finnish Romani and Fennoromani have developed special terms for nationalities, places and authorities such as police and judges. Along with *petško* 'police' that is assumed to already known by the main population, new terms have been created figurative-associatively utilizing the semantic contents of existing lexical items: 'police' is called also *juklo* < 'dog' and *oksos* < 'bull'. (Matras 2010, 23–24.)

Romani-based lexicon has been carried into Finnish lects spoken by other people than the Roma, too, in the same way as Romani words have entered the vocabularies of other peripatetic groups, slangs of different social groups and standard languages even in Britain, Germany, Romania, and elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, and Turkey (Matras 2010, 25). Finnish Urban Slang dictionary (SUS 2010) contains the Romani-based words *fuula* 'excrement', *hyöli* 'cigarette', *kaajee* 'non-Rom', *kaalee* 'Rom', *mankua* 'pester', *minhu* 'cunt', *peelo* 'penis', *petsko* 'police', and *räkli* 'girl' and a few words derived from these words. Romani-based words (such as *tinalo* 'stupid') are common in prison slang in Finland (Lipsonen 1990).

Corpora and Computational Linguistics

The early interest in Finnish Romani manifested itself chiefly in collecting lexical items and providing notes on the grammar; the data were preserved in manuscript form. The academic interest in Romani increased in general in the 1960s and 1970s, at which point Pekka Sammallahti, Matti Leiwo and Pekka Jalkanen began to tape-record the language. Also, at the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland, much emphasis was put on data collection during the 1990s. The areas of emphasis

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were first defined by people with a Fennistic background according to the scientific ideals that prevailed in Fennistic studies at the time so that they were also well suited to the highly material-oriented profile of the Institute. This work resulted in several corpora of both written and spoken Finnish Romani. The written language corpora include all the old glossaries, Thesleff's (1901) dictionary, gospel translations, Romani news presented by the national broadcasting company YLE; Viljo Koivisto's articles published in *Romano Boodos* were also obtained while producing the reader *Drabibosko liin* (Koivisto 2002). The spoken Romani corpus has been transcribed from tape-recordings, partly done in 1995 by Mr. Juhani Pallonen (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland) during a Romani language seminar, and partly by Mrs. Hellevi Hedman-Valentin in 2000–2001. The transcription used is quite broad, as the aim is mainly to provide material for lexical and syntactic studies. The size of the resulting corpus is approximately 168,000 words. The number of informants is 89 (46 women and 43 men). The informants live in 32 municipalities in Finland, so that both sub-dialects of Finnish Romani are equally represented. The age of the informants varies between 16 and 87 years. The interviewers are teachers of Romani, with good skills in Romani. The interviewers used, however, a learned and quite formal code, which was practically monolingual (primarily Romani). While all interviewees have a relatively good proficiency in Finnish Romani, in the material there are several indications that Finnish is for them the better-known language. For the data collection was of essential importance the fact that the Roma themselves, acted as collectors, as their opportunities to access the language as members of the language community are substantially better than those outside their own community.

Another corpus of Finnish Romani has been compiled by Lars Borin. Borin's corpus (approximately 110,000 words) consists mostly of written language: 170 articles published in *Romano Boodos*, Viljo Koivisto's (1982, 1987) textbooks, his translation of the gospel of John (1971) and the spiritual song book *Deulikaane tšambibi* (1970), the memorandum of the Orthography Committee *Mustalaiskielen normatiivi sanasto* (1971) and the transcriptions of Paul Ariste's (1940) interviews that he carried out in the 1920s. (Borin 2000.) As part of the currently on-going project 'Finnish Romani and other Northern dialects of Romani in the Baltic Sea area', many Romani dialect samples have been collected in Poland, the Baltic countries and Finland using the RMS ("Romani Morpho-Syntax") Questionnaire and transcribed.

Computational Linguistics have never been really an area of emphasis in Romani Linguistics in Finland. The idea of implementing computerized tools for corpus linguistic was borne out to overcome some of the difficulties in the analysis of the newly collected corpora. Kimmo Granqvist programmed a hyphenation program for Finnish Romani in 2001. It was a small MS-DOS command line utility that could read and output ASCII text files. An experimental parser based on Kimmo Koskenniemi's (1983) two-level model was implemented in 2002 at the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland. The ROMTWOL parser comprised a complete rules component, lexicon and a word grammar that closely resembled Schieber's (1985) PATR-II. The rules component stood for the morphophomenic transformations of lexical forms. It comprised 27 two-level rules, implemented for the computer as finite-state-automata that acted in parallel. The lexicon consisted of 1075 nouns, 156 adjectives and 490 verbs; 50 categories were defined in it, most of which were related with the inflection. While the parser could successfully analyze grammatically and

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orthographically correct texts, it encountered great difficulties dealing with any real Romani material due to the huge amount of variation (and code-switching in spoken language).

There were originally plans add more Parts-of-Speech in the lexicon, implement more declensional types of nouns, and to enrich to the rules component by adding articulatory reduction rules to allow more variation in the orthography of the input. This would have been necessary for the analysis of real corpora, but furthermore proper disambiguation tools for the needs of automatic syntactic analysis would have been required. These plans never materialized, and the development of ROMTWOL ceased. The only time the ROMTWOL parser truly used was in 2002, to create a Romani–Finnish vocabulary that was published at the end of Viljo Koivisto's reader *Drabibosko liin* (2002). More recently, there have been discussions about producing a spell-checking module for Finnish Romani in co-operation with computational linguists, but until now the work has not been engaged.

Pragmatics

While the Finnish Romani community is egalitarian within age groups, it is markedly gerontocratic between age groups (Viljanen-Saira 1979, 159ff). The gerontocratic subdivision of the community is not absolute, but relative based on the age difference between the persons interacting with each other. It is assumed that an age difference of five to six years suffices to place two people into different categories, forcing the younger one to adopt various kinds of avoidance rituals. The authority of the old people serves to secure the continuity of internal structure and cultural inheritance of the Roma community. The gerontocratic subdivision defines the position of everyone within the community, and it also dictates the behaviour pattern he/she is expected to follow. Violations of the norms will cause at least loss of personal authority and honour and jeopardize even the honour of the entire family group. (Viljanen-Saira 1979, 159ff.)

Due to the age hierarchy, the discourse of the Finnish Roma shows interaction patterns that are inherently asymmetric. The politeness strategies of the Roma have been studied by Granqvist (2009a). According to him, the politeness strategies applied by the young Roma are both lexical and textual. The younger Roma address the older formally by means of the second-person plural (occasionally third-person singular), and often use enclitic particles to soften their messages, but more sophisticated strategies such as polite pessimism, conditionals and if-sentences are more rare than imperatives in the discourse of the Roma. Older Roma may reciprocally use the singular. (Granqvist 2009a; Granqvist & Viljanen 2002.)

Other, less salient asymmetries occur in the choice of speech acts and turn-taking mechanisms as well as in the syntax. Young people in particular are expected to address old people in a polite and respectful manner, whereas the elderly are permitted to reprimand the younger even directly using harsh language. Young Roma use a more formal code when addressing old people than within their peer group.

There are also several topics that are taboo-laden: any topics related to sexuality and reproduction, intimate relationships, marriage, and childbirth, as well as certain types of diseases (Granqvist & Viljanen 2002). These cannot be overtly referred to

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as they are shameful in intergenerational and intergender discourse. It is not only lexical items with tabooed referents that are avoided, but interestingly also items with a phonological form that bears a resemblance of taboo word. Complete avoidance of any reference to linguistic taboos is usual among young Roma in the presence of older people. Occasionally, direct intergender dialogue is avoided by means of conveying the message through complex chains of mediators. (Granqvist & Viljanen ibid.)

The interactional constraints affect more strictly the formal ('externalized') properties of communication than the actual discourse function or communicative intent. In many cases, semantic equivalence can be reached more covertly and in a socially acceptable way by means of syntactic variation or periphrases, or paralinguistically (Chambers & Trudgill 1998, 50; Granqvist & Viljanen 2002). A common strategy to gain acceptance for expressing tabooed things is to mark them less overtly in the discourse. Both intersentential code-switching and overt warnings of tabooed matters and whispering may co-occur with other marking strategies. Different phrases function to warn the hearer about tabooed matters that will follow and legitimize otherwise shameful expressions. (Granqvist & Viljanen ibid.)

Despite of its saliency in any discourse in Romani, code-switching has not received much attention in Finnish Romani linguistics. The first paper discussing intrasentential code-switching from Romani to Finnish and vice versa was presented by Granqvist at the 7th International Conference on Romani Linguistics in Sofia in 2000. The theoretical framework chosen for the paper was the Matrix Language Frame Model proposed by Myers-Scotton (1993). The paper suggested that most of the switches from Romani to Finnish consist of indeclinable adverbs or nominative forms of nouns with no case/number marking, inserted in positions determined by the Romani grammatical frame; declined Finnish items was shown to usually retain the Finnish grammatical frame. Petra Kovanen's (2010) master's thesis (Finnish language) in 2010 largely confirmed Granqvist's earlier findings, but furthermore brought an interactional and discourse analytical point of view to the Finnish Romani linguistics and provided new insights of the functions and consequences of the code-switching and the shift of Finnish Romani into a mixed code. Kovanen's master's thesis was also a valuable contribution on the question of demarcation between Romani and Finnish. More recently, bilingual speech of the Roma has been discussed by Adamou and Granqvist (2015) in a paper comparing Finnish and Thrace Romani.

Finally, metaphors used by the Roma have been discussed in a paper by Granqvist (2012a). In the paper, emphasis is laid on the socio-cultural grounding of the metaphors. Most of the discussion is devoted to the Finnish lect used by the Roma, because the inventory of metaphors is in Romani much more limited and more difficult to access.

Language Sociology and Sociolinguistics

A few surveys have been conducted to analyse the language skills of Finnish Roma. All surveys were based on structured questionnaires. The Roma were asked to evaluate their own skills in the Romani language. The first survey was conducted by the Social Investigation Bureau in 1954. The data comprises interviews of 3,569 Roma or persons living with them. According to survey, 71 percent of the adults could speak

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Romani, and 81 percent at least understood it. Raino Vehmas' (1961) dissertation was sociology, but also included some comments on the Romani language and its state of preservation. In all, 89 Roma living in Saarijärvi and Viitasaari regions and 88 Roma living in Helsinki were interviewed. According to the statistics published, 60 percent of the adult Roma mastered Romani perfectly or well; 89 percent of the Roma came along in Romani (Vehmas 1961).

Helsinki Welfare Agency investigated in 1979 the social and cultural conditions of the Roma living in Helsinki. 185 household heads or their spouses were interviewed; the size of the total Roma population living in these households and covered by the survey was at least 550 people. Of the Roma household heads, who lived in traditional Roma marriages, about 55 percent reported that they know Romani so well that come along with the old Roma. Approximately 88 percent of the interviewed Roma could get along in everyday conversations. However, the Roma how indicated that they were unmarried, divorced, widowed, or lived in mixed marriages, had much worse command of Romani. (Helsinki Welfare Agency 1979.)

The latest report was prepared by Henry Hedman (2009), who examined the Romani language usage, the domains of its use and language attitudes. The study was based on interviews with 306 the Roma in Finland and Sweden during 2004–2005. The study suggests that 62 percent of the Roma should master Romani at least satisfactorily, but only about one third have good or excellent skills (Hedman 2009, 24).

Granqvist (2013a) suggests that, in fact, according to the previous surveys dealing with the Roma's skills in Romani, there has been no significant changes in any age-group in the percentage of the Roma who tell that that they master the language at least satisfactorily. One reason, why surveys based on self-evaluation fail to provide a true picture of language skills of the Roma, is that what is understood as a good knowledge of Romani varies in time and characteristically confirms with the language competence of the oldest members of the Roma community. This manifests itself in the comparison of speaker profiles. Similarly, to the speakers of Angloromani (Matras et al. 2007, 3), many Finnish Roma consider themselves as semi-competent in Romani. Usually, they can name other, often older Roma, whom they consider to be more competent and fluent speakers. Even the most fluent speakers of Romani often refer to deceased Roma who used to know Romani far better than them and who used to speak deep Finnish Romani.

Domains of Use

The Romani language has been considered by Valtonen (1968, 241) as a language of home and other group-internal communication, but it is also an important symbol of the cultural identity of the Roma. According to Hedman (2009, 31), up to 40 percent of the Roma who were interviewed used Romani at home, and a majority of the Roma who mastered Romani, had heard it being used at home. On the other hand, almost every informant also spoke Finnish at home (ibid.).

Valtonen's and Hedman's view, however, partly contradicts with observations made as early as by Thesleff (1899, 472), who argued that Finnish was the actual mother tongue of most Roma. According to him, Romani was little used by them,

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but nevertheless all adult Roma knew how to speak it. Ariste (1940, 206–207) stated in a similar way that at all the Finnish Roma still mastered Romani to some extent, but their actual language of interaction was Finnish. Similarly, Vehmas (1961, 188) pointed out that a clear majority (81 %) of the Roma who were interviewed used Finnish mostly or exclusively in their discourse. A further proof of the limited position of Romani as a home language is its late acquisition by Roma children/adolescents, which would have been very unlikely if Romani were used at home and between the Roma on a regular basis. Thesleff (1899, 472) already claimed that the children learn to speak Romani first at the age of ten years. Vuorela and Borin (1998, 60–61) and Borin (2000, 75) also have paid attention to the fact that Romani is either acquired at school or as an conscious process as a part of growing up to a member of the Roma community. According to them, the Finnish Roma master solidly first at the age of twenty.

The position of Romani as a secret language of the Roma was already referred to by Thesleff (1899, 472), who mentions that the Roma spoke Romani between each other and when did not wish to be understood by other people. Thesleff argued that the Romani language was considered *sanctum sanctorum* of by Roma, and nobody should deceive it under penalty of death. The use of Romani as a secret language has been also discussed by Ganander (1780), Valtonen (1968, 241–245), Grönfors et al. (1997, 175), and Pirttisaari (2002, 17–18). In line with Bakker and Kyuchukov (2000, 30), Hedman (2004, 45) combined the function of Romani as the secret language with cruelties against the Roma in different times. Hedman (2004, 46) was also inclined to see the secret language use of Romani to be attributed to the politics of the church and the activities of researchers that has at times been harmful to the Roma. But the use of Romani as a language understood solely by the Roma has proved useful as means of discipline, exhortations, warnings, and pieces of advice as well as in contacts with authorities, and when doing business (Hedman 2004, 43–45; Karimus 1969, 142; Tolkki 1951, 264–266; Valtonen 1968, 214).

Granqvist (2006b, 44) pointed out that result of the extension of the institutional rights of the languages spoken by the minorities during the latter of the 1900s was that new linguistic domains emerged: what had previously been private and solely restricted to the Romani community now became public as a language of literature, state officials and church. The public use of Romani was seen to contradict the traditional point of view, according to which the language should be safeguarded from outsiders. This contradiction still manifests itself as a fear or shyness of many Roma to use the language publicly. Printed materials still encounter resistance from the behalf of some traditionally thinking Roma.

When discussing the literary tradition of Finnish Romani, it is important to provide it a definition first. Granqvist (2009b) has defined the literary tradition of Romani to only cover works intended to be read and used by the Roma themselves, thus, separating the literary tradition from the research tradition and notes made of the language in different times. He considered the literary tradition in Romani a new and limited phenomenon, that can be well compared to the first stages of the development of Finnish literature. While attempts to create teaching materials for Romani were made as early as at the end of the 19th century and the first printed book in Romani (Oskari Jalkio's spiritual song book *Romanenge gilja*) was published already in 1939, most of the published literature dates to the 1970s and onwards.

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Given Granqvist's narrow definition, thirteen books have been published in Romani in Finland (2224 pages in all) before 2007; notably 70 percent of all printed books have been produced within the last fifteen years. The published literary merely includes three gospel translations between 1970 and 2001, two spiritual song books, six textbooks for different school levels and two dictionaries (one is published in two editions, two more dictionaries are under preparation at time of this writing). Belles letters are generally lacking, but individual poems have been published in poetic and the Roma's own journals; several fairy tale books are, however, being translated into Romani. Newspaper and journal articles have constituted an important part of the literary tradition: these have published by Roma NGOs in *Romano boodos* (since 1970), *Zirikli* ja *Elämä ja Valo*, but also in *Latšo diive*s issued by the National Board of Education.

Status of Romani

Granqvist (2006b) discussed the instutionalization of the language rights of Roma in terms of Andrássy's (2005) idea of hierarchical organization of institutionalization of language rights. Andrássy distinguishes four levels of the institutionalization of a language: 1) an official language; 2) recognition and protection of a language as an official minority language or an official regional language; 3) prohibition of discrimination and right to linguistic privacy or freedom; and 4) prohibition of the use/negative institutionalization. Granqvist (2006b) concludes that in Finland the institutionalization of Romani has undergone a development from level 4 (negative institutionalization) to level 3 (protection of linguistic privacy). The legislation today protects extensively the position of Finnish Romani, but actually the rights guaranteed by the law do not materialize or they are not fully utilized.

The institutional status of Finnish Romani is thoroughly discussed in the Romani language policy published by the Romani Language board in 2009 (Lindstedt et al. 2009). Central in the language policy is the claim for special Romani language law, in which the currently scattered regulations would be brought together. Furthermore, the language policy seeks for wider possibilities and more national resources for instance for translating and publishing literature in Romani, establishing a cultural center and a museum, and developing the language teaching in all levels of education. The contents of the language policy have been later summarized in Hedman (2009) and Lindstedt (2010a, 2010b).

Summary

In my chapter, I have discussed the history of Romani linguistics in Finland since the end of 18th century. I have attempted to summarize some of the main findings from the point of view of methods and theoretical significance. Some of the research areas I have focused have a long tradition in Finnish Romani linguistics but have been recently approached more theoretically (such as the study of the place of Finnish Romani within the family of Romani dialects, contact-induced and language-internally motivated changes, study of attrition). Some fields are new: these include

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the study of Fennoromani, the Finnish Para-Romani, computational linguistics, the discourse and mostly even sociolinguistic and language sociological work. Many of these have been motivated by language obsolescence, changes in domains of use and increasing public use, or extension of linguistic rights.

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Subjectivities and membership

III

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Ambiguous Belongings And (Un)Certain Paths

Pentecostal Kale Subjectivities in the Practice of Finnish Life

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Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on the complexities of Pentecostal belonging for what has been defined, officially and unofficially, as a traditional Romani community, the Finnish Roma.[1] Since the 1960s–1970s, a large number of Finnish Roma have started converting to Pentecostalism and other Evangelical movements in the country—among which also the Free Lutheran Church, a charismatic movement that grew out from the Lutheran state church of Finland (Hedman 2012; Lindberg 2012; Mäkinen 2014). This religious revival of the 1960s and 1970s was not unique to the Finnish Roma (in fact, religious revivalism occurred simultaneously among majority Finns and Finnish Roma were but one segment of the population that converted to Evangelical Christianity since). Likewise, this process of religious transformation is connected to the wider spread of Evangelical movements among Roma across the world, with the development of what some have called global Roma Pentecostalism (see Fosztó 2006, 2009; Gay y Blasco 1999, 2002, 2012; Lange 2002; Ries 2011; Thurfjell & Marsh 2013).

What is distinctive, however, is the much longer historical connection between Roma religious revivalism and the setting up of several religious missions and organisations in the country, which were aimed at (and for) the Roma community in Finland. Among these, worth mentioning are Romani Missio ry. (est. 1906; former Mustalaislähetys ry., or the Finnish Gypsy Mission) and Elämä ja Valo ry. (est. 1964, or Life and Light; under its former name of Vapaa Evankelinen). While there is no space to go in depth into the history of these two organisations (for more on this, see Blomster & Roman 2021, 2022; Roman 2021; Roman & Blomster 2023), it is noteworthy that, in Finland in particular, the history of Roma conversion to

1 Finnish Roma, or Finnish Kale as they would refer to themselves, are the national Roma community in Finland, numbering approximately 10.000 people (the numbers are but approximations, as no exact data currently exists), and representing less than 1 per cent of the total population of Finland. They are believed to have arrived in Finland sometime in the 16th century, most likely from Sweden (Pulma 2006; Tervonen 2010) and have resided in the country ever since. Though Finnish Roma live spread out across the territory of the country, the vast majority are said to live in the South of Finland, and primarily in the areas surrounding the capital city of Helsinki. My fieldwork therefore was mainly in the south of Finland, in the capital area of Helsinki, and in the Savo area of the country, in Eastern Finland.

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Evangelical movements goes back to as early as the start of the 20th century, rather than connected to the spread of Roma Pentecostal faith in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Roma-focused agenda of these (initially non-Roma-led) Evangelical organisations also paved its way within the community, with the shaping of some of the main Roma social and religious activists in the country, such as Ida Blomerus, Ferdinand Nikkinen and Aleksandar Åkerlund (for more on individual stories, see Blomster & Roman 2021; Roman 2021; Roman & Blomster 2022). These historical connections are complex and deserve a focus of their own. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to emphasize the impact of conversion among individual lives and through individual life stories of contemporary Roma believers in Finland. In particular, in the past as in the present, the changes that conversion have brought about in the lives of Roma who converted to Pentecostalism in the latter part of the 20th century were striking both for those inside and for those outside the community: not only did individual members convert but soon after family members followed in the path of the initial believers. Presently, though they are still a minority group in the Finnish Pentecostal congregations they attend, Finnish Roma are an active, visible, and engaged group of believers and Pentecostalism has come to be a definitive marker of their social life.

In the sections that follow, my aim is to explore the ways in which religious conversion changes the lives of those coming into faith, alongside the uncertain and ambiguous pathways of coming into/and exiting religious life. For this purpose, by looking at elements of 'being in faith' (*uskossa*), and the uncertainties in what seems to be a certain path (belief in God), I engage with theories from the anthropology of Christianity and question the validity of a 'break with the past' approach to Pentecostal religious conversion among the Roma. The process of conversion, as described in the experiences of Finnish Roma believers I met, raises further questions on how changes in religious position and social engagement can be understood in connection to each other and how members of what is still perceived as 'marginal' communities in Finnish society problematize their own sense of societal belonging through religious belonging.

This chapter, part of my PhD research (Roman 2017) and based on more than fourteen months of ethnographic fieldwork among Pentecostal Finnish Roma, thus comes as an attempt to reflect on some of the main issues rising from the stories I collected and the experiences I witnessed. Moreover, it is a step in understanding how those who have become my closest friends make sense of the changing environment around them, seek their own place in the world and, through it, embark on a quest of reaching out to others.

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Grassroots 'Traditionality'[2]

I have been surprised every day from the first day of my fieldwork by how recurrently, the Finnish Roma individuals I met challenge and complicate stereotypes of what a Roma is/should be (or at least from what one is taught through mainstream media) and the complexities embedded in their everyday lives. From anthropology to political science, much literature concerning Roma groups in Europe has been devoted to underlining and connecting elements of marginality with spatial or symbolical segregation (Abu Ghosh 2008; Scheffel 2005; Stewart 1997; Sutherland 1975), focusing on the elements which distinguish and position the world of the Roma in opposition to the world of those they called the Gadje/Kaaje/non-Roma (Gay y Blasco 1999; Okely 1983; Stewart 1997, 1998) or emphasizing the struggles to attain some form of social, political or economic significance in the societies in which they live (van Baar 2010; Benedik 2011; Buckler 2007; Grill 2012; McGarry & Agarin 2014; Sigona & Trehan 2010). Elements of 'distinction' or 'custom' have featured heavily within some of these works, as they featured heavily within the communities these scholars have worked with.

Yet, as much for the Roma as for the non-Roma, lives are not lived in isolation or complete autonomy from the socio-economic environment which shape them. Finnish Roma in particular live their lives embedded in 'mainstream culture' and contribute to the shaping of that culture through the most elementary aspects of everyday life. Finnish Roma live and experience life among the majority of Finnish society, reside in non-segregated housing, and are involved to different degrees in their local communities, beyond the confines of the Finnish Roma society.

Women, especially, engage daily with non-Roma members of their Pentecostal congregations, participate in social work through the mediation of their churches, are connected to the social media (using social networking sites such as Facebook, TikTok and Instagram), enjoy the benefits of Finnish saunas and the smart phone (with its applications and games, almost an extension of their bodies). At the same time, and whilst clearly enmeshed within the workings of Finnish life, most of my Finnish Roma friends maintain the strict rules of conduct considered characteristic of the community itself, searching for a sense of meaningfulness in present society and stability and certainty in their believing/religious life. In the next sub section, I will detour briefly into the meaning of this 'traditionality', as it links to contradictions and complexities of their religious belonging.

2 I use the term traditional to refer to the members of the community I have worked with because it links two elements characterizing the Roma in Finland. They are officially recognized as a traditional minority in the country (having access to language protection, minority representation within governmental bodies and so on). But they also, and perhaps of most relevance to this paper, present themselves as 'traditional' through practices and customs.

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The Dress and the Rest

Dress code is perhaps one of the most visible signs of Roma belonging, particularly for the women. They must wear a heavy, velvety dress, which may weigh up to 15 kg, lacey/silky blouses (*röijy*), and high heel shoes, sometimes up to seven inches high. Younger women must, ideally, wear long black skirts and a blouse that completely covers their skin. The men are not exempt either from the standards of dress code, although the rules may be more lenient in their respect: very often men would wear a neat black and white suit, often still sporting brands such as Mercedes, BMW on their backs, with long black boots (in the past) or, more recently, shiny black shoes. Whatever the gender, the skin must nevertheless always be covered, and they must abide by this dress in the presence of elders or in community events.

Dress codes differentiate not only between Roma and *Kaaje* (the name they give to the non-Roma), but also between those who can be seen as fitting in within the traditional (often the religious) community. Choosing to abide by the dress code (whether it be the adult woman dress or the young girl dress) shows commitment not only to cultural norms but also to specific understandings of respect towards kin and family. Exceptions from the rule may be tolerated (in cases of employment, for example), but a proper moral dress is always expected.

At the same time, it is not just dress but behaviour that accompanies dress codes which make for a 'good, rule abiding Roma'. Behaving with 'shame' (*hävetä*) and showing 'shame', where necessary, are central in being a 'good Roma', acting as a form of manifesting respect and giving honour to one's community. A 'good Roma', I was also told, knows this, and knows when showing shame is appropriate (note: it is not modesty per se that they emphasize, but shame, in the form of being 'ashamed', the direct translation of the Finnish word *hävetä*, which can be a verb and a noun, a way of behavior and a way of being). Shame and respect are, in fact, not far from each other. They emphasise and mirror one another, as being 'ashamed' of one's behavior may, at times, be a proof and expression of respect and, in effect, linked to a positive manifestation of one's abidance by duty to the family.

Similarly, concealments and the maintenance of secrecy are often a central part of community life, a way of knowing the goings on in the community, while also maintaining the elements of modesty that are thought to define members within it. Avoidance thus, whether of subjects or people, is also part and parcel of interactions within the community. Avoidance can mean anything from not talking straight or talking in circles about subjects that are of interest but improper to discuss (such as new marriages, births, etc.). But avoidance can also be a form of behaviour, where those who must show shame avoid the gaze or the physical presence alongside those in front of which they should show shame (see, for instance examples of such encounters in Grönfors 1977, 1982, 1997; Markkanen 2003; Åberg 2008). All these elements collate into the complex understanding of Roma identity in practice and enmesh themselves even more so in the daily practice of modern day 'Finnish life'. While Finnish Roma seemingly maintain a separation from majority society through the rules of conduct and maintenance of community norms, the emphasis is always placed on enhancing the role and importance of the family, as the central site of unity, cohesion, and strength, rather than as a clear-cut detachment from the social environment they live in.

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Evangelical Belonging and the Meaning of Faith in Practice

As pointed out in the introduction, Evangelical faith has become one of the most defining features of Roma communities for a number of decades and has somehow become embedded within community practices (see an engaging edited volume on the spread of Pentecostalism among the Roma in Thurfjell & Marsh 2013, as well as the role of Pentecostal faith among Finnish Roma in Thurfjell 2009, 2013, as well as great historical perspectives on the birth and expansion of Pentecostalism among the Finnish Roma in Hedman 2012; Lindberg 2012; Mäkinen 2014). While this may often be presented as a recent phenomenon, with the spread and rise of Pentecostalism among Roma being a present-day feature across European and non-European countries, in Finland it also connects to the role of one major religious organisation in the country, Romano Missio (formerly Finnish Gypsy Mission), mentioned above, who has had an influence in the shaping of Roma-focused missions and missionaries in the area (for more in-depth analysis about this, see Blomster & Roman 2021, 2022; Roman 2021; Roman & Blomster 2023).

While Finnish Roma are by no means *all* believers, being a believer (for those who are) becomes a key element of their communicated personal and group identity. Unsurprisingly, given the interlinking of Evangelism and Roma since the start of the 20th century, as denominational belonging goes, 'believer' Roma in Finland presently belong both to the Pentecostal movement and to the Free Movement churches in Finland (see also Lindberg ibid.; Thurfjell 2013).[3] In other words, for the Roma I met and interviewed, it did not seem to matter much the 'name' or denominational position of the congregations they belong to. Rather, the presence of the Holy Spirit, a renewed life, and a form of socially engaged Evangelism, is what was said to define both movements and belonging to one or the other was seemingly random: it depended on which church had most Roma members and which church was more popular in the local area. This could change from town to town, even between neighbouring districts. As an example of this, most Roma could belong to the Pentecostal congregation in one city while the neighbouring area might have most Roma belonging to Free Church congregations. This did not prevent, however, either group from participating in either congregations' services or events[4].

3 Free Churches are Evangelical and, much like Pentecostal, are revival congregations practicing a type of faith similar to that of Pentecostalism; for instance, via the centrality of the Holy Spirit in the church doctrine, the practice of speaking in tongues, the open nature of the church services. It is a Finnish born movement, sprung from the revivalism in the 1900s (Ruohomäki 2014). While most Finnish Roma presently belong to Pentecostal congregations, a large number also adhere or participate in Free Movement churches.

4 In fact, the distribution (if one may call it so) of Roma in Free/Pentecostal congregations also has a historical legacy (which I cannot go into detail here), related directly to the revival movements in different parts of the countries. Tent meetings have been organized since the 1950s, with two successive waves of revivalism: the first in the 1950s and the second in the 1970s. Roma who attended tent religious meetings and conferences often belonged to the specific denomination that organized that event. Beyond belonging to two different Evangelical denominations, coming in and out of faith is, as I will show in this chapter, not an uncommon occurrence.

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Specific to the Roma in Finland, however, unlike other countries where Pentecostalism has had a deciding influence in the conversion of Roma to Evangelical movements – such as Hungary, Romania, Spain (see Fosztó 2006, 2009; Gay y Blasco 1999, 2002, 2012; Ries 2011; Rose Lange 2002) – there are no all-Roma (or Roma-only) churches in the country. This broadly means that Finnish Roma and majority Finns come together and share not only the space of the congregation, but also a belief in the tenets of charismatic Christianity: embodiment of the Holy Spirit, community with Christ and community with fellow believers. In fact, all of my informants (young and old, male and female, long-time believers and newly 'born again') stated that they would never want to belong to an all-Roma church since this defeats the purpose of coming into brotherly communion with other believers, be they Roma or not. Thus, the space of the congregation becomes not only a space of shared belief but also a space of shared sociality.

Freedom in Christ, (Un)Certainties and Worldly Lockdown

Being temperamental, emotional, free is, as was pointed out to me, a central feature of being Finnish Roma and it makes no difference if individuals are believers or not. 'We are emotional beings, we live how we feel and we feel what we live very deeply' was how one of my closest informants explained her recurrent entering and exiting believer's life replicating, to some extent, outsider stereotypes of the free, wild-spirited Roma (see Åberg 2013 for a thoughtful analysis of the manifestations of emotionality in gospel songs among the Finnish Roma). Moreover, many of the Roma believers have experienced successive personal salvations (or successive times of becoming a believer and halting their believer's life).

In fact, in many of the conversion and reconversion stories I have heard, far from being a straightforward (narrow) path, personal revival (or entering believing life) is neither permanent nor unproblematic for the Finnish Roma. But this does not mean that either faith or belief is taken lightly. Faith becomes an all-encompassing force in the lives of believers, for the length of time they are believers. Often, entering faith may come in a time of grave personal or emotional loss or, even in a time of incarceration, when any alternatives, dreams, or hopes disappear. Prison missionary work (by Roma for Roma or by Kaaje/non-Roma for Roma) thus often translates into many people entering belief before they come out of prison. At the same time, believing life comprises successive moments of going back 'into the world' and then coming back into faith *again*.

'There are two different things', one elderly Finnish Roma man and longtime believer explained to me, '*to believe* and to *be a believer*. One can say one believes in God, which many non-believer Roma do, but they are not really believers. Being a believer means following a certain type of lifestyle that proves you are one following Jesus in your everyday life. It changes your entire life course. One is not really a believer until one accepts and replaces one's heart for that of Jesus, who comes to life within it'. Re-entering a life of sin and worldly pursuits would, in the arguments of those still 'in faith', be proof not only of the weakness of our human condition but also of the fact that one can very well *believe* in God while not being truly and completely a *believer*.

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Much like ethnographies of African Pentecostals point out (see the works of Comaroff 1991; Engelke 2004, 2007; Gifford 2004; Llera Blanes 2007; Meyer 1995, 1999, 2004a, 2004b) often the non-believing life, or the life before coming into faith, is demonized, and attributed to a past a life without Christ and the Holy Spirit. Believers make a distinction between one life and the other, and one is not a true believer unless the actions of one's life prove this. Believing and being a believer are thus inherently distinctive features of a Pentecostal identity among Finnish Roma.

Alcohol and drug abuse seem to be two of the most poignant and lasting battles in some Kale believer's life. Not only alcohol but prescribed anti-depressive medications have become sites of spiritual vulnerability of many of my informants, who conveyed their belief, lack of belief journey as a constant struggle. Rehabilitation is often associated with coming back into faith, or becoming a believer, once again. But changes in their path may not always be permanent.

As Ramona, a 46-year-old informant pointed out when facing her own history of being in and out of faith, 'believer's life is far from being ideal. In fact, it is harder to be a believer, because of all the uncertainties I am faced with, every single day. I always remind myself that God is there and cares for me, even when I don't really feel it. I feel powerless most of the time. But the victory is worth the battle.'

Fully condemning the past is therefore problematic for Finnish Roma I came to know, given the very high probability of this past resurrecting into the present. In many ways, it may mean condemning one's own struggling existence. When discussing their believing life, their changes in choices and friendships, the old person and the new person are put face to face. The most difficult and tormenting aspect of their individual faith is making sense of these entering and exiting an Evangelical world and the instability of their own believer's lives.

At the same time, as already pointed out in the ways participation is central for many Finnish Roma believers, congregational life represents not only a source of personal belonging but also an additional means of creating a pattern sociality and socialization with others. Moreover, despite participating in the same congregational space and sharing in the same faith as their non-Roma counterparts, Finnish Roma may come together, and separate, particularly in the form of prayer groups and organized religious and social work (many of them taking the form of missionary work in prisons, hospitals, family homes or abroad). The congregation is thus a space of not only sharing faith but sharing friendships, a setting where relations are formed, shaped and maintained; or at times altered and halted: particularly when coming into faith begs a change in the lifestyle of the new believer (quitting drugs, changing friendships and sometimes even distancing oneself from non-believer Roma).

In the next sub section, I move the focus from the general to the individual, by looking at two cases of faith in practice and at how believer's life, although central, may not always be a straightforward path in the life and pursuits of individual Finnish Roma. Moreover, rather than detached from their devotion to kin and family, personal faith is always conflated within the social and spiritual relations that make up individual lives, some of which are difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle.

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Community of Faith: Being a Son, a Mother, a Believer, a Roma

Toni[5] always knew of God and religion, but he only began to experience faith in his adulthood. As a teenage boy he often saw his mother pray for him and his deliverance from alcohol and drug abuse. She prayed alone, she prayed with others, and she prayed with him. He found those prayers to be wasted but out of respect for his mother, he sometimes also prayed with her. Toni spent most of his twenties in and out of prison, for petty crimes and petty fights and it was in prison that Toni first became a believer. Some Finnish Roma missionaries had visited him (and others) and talked of God and salvation. He went and listened to them every week and something changed in him. By then with children of his own, Toni wanted to make a change in his life, he wanted to become a father that his sons could be proud of. He saw the missionaries' entrance in his life as a sign from God and a hope for the future.

After getting out of prison, Toni began attending the Pentecostal congregation in his small town, but he gradually became disillusioned. His friends outside the church (Roma and non-Roma alike) mocked him for his faith and he had few Finnish Roma in the congregation who he could talk to about his doubts and struggles: many were too old, and many were too young to understand. When he stopped going to church, he knew he would soon go to the path he had been on before coming into faith.

When I met Toni in 2014, a divorce and another prison conviction later, he was once again a believer. While in prison he had time for God, for prayer and for reading the Bible, which he never found when he was dealing with the struggles of life. He moved towns and found a congregation where he could share his faith, in and outside it. He found a group of Finnish Roma believers who he met regularly, and who prayed for each other's struggles, happiness, and trials. His strongest prayer these days are that he would not be torn apart by doubt once again.

Unlike Toni, Tanja had always been sure of God's place in her life. In her 30s, she tries her best to be what she considers a model Finnish Roma daughter to her parents, a good mother to her children, an adamant Christian in her life, and a good employee in her work. Her life seems to be built along the struggles for some kind of significance. She divorced her husband some years ago, after he had strayed away from the path, given into alcoholism, violence and stopped going to church. Belief in God and God's presence in her life, are what fills her days and are most important to Tanja nowadays.

She prays, several times a day, reads the Bible every morning and evening and would burst into *Hallelujahs* and *Kiitos Jeesus* ('Thank you Jesus') at the oddest moments of the day (doing the dishes, driving the car, washing the clothes). She reads the Bible often and she finds prayer to be a form of meditation and direct communication with God. Everything and every moment, Tanja says, is a moment to praise God and to thank God.

She exchanges such beliefs and experiences with her believing Roma friends in an all-Roma prayer group. Prayer group meetings are a regular, almost weekly occurrence in Tanja's life. Preparing for the prayer meeting is an event. Sociality is as much part of the setting as spirituality, and coming together to share faith, doubts and struggles

5 To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, all names used here, and elsewhere in my work, are pseudonyms.

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is a central part of her experience of faith. Much like Pentecostal services, the small group prayer meetings always start with songs of worship which bring the attendants into closer contact with the Holy Spirit. Communion and community are entangled in these small group meetings, where the purpose of faith is transposed in a space of social encounters, self-reflexivity, and self-awareness.

What ties Toni's and Tanja's stories together are their search for certainty and belonging, for sociality of faith and communion with others. While Tanja had always been certain of her faith, and while Toni's life was a struggle to keep it, both found their stability in the social sharing of belief. Toni's life changed when he shared his experience with missionaries in the prison, but it changed yet again when he could not find the same space outside it. Small prayer group meetings provided an opportunity not only to make faith manifest, but to share it with others, in a smaller and more intimate environment. Such meetings and experiences are not uncommon among Pentecostal Finnish Roma. Both Toni and Tanja experienced and sought them.

Often, prayer group meetings are organized in various areas of the country and are a chance for both socialization and meditation, giving believers a space and time to reflect on the state of their faith and spirituality, about the state of the Finnish Roma community and what they, as Roma believers and as Christians, can do to help the members of their extended community. Once inside (in faith), the need to help others, be they Roma or not, in becoming religious is central.

Revivalism and Social Doubt: Between Change and Continuity

From the life and conversion stories I have been privileged to hear during fieldwork, most Roma who come into faith often experience powerful and obvious changes in their lives: they have stopped gambling, drinking and taking drugs; at least for a period of time (see also Thurfjell 2013; 2014 for similar examples). At the same time, most of those who convert in adulthood have grown, and gone through extremes: prison time, alcoholism, drug addiction, etc. Coming into faith brought obvious, visible, and significant change in their lives; almost instantly. But this need not be, nor is it always, a permanent change. What seems important is that, for a time at least, God was seen to have purified their world and their lives.

In many ways, Pentecostalism (or Evangelical Revivalism) offers Roma something beyond the immediate. It offers hope and gives them a certainty that things will improve. However, it also gives them, in practice, something opposite to what it predicates: not a life of peacefulness but one of battles through uncertainty and struggles with doubt. Conversions and entering faith are thus not permanent changes they but paths filled with ins and outs, comings and goings and a constant struggle to belong. Those who enter the churches do not necessarily and always remain in them. They are not always and forever believers. And yet, faith and belief are something they always relate back to. At the end of it all, it is a personal and individualized battle for their own stability in faith.

One of my closest friends, when trying to make sense of her recently found stability in faith and, as one who had gone through more than five successive exiting and re-entering, she explained: 'Whenever I stop searching for myself, reading the Bible and spending time with God in prayer, I am lost again. If I go to church, and

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read the Bible, even when I don't feel like doing it, I am kept on the path. Whenever I stop doing that, I am again brought back into my world of doubts and anger and pain.'

The discourse of conversion for Roma therefore presents a double mirror, emphasizing the past life as very much present in their believer's life, a co-existing force of nature that disrupts the life of newer or older believers. Both the non-Roma and the Roma fit within this image; but it is the strength of the past life that becomes the element of believing life that distinguishes Roma believers from non-Roma believers. One's 'new life' is always related to the past one, as much as the past becomes part of the present.

The meaning of Christian 'brotherhood/sisterhood' is moulded to fit within the Evangelical discourse of belonging and community while relations with kin must nevertheless be maintained and emphasised. At the same time, and this is a topic I elaborate on elsewhere (see Roman 2020), there has recently been an increased sense of need for missionary work among Eastern European Roma communities, a type of work that reshapes the life of the Roma believer and becomes a defining feature of their believing life. [67]

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Finnish Romani Women's Pathways to Work

Struggling for Full Societal Membership

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Introduction

What is it like to progress through life as a Finnish Romani woman? What is your experience of education, applying for jobs and facing the possibility of being the only Roma in the workplace? This chapter is based on my master's thesis on 2009 on Romani women's pathways to work (Mikkola 2009). Since the 1950s when Finland started to urbanize, need for the traditional Romani occupations such as horse raiding and trading of handcrafts decreased. This societal change brought with it new challenges for Roma's livelihood (Markkanen 2003a, 13; Pulma 2006, 71; Tervonen 2012b, 176). Today the Roma are overrepresented among the unemployed population and stereotypes about the Roma as non-working and lazy hold tight among the Finnish majority (Forsander & Ekholm 2001b, 101; Markkanen 2003b, 37; Nordberg 2007, 69). However, in the past few decades Romani women have increasingly begun to educate themselves and join the mainstream labor market. Especially popular is work in the social sector and the so-called Romani work which targets the wellbeing of Romani people.

I argue that mainstream employment is a key step towards full societal membership and with that the acceptance of mainstream Finnish society (see Harinen 2000, 31; Nordberg 2007, 22). In the case of Romani women getting job and achieving societal membership can be a challenge. Due to generations of negative stereotyping, acceptance by the mainstream can rarely be taken for granted and must always be earned – a Romani woman must work twice as hard as a non-Roma to prove herself (see Lister 1997, 38–39; Nordberg 2007, 33). Therefore, Romani women's pathway to work can be seen as embodying her 'membership struggle'. The concept of membership struggle has been applied to ethnic youth in Finland giving insights into young people's experiences of both belonging and exclusion. This is a struggle for cultural identity in a society that sees you as different, and a struggle for acceptance by that society. The struggle takes place during everyday interactions, as well as on a more symbolic level where a person uses language to actively accept, resist or re-interpret commonly held ideas (Harinen & Suurpää 2003, 7; Harinen et al. 2005, 282). Romani women must struggle against negative stereotyping at school, when applying for jobs and in the workplace. The struggles also take place in the interview setting, where the women can assume that the interviewer has made assumptions about her based on her ethnicity. The women also struggle to successfully balance the expectations of mainstream society and those of the Romani community.

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I interviewed ten Romani women, who worked in different fields, but most of whom had experience in the social sector and Romani work. The women's commitment to Romani culture and community varied as some of them had been partly raised by non-Romani families. However, all women considered themselves Roma, and this fact unified their experience of seeking employment. I refer to the women with pseudonyms which are common Romani names. Only a well-known Romani activist Miranda Vuolasranta wished to be referred to by her own name.

Redefining the Concept of Work

It is inevitable for a person belonging to an ethnic minority to react to the majority's assumptions about them (Säävälä 2007, 85). This became evident during my discussions with the Romani women due to our different ethnic backgrounds. The interviews turned out to be membership struggles in themselves as most women assumed me to have certain ideas about the Roma only because I am white. I had to work hard to convince my interviewees that I do not think the way they thought I did. This experience gave me a hint of what it feels like to be judged for one's background, something which the Roma experience every day.

The stereotype about the Roma as non-working and lazy was brought up by all the interviewees without asking. As Nordberg (2007, 69, 85) points out, the societal membership of the Roma is seriously challenged by this stereotype and therefore the Roma need to defend themselves against it. The women were troubled by my definition of work and education as new phenomena among Romani women. They were keen to emphasize that common stereotypes of the Roma are untrue as they have always been hardworking people. According to Tamara 'it is the greatest false on earth that we would be non-working and lazy'. After this statement Tamara describes how her grandmother needed to melt snow to cook, clean and do laundry and how hard she worked all her life. However, my interviewees did make a distinction between work in the mainstream labor market (which is a relatively new phenomenon) and the more traditional Romani occupations which they have done for generations. The occupations were different due to harsh living conditions and lacking permanent accommodation.

Tervonen's (2012a) article about the life conditions of the Finnish Roma from the end of 1800s until 1940s proves my interviewees' point. Tervonen argues that the Roma had to be real multitaskers to make a living and survive through the cold Finnish winters. Statistical records from the time reveal that the Roma practiced a multitude of occupations: men's occupations centered mainly around horses whilst women prepared and sold handcrafts, begged and practiced fortune telling. Oral accounts reveal though that the actual breadwinning practices were even more diverse. The Roma took part in varying tasks on the farm and in the house that was sheltering them. A 'handcrafter' woman often did much more than handcrafts: knitted, delivered news, sang, told fortunes, cleaned, did laundry, and practiced traditional healing. It was the women who were responsible for everyday living and therefore for developing and sustaining relationships with the majority population (Tervonen 2012a, 98–101).

The role of Romani women as the ones who made the link between the two cultures has been recognized in other Romani research as well (Markkanen 2003a,

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176; Okely 1996, 69, 78; Vehmas 1961, 166; Viljanen-Saira 1979, 105). The women's breadwinning was referred to as 'walking': they walked from house to house asking for food, exchanging handcrafts for it, telling a fortune, and carrying out other tasks such as cleaning and cooking. The women would work long and hard, walking long distances and often carrying their children along with them (Tervonen 2012a, 100–102). In the light of Tervonen's article I can understand why my interviewees emphasized the strong work-ethnic and hardship endured by the previous Romani generations and objected to my hasty and culturally biased assumption that Romani women's work was a new phenomenon.

There was yet another problem with the concept of work which needed reframing; it did not consider the work done by Romani women at home. Romani women have always done culturally valuable work inside the house and the Romani community. As Anneli puts it, this work is *real* work:

> It is a real job to raise nine kids and make them all go to school…That is why your question about Romani women's employment is a bit silly, because they are always employed at home. It is a real job for them and valuable job for their culture…

Romani women are responsible for both the concrete and symbolic purity of the Roma community. To be seen as a respectable Romani woman, the woman needs to keep her house tidy according to detailed standards, take good care of her family as well as act, move, speak and dress correctly. Women are also responsible for taking care of elderly relatives and holding the community together (Granqvist & Viljanen 2002, 111; Grönfors 1981, 61–62; Markkanen 2003, 153–154,176; Viljanen 2012, 388–389; Viljanen, Hagert & Blomerus 2007, 460). In the Romani community men are heads of families, but my interviewees emphasize that the responsibilities carried by Romani women give them power and strength. With this argument the interviewees are opposing the stereotype of Romani women as subordinate to men. I was not acquainted with this stereotype, since I have always seen Romani women as people who carry themselves with pride. In the interviews the stereotype was taken up as if it was a common assumption of the majority. This is understandable. According to Säävälä (2007, 76), all womanhood that differs from the majority's culture always needs to be defended against this stereotype. As Anneli puts it, 'all women wearing a scarf or long dress are seen by the majority as subordinated'. By emphasizing women's culturally valuable role, the informants fight for social membership and recognition for those Romani women who do not take part in paid labor.

My research question had yet another weak point that required reframing: the idea about the novelty of Romani women's education was lacking historical and cultural understanding. My interviewees wanted to shed light on why formal education is a relatively new phenomenon among Roma. They argue that the hard historical conditions such as lack of accommodation made education difficult (also Forsander & Ekholm 2001b, 101; Markkanen 2003b, 37). In addition, school was not needed in the past as the traditional Romani occupations did not require formal education but were learned at home as part of socialization (also Markkanen 2003a, 13; Viljanen-Saira 1979, 101, 121). In this argumentation they object to the commonly held assumption that the Roma don't want to get education. According to Tervonen (2012b), the pressure to engage with formal education came about because of the societal changes

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that took place in 1950s and 1960s. These changes attacked the foundations of the Romani livelihood requiring even more creativity from the Roma's part as they tried to adjust their previous occupations to new circumstances. Horses were replaced by cars and handcrafts by industrial products. In addition, the Roma found short term employment in factories and harbors, the women often in the service sector like restaurants and shops. As the contracts were often short-term, livelihood was still made of a multitude of separate tasks. Some Roma started moving towards majority's occupations, but others lost their livelihoods and so needed to rely on social assistance (Tervonen 2012b, 176–188).

My interviewees emphasize that today the Roma are passionate about getting education and work as the lack of permanent accommodation is no longer an obstacle. The interviewees refer to themselves as 'work addicts' and emphasize that Romani parents have started actively encouraging their children to go to school. I see that by emphasizing these points, the women are struggling for membership and respect in the interview setting.

However, the women also speak about the difficulties Romani children experience at school. Although today increasing amounts of Romani children are attending school and the value of education is emphasized, learning difficulties and the high number or drop-outs still stand out as problems (Markkanen 2003b, 39; Pulma 2006, 193, 200; Tervonen 2012b, 193). The women think that Romani parents often lack adequate resources to support their children at school. In the words of Miranda 'there may be no pencils or books at home'. In other words, school remains culturally distant for some Roma. The major reason for this is the lingual differences as the Roma speak slightly different Finnish from the majority (Viljanen & Granqvist 2002, 110–111). As Anette says, 'at home there may be no words for the things taught at school'.

School has been an alienating experience for many Roma because in the past it was one of the key institutions used to assimilate the Roma into the majority and make them give up their culture (see Pulma 2006, 172–173, 199–201; Tervonen 2012b, 193). This has been a reason that the Roma have not wanted to put their children in school as school would 'turn them into majority's folks' (Anja). The women think that the fear of assimilation still holds true among some Roma. As Pulma (2006, 191) mentions, openness to education does not apply to all of the Romani community. The interviewees are doing their best to inform other Roma about the importance of pre-schooling and schooling. They are working as 'messengers' in the Romani community and through this they are struggling for membership for current and future Romani generations.

Romani Culture: Opportunity or Barrier?

Though the work done by Romani women at home is time consuming and valuable, it is not enough for full social membership. The interviewees have recognized in themselves and other Romani women that being at home causes frustration. According to Pricilla it is this frustration that pushes women to educate themselves. This makes sense also from a historical viewpoint. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Romani women have always gone out to make a living and interact with the majority. Today work in the caring sector has become especially popular among Romani women.

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They have also found jobs as minority language teachers and cultural interpreters. Such ethno-specific occupations require membership in a particular ethnic group (Forsander & Ekholm 2001, 71). Within such occupations, Romani culture is viewed as a resource. Caring for the elderly and children is something that Romani women are accustomed to, so it is only the context of the work that changes.

According to my interviewees the Romani dress is seen as a benefit in Romani work. Viljanen (2012) has given a detailed description on the Finnish Romani women's unique dress and its history. Those Romani women who have chosen to wear the Romani dress all wear similar long, black velvet skirt. The blouse is called '*röijy*' and it is often decorated with lace but can differ in color and material. Though Romani women's outfit has always stood out, it was not that distinctive before. For example, in the end of 1800s and the beginning of 1900s the dress did not differ significantly from majority's women's dresses. Small changes in style and appearance have taken place throughout history, but the most significant transformation took place during the societal change in 1950s and 1960s. Industrialization made it easier for Romani women to get access to factory made fabrics such as velvet and by 1970s the black velvet skirt had become a norm. (ibid., 380–385). The dress and the meanings attached to it can only be understood in the context of Romani culture. Especially the principles of respectability, honor, shamefulness and purity are carried by Romani women in their dress, behavior, household duties and relationships with other Roma. The skirt needs to be long to cover impure parts of the body such as feet and the blouse needs to cover sexual body parts such as breasts and shoulders. Like in many other cultures, also in Romani culture it is the dressing and behavior of young fertile women that is controlled more than others (ibid., 388–389).

As the dress is a benefit Romani work, it puts those Romani women who wear 'majority's clothes' into an unequal position. Since such jobs are scarce, ethnic boundaries are drawn between those who are and who are not 'Roma enough' to represent their culture to the rest of society. As Viljanen (2013, 358) has stated, from 1970s when the long velvet skirt become a norm, not wearing one has caused negative reactions in other Roma. Such boundary drawing and questions about authenticity are taken up among the Roma on a regular basis (Grönfors 2012, 248). Despite these expectations there are a few active Romani women in the forefront of Romani work who do not wear the Romani dress. They have customized their clothes so that their presence will not offend Romani culture, wearing long dresses and sleeves.

Though the interviewees are proud of Romani women's increasing integration into labour markets, the jobs taken up often fall into the category of 'secondary labour market' characterized by low salaries, temporarily contracts and a lack of security (Forsander & Ekholm 2001, 71). Such jobs can be the first step to the labour market from which women can proceed to more permanent and better-paid jobs. As Miranda puts it:

> Only when the Romani women are working in all sectors of society, also as lawyers and doctors, have we achieved equality in the labour market.

Romani culture can also be a barrier in the context of women's labor integration. According to my interviewees, adulthood starts earlier among the Roma and for women the Romani dress is the most visible sign of maturity. If the girl chooses to

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wear the dress while still at school, she often feels ostracized and different which decreases motivation and may result in her leaving school early. Many Romani women, including my interviewees have experienced exclusion or even bullying at school because of their dress and Romani background. As Viljanen (2012, 387) points out, the unique dress causes prejudices and stereotyping among the majority which has negative effects on Romani women's work opportunities.

In the Romani community the dress symbolizes that the woman is mature and ready to set up a family. As young people and sexual relations are considered shameful in the Romani culture, couples need to elope for a month or a year to signify the will to be together. After this separation the couple usually comes back with a child. (Grönfors 1981, 52–55; Markkanen 2003a, 143–146; Viljanen 1974, 142–150, 182–189; 2012, 392–393.)

It is obvious that such cultural habits are harmful for women's education plans and thus achievement of full societal membership. However, they are necessary for young women to gain respect and acceptance in their own community. The two processes do not fit together smoothly, and career plans are often given space only after the family setup. The interviewees emphasize that they are encouraging young women to put on the dress only after school is done, so that there would be more options open to them in the future. This way my interviewees are fighting for social membership for young Romani women. Many young women tend to postpone the symbolic maturation, but the interviewees also recognize the existence of opposite culture where girls put on the dress earlier than their mothers did, at the age of 14 or 15. This they say is because many of the Romani youth no longer know their culture, roots, and the Romani language. For young Roma living in crossroads of two cultural worlds the identity formation may become difficult. If the Romani culture is not well known, they may attach themselves to the most visible signs of Romani culture such as the dress and start closing up from the rest of the society. The interviewees try to get through a message in the Romani community that one can be both a true Roma and yet take part in the society and be in contact with the majority. This however is not easy as the women's own experiences reveal. Part of the Romani population still fear that getting education and work will result in cultural loss and take time from the more valuable work conducted by women at home. The women already taking part in paid labor need to balance between contradictory demands: they try to be hardworking employees and respectable Romani women who take good care of their families. Often, they experience feelings of inadequateness in both contexts. Anette describes the everyday life of working Romani woman:

> There are three things when you think of a Romani woman, a Romani mother: family, relatives and home. When we work, we don't have as much time for the relatives. They know that we are working and don't come to visit us as frequently as before…And about the family, it is so hard to leave them to go to work…And then home. When a Romani woman comes home from work, she starts another shift.

The hardship of combining home and work is not a new phenomenon for Romani women. As discussed earlier in this article, in the past Romani women walked from house to house with their children and later the day took care of the family and

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household according to the detailed cultural standards (see Tervonen 2012a, 101–102).

Wearing the Romani dress may become an obstacle to work if perceived in a strict manner by the woman and her family. In such cases the woman cannot take up jobs that require a uniform, which limits her possibilities for employment and social membership. Most of my interviewees have worn a uniform if needed. They emphasize that cultural symbols need to adjust to new circumstances, but their meaning and value can remain intact. The women still held strong Romani identities, wore the Romani dress during leisure time and negotiated with their employers if other Roma were to be present at their work place. This example illustrates that culture need not be a barrier to social membership, but cultural symbols are negotiable and flexible.

Stigmatization and its Effects

The negative attitudes of mainstream society create significant barriers to Romani women's labor integration. The interviewees gave multiple examples of people not being employed due to their ethnic background. A Romani background is seen as an unwanted characteristic, bringing with it negative connotations about a person's work ethic and trustworthiness. Tervonen (2012b) argues that such experiences only rose from the societal change that brought large amounts of people including Roma to the new industrial areas. Previously in the countryside the Roma had a unique role in the social system. They needed the majority for accommodation and food and the majority needed the Roma for specific tasks and products as well as for some extra helping hands in their farms and households. Relations were based on mutual exchange and need. Often relationships were long-lasting and even warm. In the societal new context, however, the Roma found themselves competing for the same jobs as the majority. As oral accounts reveal, this gave rise to experiences of ostracism and discrimination. Of course, the Roma had always encountered people who did not accept them, but with these changes the discrimination became more structural (Tervonen 2012b, 100–107, 183–185, 188, 191–192).

Experiences of discrimination color my interviewees' life stories as well. Pricilla gives an example of her Romani colleagues who were not employed, because the lockers in the dressing room did not have locks. Other women describe situations where they have missed the job because the employer has recognized them as Roma, for example because of their surname or physical appearance. The phenomenon taking place here is called stigmatization. Goffman has defined stigma as a characteristic that is despised by the rest of society and therefore becomes a barrier for acceptance (1963, quot. in Reuter & Kyntäjä 2006, 106). Stigma attached to a Romani background blocks women's pathways to work.

If however, a Romani woman manages to get a job, she has better resources to fight for respect and membership. By working 'twice as hard' the interviewees have been able to prove the prejudices wrong. Such experiences are reported already in the accounts from the 1950s when the Roma started to enter the same labor market as the majority (Tervonen 2012b, 185, 188). Such strategy can obviously be exhausting, but often it leads to some level of acceptance and sense of belonging to one's work

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community. The best feeling is to be treated as an individual and not being judged for the Romani ethnicity. Tanja refers to such experiences as empowering and healing, giving her strength to move forward in her career. Most women, however, have also experienced exclusion at work. Ramona has often felt different, left out from social gatherings, and hurt by stereotypical joking. Vieno was paid too little due to her Romani background. One may become a victim of exclusion also when working in ethno-specific occupations with other Roma. One of the interviewees felt that the worst sort of exclusion and bullying was practiced by other Roma who thought she was not 'Roma enough' for her job, because she is not wearing the traditional dress and one of her parents is white. Grönfors (2012, 248–249) draws attention to the same problem. According to her the situation is especially hard among those Roma who have been raised as foster children in majority's families. In their experiences the discrimination has not only been based on wearing majority's clothes, but also on being educated and employed in majority's occupations.

Stigmatization has further consequences that are harmful to Romani women's membership. As Eriksen (1993, 5) indicates in some cases a stigmatized person may incorporate the stigma into being part of his/her identity, which leads to low self-esteem and lack of self-worth. Freire (2005, 64–65) has described how the powerless people in society incorporate the powerful people's negative ideas about them into their view of themselves. This makes them believe that they are inferior to others. Some of my interviewees like Ramona recognize such phenomenon in themselves:

> S: When you face unequal and disrespectful treatment, do you still always know that you are equal and as good as anyone else?
>
> R: I have never even thought about that because it is so evident that you are not equal. It is terrible that you lose that part of your self-esteem. You can be strong etc, but you are always aware that you are of secondary importance…

According to Rawls self-worth is the 'primary good' for person's wellbeing. It provides the basis for life plans (1971, cit. in Saari 2009; 2014). Lister (1997, 38–39, 113–114) talks about the same thing by arguing that self-esteem is a condition of true participation. With no sense of self-worth, it is impossible for a person to have goals in life not to mention proceed towards them. Early childhood living conditions are of primary importance. (Björklund & Hallamaa 2013, 163–165.) As Alexander (2008, 58–60, 349) argues, people can lose their self-esteem later in life due to continuing experiences of rejection and ostracism. Assimilative politics targeting certain ethnic groups can even result in a collective loss of self-esteem. Humiliation over the culture one represents and a requirement to give it up can result in people feeling ashamed of their roots. According to my informants the exclusion and disrespect experienced during history has left marks in Roma's 'genetic memory' which makes them feel inferior to the majority. As Anette has observed:

> You don't hear Romani youth SPEAK OUT about their career plans as their peers do. They don't believe they could become teachers or lawyers or how to pursue such a goal.

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According to the interviewees what is desperately needed for the Romani youth are experiences of success. When a person sees oneself and one's culture as not good enough, experiences of success can slowly start to change the vicious circle. The women report multiple examples of Roma, including themselves, of having empowering experiences at school when they realized that 'hey I am actually good and I can do this' (Anneli). As Särkelä (2001, 88–89) argues, it is experiences of success that can slowly change a person's self-concept for the better. Another strategy for better self-esteem is never to hide one's ethnic background in search for social membership and acceptance. My interviewees have always been open about their ethnic background even if it has often resulted in 'being the number two'. Tamara thinks that hiding would give the impression that her ethnicity is inferior to others and therefore worth hiding. Tamara's strategy is correct, because hiding one's ethnic background is harmful to self-esteem and therefore for full membership in society (see Alexander 2008, 349; Nordberg 2007, 24; Viljanen-Saira 1979, 134). By being openly Roma, the interviewees want to send a symbolic message to the majority and the Romani community that an openly Romani person *can* get a job. They are fighting for cultural recognition, equality, and the right to membership (Nordberg ibid., 24–25).

Though all the women interviewed have faced exclusion in the context of work, only two of them have defended themselves. Others have given up on the process because they believed it would lead nowhere or lacked adequate resources to move forward with it. Some reacted to exclusion by ignoring it totally so that 'it won't hurt'. It has been argued that lack of self-worth leads to feelings of shame, which makes it hard for people to defend themselves (Granfelt 1998, 78; Krok 2012, 130). In the case of my interviewees the passivity is more about 'saving oneself'. It has helped the women to retain their self-worth so that they have had enough strength to 'give it another go' and apply to other jobs. As Tanja describes, such indirect membership battles require a lot of strength:

> You can always be the target, your roots are. You carry the history and barrier of the whole community. Even if you were something as an individual. You have to work so hard to show that you are good. You go and you show your great school report and say that you are good. It is not enough.

Being accepted is something that all the interviewees aim for. As Korkiamäki (2008, 173) points out, acceptance and belonging to a community are basic human needs. Since the majority still holds negative stereotypes and prejudice about the Roma, the most important thing for the women is to be accepted by their own ethnic community where criteria for acceptance are different. Among other Roma the women feel respected and valued for who they are as people, not for what they have achieved in life. What matters is 'how you treat other people' (Tanja). Viljanen (2012, 417) emphasizes that caring for one another and especially the elderly is at the heart of Romani culture. If the women lack acceptance at work the value of their ethnic community grows even greater. The most difficult is the position of those women who belong neither to their workplace nor Romani community. They have partly been brought up by majority's families either as foster children or because the family is mixed. They feel like outsiders on many levels. Especially hurtful have they experienced the exclusive boarders drawn

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by other Roma at work or within the Romani community. The Helsinki Deaconess Institute has set up an open living room and a meeting point called Kaalo to target the Roma who are not welcomed by their own ethnic community. These include people with substance addictions, mental problems and other issues that are not easily accepted in the Romani culture.

Discussion

My thesis was an interesting dive into the worlds of Romani women in Finland. Through the women's narrations I learned how much strength and pride is needed to get a job as a Romani woman. It was a shock for me to realize how strongly the women's pathways to work are affected by negative stereotypes. During my research, I was saddened to witness that even among well educated people who claim to value multiculturalism, these prejudices hold true. In such an atmosphere the Romani women need to struggle for membership and acceptance at every stage – at school, during job application and at the workplace. Often, they manage to achieve some feeling of fellowship at their workplace, but the most important thing is to be accepted by their own ethnic community.

What also caught my attention was the passivity the women demonstrated when it came to standing up for their rights. Although exclusion and ostracism happen every day, they hardly ever defend themselves. Only after long discussions with them did I realize that sometimes it is best to let it go. This saves the women's sense of self-worth and therefore it can be seen as a rational course of action and indirect membership struggle. As I have demonstrated, healthy self-esteem is of major importance for a person to be able to have and pursue goals. However, the passivity regarding one's rights also tells a sad story about Finnish society. The women simply don't believe that they would get justice even if they did go forward with the process.

There seems to be a wave of change taking place among the Roma in Finland. The women I interviewed stand in the forefront as women who have managed to combine Romani culture and mainstream employment successfully. As many Roma today, also my interviewees are strongly encouraging younger Romani generations to be open to the society and get education and careers. The women believe that Romani culture can provide great support for working life when the culturally important qualities such as caring for others are taken up at the work setting. However, the women also show concern over the opposite developments taking place in the Romani community as some young Roma are closing from the society in search of cultural identities. The Romani culture cannot be blamed for this phenomenon though. It seems that not knowing one's culture well enough can lead to sticking to certain cultural traits that can be harmful for societal membership. People who know and can be proud of their roots are better equipped to participate in society (see Alexander 2008, 349; Giddens 1995, 115–116). Therefore, yet more support for the Romani culture and healthy Romani identities is needed.

The interviewees try to get through a message that one can be both a true Roma and yet take part in the society and be in contact with the majority. As I have demonstrated, this is not easy, but requires strength and continuous negotiations and reframing of cultural symbols and habits. The most striking observation during the

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research process was the lack of self-worth that may result in always being the target of negative stereotypes. Good self-esteem is vital to proceed through life as a Finnish Roma. Self-esteem is also required for Roma to be able to resist exclusion and stand up for their rights, which is needed for the overall situation of Roma to change for the better. What is also desperately needed is changes in the attitudes of mainstream society. Whilst employers refuse to hire Romani people based simply on their ethnicity and culture, it remains very difficult for attitudes to change. The more people see the Roma at work the more they need to challenge their negative assumptions about them.

The interplay between cultural identity, self-esteem and societal participation still requires more insight. It is important to get more knowledge on the cultural traits and phenomena that can support societal membership. On the other hand, more light needs to be shed on the habits and rituals that can, in a intercultural context, become barriers to membership. Such research interests apply to all ethnic minorities and the important and politically very acute questions about their successful integration into the Finnish society.

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Epilogue

Travelling with Finnish Roma

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Introduction

This chapter chronicles my research-based journey with the Finnish Roma over the years. It draws on my scholarly journey and interaction history guided by events and experiences, observations and knowledge that spring from my research work in the Roma field. I aim at capturing Finnish Roma people's understanding about the special nature of their culture, as well as about issues that they define as problematic today. I will also discuss the abuse experienced by Roma women. Lately, the violence occurring among the Roma has been increasingly discussed by the media, but there are still significant gaps. For example, a book called *Suomen romanien historia* [The history of the Finnish Roma] (Pulma 2012), falls silent on several difficult issues in Roma life.

Based on my field research among Roma for over 30 years, I have compiled an ethnography as my research methodology. In fact, I have never left this field: it is still a part of my life. Some of my interviewees and informants have become friends – even 'sisters and brothers'. We share a long friendship and solidarity, and in this chapter, I will also discuss the ethical issues related to writing about friends: what and when is one allowed to reveal without breaking a friend's trust (on writing about friendship, see Gay y Blasco & Hernández 2020). When speaking about my informants, I use the terms *Roma* and *Gypsy*. The word Gypsy is used *naturally* (a term referred to continuously by the Roma) and sometimes even with pride among the Gypsies themselves, with no hint of self-deprecation or irony. I lean on arguments that white persons may use these kinds of words if the use is not mocking or degrading (Markkanen 2003, 3).

My previous analyses have concentrated on Roma women's lives and life-courses and are based on ethnographic interviews and observations. I have focused on the features peculiar to Roma culture as the everyday frame of their lives and as something they learn *naturally* (Markkanen 2003). *Naturally* as a reference, however, has a tone that refers to a dichotomy of the present and the past of Romani life. Finnish Roma people themselves often claim that in the past it was easier to follow the norms shared by families and kins, because their life used to be more solid and homogenic. *Past life* in their speech refers to years before the 1960s when significant structural changes moved the Finnish society towards strong industrialization and urbanization. According to Roma people, before that turn there was a stronger Romani culture where people took care of each other and sociality was *natural*. Now the conditions are changing but many issues are still reflected against former life that is seen as better.

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I have listened to these kinds of nostalgic reflections now for more than 30 years – even though my informants have not lived in the era they idealize. (Markkanen 2003.)

This chapter proceeds as follows: First, I will discuss the special ethical issue concerning interaction-based Roma research. After that, I will focus on certain special and idealistic features of Romani culture and today's challenges concerning the difficulties in following the demanding tradition. The challenge-perspective leads my scrutiny towards issues that usually remain silent in Roma research: abuse by men, violence, drugs, and crime. My approach can be called meta-analysis of my former research, where previously collected data corpuses are put under a new loupe. The empirical data for this chapter consist of my fieldwork materials: they include my fieldnotes, and interviews conducted and videos recorded during fieldwork. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, all names of my interviewees are pseudonyms.

Trust as a Base for Research Ethics

Trust and research ethics are crucial in all human sciences. Successful fieldwork calls for social trust, for being close to research subjects. In the best case, this may also lead to achieving cultural intimacy and understanding. Anna-Leena Siikala (1997) reminds us of a vital principle of research ethics: constructing the identities and histories of other people is an area to be approached with caution, in a way that considers the culture-bound nature of our own thinking. In my fieldwork, all this has meant becoming friends with some interviewees. However, my aim as such has not been to make friends with the interviewees; it has not been a methodological strategy. Conversely, this has been a 'natural' result of closed field involvement over many years, even decades. For me, the best research method has been real-life participant observation and interviewing, living, and moving with people.

In this chapter, will touch on some difficult, and even silenced topics. Consequently, I have been confronted with a central ethical question: What should I write about what friends have told me? This question has guided several choices and conclusions. I find that being friends with some key interviewees has not had a negative impact on the research findings – but there have been serious reflections of a proper time to present them. The follow-op nature of my project has made it possible to create a kind of 'hermeneutic intuition' (Käyhkö & Armila 2022): an understanding of when the issues dealt with research subjects are too hard or painful for further dealing and when there is a need to wait for a more proper moment to discuss, analyze, and publish them. Over the years I have discussed 'ethnographic scarcity', as well as how a researcher can draw on ethical reasoning to conclude that it is better not to repeat sensitive stories, and how this can affect the style of the depiction. Ethnographic scarcity implies that researchers do not speak or write about everything they know about their subjects. (Markkanen 2003, 3–7, 2018, 87–112.) Sensitive, in-depth, long-term ethnography is my method of understanding Roma people, including the mobile lives among Roma from Romania. Ethnographic scarcity can also be criticized in that not talking about certain issues has resulted in for example the silence faced by Roma women not being discussed.

A Roma who had left her community at a young age was taken aback by my 'romantic' idea of Gypsies and wondered how I had been able to do my research of

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Roma women in the midst of 'layers of embellishment'. However, I have never regarded my image of Roma life as romantic, not even at the outset. I saw the harshness of Roma women's life already when I was young while working in the hospital. The question posed to me was nevertheless important because it touched on the basic problems of research ethics and ethnography: Whose voice is heard? What consequences will the research have for the participants? What information is too confidential? Which part of the information can the researcher use? (Markkanen 2008, 84–106.)

Over the years, I have often visited and stayed overnight in Roma homes, and some night-time discussions, for example, have opened my hosts' hearts. The fact that some of these discussions have stayed totally confidential and unanalyzed has made the bond stronger between some interviewees and I. It is a real matter of choice what to include in a study when confidentiality is at stake. I hope that I have been able to capture my own emotions, relations, and memories of my fieldwork with Roma people. (See Markkanen 2018.) Mutual friendship and trust with my informants have led to self-confidence and helped me continue despite some misunderstandings, failures, and even intentional insults from some Roma activists.

I have written my research analyses mainly in the first person and included my own fieldwork experiences, following Amanda Coffey (1999) who suggests that it would be hypocritical to leave her own voice and experiences out of her text. However, my analysis is not an analysis about me. People who are studied are in the main role, and they must know why they are interesting. In this case it is a problematic issue because they have not necessarily read a single book in their lives and cannot read (this is the case especially with the Romanian Roma I have interviewed). They might find it difficult to perceive what the researcher intends to do with all the material. But it is still obvious that bringing the issues to light is the only means of improving and changing conditions and of helping people. Ethnography provides an opportunity to explore how people live day to day, how they cope and make their living. However, it is not easy to approach ordinary people, let alone those who are marginalized, as this calls for face-to-face interaction and an awareness of ethical and political prerequisites and consequences (also Saarinen & Puurunen 2015, 59–61). The 'new ethnography' thus has every opportunity of being truly dialogic. British anthropologist Edmund Leach (1984, 22) says:

> The data which derive from fieldwork are subjective and not objective. I am saying that every anthropological observer, no matter how well he/she has been trained, will see something that no other such observer can recognize, namely a kind of harmonic projection of the observer's own personality. And when these observations are 'written up' in monograph or in any other form, the observer's personality will again distort any purported 'objectivity'.

Discussion on Roma people's problems in the Finnish society has proven to be complicated. While there is discussion about the problems as such, it is also debated who is allowed to speak and write about them. Roma activists tend to keep the discussion within their own communities and would prefer researchers emerging from their own community. However, there are no restrictions about which groups and people are allowed to study one another and how the studies can be published. Though it is always debated why and with what right a researcher infiltrates the lives

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of a community and its people, neither research nor the conditions of a group under scrutiny are served by secrecy and silence. However, the researcher's descriptions and interpretations can sometimes startle the subjects, who may have forgotten what they had previously discussed. It is possible that sometimes the subjects have not completely understood why the researcher is engaged in the field. More conflict can be caused by the researcher's need to fade into the background to make the narration as free and natural as possible, which provides tools to describing the lives of the subjects. (Okely 2012, 1–25.) Within the field of Romani research, it is not the fieldwork itself that poses the most problems but the question of what and how to write about the Roma (Kurvinen 2005, 48; Markkanen 2003; Viljanen 2003, 64).

During my recent visits and field trips I have found that the portrayal highlighting the good sides of Romani life to outsiders, focusing on such traditions as cleanliness and respect for the elders, has changed; I have been doing fieldwork among the Roma for so long now that these sides of life are no longer highlighted to me. Rather, life is shown to me as it is. Now, recurrent and often difficult themes emerge in my informants' narrations: children, relatives' lives, tragedies of the immediate family and the relationship of the Roma with the majority population, for example. Many confronting negotiations are evident in the Romani community of today, and maybe it is time to discuss them, too.

The Constant Purity–Impurity Dilemma

Romani studies from the 1970s on have often leant on Mary Douglas' (1966, 2000) theories of purity, pollution, and taboo. According to Douglas, these kinds of abstract categorizations form the basis of a culture. Pollution and dirt are elements that are not seen as suitable for the community culture. Thus, they also have moral dimensions in marking issues or artifacts as right or wrong. These kinds of categories are maintained by rituals, also on the everyday life level – such as washing and cleaning (Markkanen 2003).

Perhaps the most important and visible dichotomy in Roma people's everyday lives is the line between concrete and symbolic purity and pollution. Purity and pollution also intertwine with the concepts of honor and shame. The paired concepts of *pure–impure* and *honor–shame* form a flexible part of Romani life: by following the rules on purity, chastity, and proper manners, one honors the elders – incarnations of the tradition. This is an ideal element of the culture and mentioned often (see Viljanen 2012). However, maintaining normative purity causes concern because life is now more scattered, and families live more separated than in the past. Still, preservation, rejection, and variations of this ideal are repeated in speech and action continually in words said out loud and in more silent information. (Granqvist & Viljanen 2002; Markkanen 2003; Viljanen 2012.)

There is a clear change from when Roma people were *kulkeilla* (on the road with horses, or women walking and selling handicrafts, for example), to living in suburbs. Still, some similar customs have been followed both in the wagon travel camp and in an apartment building. Food and dishes could not be put on the ground or on the floor of the wagon but were kept outside or in the rear part of the wagon. Clean dishes and other objects were placed higher up than dirty ones: also, older people were

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considered superior both physically (in the camp they slept higher up) and mentally. Even today, groceries are never put on the floor or even chairs, only on the table. (Markkanen 2003.)

Some time ago I spent a night with my long-time friend Lahja. One of the most intriguing things when visiting Lahja is how she covers up the photographs of her relatives with dark cloth before going to bed. The relatives must not see her in her nightdress even through photos. I also noticed that her guest Jasmin put up a sheet in the kitchenette doorway because there was no actual door there. She could not move in the hallway close to the kitchenette half-dressed with the space 'seeing' her. The kitchen becomes impure if it is entered half-dressed. (Markkanen, Field notes July 15, 2012.)

These observations are examples of the theme of purity and pollution and refer to a principal level of culture. These and countless other cultural customs are learned *naturally* among the Roma: there is no schooling to learn Romani customs. One of my study cases on the lives of Roma women was then named *Luonnollisesti* [Naturally]. If a Roma person has a white spouse who abides by the Roma customs, it can be interpreted pretentious and theatrical. However, some customs related to cleanliness and honor are required even of visitors to a Romani home. *Paskakoprat* (dirty hands) are not allowed at the dining table: hands are to be washed immediately when entering a Gypsy home. Topics related to sexuality are not allowed if Roma of different ages and genders are present, but some private conversations can be very intimate. If an interviewer asks or talks about a taboo, he or she loses face in the eyes of the Roma interviewees and becomes a laughingstock. The interviewer, however, is often comforted with *you were not to know, as you're not one of us*. Taboo words, such as underwear, nudity, and sex are not discussed publicly. Older Roma can also deliberatery ignore inappropriate words or action in their presence.

Facial cleanliness and purity are abstract and symbolic in their nature – losing face causes embarrassment. It is possible to lose face if the customs related to purity in the Romani culture are not adhered to. So, many adolescents follow proper Romani manners as well. I spent a night in a young family's home. When it was time to go to bed, I accidentally placed a glass of water on the bedroom floor next to my mattress. In the morning, a young Roma woman gave me an accusing look; food or containers are never to be found on the floor or on chairs. Realizing my mistake, I apologized, and she said: *I forgive you because I don't think you did it on purpose*. She had a sink cabinet shelf in the kitchen for dishes that were considered unclean – someone else had also acted inappropriately.

Age and gender hierarchies as cultural categories are always mentioned in Romani research. The elderly are more respected and higher up in the hierarchy than the youth, regardless of gender. Men are higher up than women. Among Roma people, traditions and customs are called and honored but also questioned and negotiated. A Romani friend of mine has often mentioned that all Roma people do not follow the customs in their pure form. (Fieldwork video, 1998.) The next sub-chapter pays attention to the gendered nature of tradition, as well as the sometimes-unfair position of women inside it.

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A proper Roma and the gendered nature of the tradition

The concept of a *proper* or a *genuine Gypsy* regularly comes up in conversations with the Roma. Often the reference pertains to an older person whom the speaker identifies as still living *properly*: following the traditional Romani customs. This train of thought has an inbuilt idea of deteriorating customs and traditions: the younger generations become whiter (*kaajeenmoinen*) and cease to abide by the proper customs. Becoming whiter (*kaajeenmoisuus*) destroys the good qualities of being a Gypsy and eventually leads to the disintegration of the Romani community. The ideal of being a proper Gypsy is based on the notion of difference from the majority population. Narratives of nostalgia related to being a proper, genuine Gypsy are examples of the younger generation not adhering to the customs.

Over the years the Roma have been asked directly in different situations what they think makes a genuine or proper Roma. My data gives an indirect suggestion on the concept and definition of a proper Roma. In the following, a group of students of Roma language and culture consider the concept of a proper Roma. Orvokki, whom I have known for 20 years, answers my question: a genuine Roma is *honest, natural and gets along with everyone*. This answer is common and can be interpreted as a strategic way to react to prejudices and stereotypical ideas about the Roma, including their alleged dishonesty, among the dominant population. Orvokki as an older Roma woman argues that a proper Gypsy can be identified by his and especially her *modesty, dress, and use of language*. Good manners include *respecting the elders and taking care of one's own.* My interviewees usually acknowledge the importance of upholding the customs of one's culture, but some also hold that not all customs need to continue. Further, real life is not always as ideal as presented.

The characteristics of a *genuine Roma* were also discussed by a group of Roma students at the Helsinki Deaconess Institute (2009). The first topic to emerge were the customs, including respect for the elderly, purity, shame, and clothing. *A genuine Roma* was defined as a social and cosmopolitan person that is tolerant towards all people. The students also referred to a world citizen who experiences community on a global level. As community was a key word, the group also debated reasons for the disintegration of the community. Rising standards of living make it possible to earn a living without help from family. According to the students, the strong feeling of community among the Roma, and their way of interaction, steer the youth towards aiding and nurturing work in social services and health care. *A genuine Roma* helps those who are marginalized and of poorer status – other than Roma as well. I have often witnessed this with my interviewees: a friend of mine makes room for outcasts and alcoholics in her home. Even so, my friend is sometimes irritated with the drinking tenants. Once, the police were called to take away the tenants while I was visiting.

A genuine, proper Roma has a gendered nature. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the Roma people customarily had large families, often with around ten children. A woman born in the 1930s described her childhood and living conditions back then: 'Mom took care of us, dad had left and taken another hag'. The 1940s were a time of vagrancy and poverty. However, for this woman, being a proper Gypsy is still all about purity: 'purity is important above all else'. She has raised her grandchildren

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since they were little. Many Roma have some experience in taking collective care of children. Either they have themselves been foster children, or there have been foster children in their families, which brings family connections and family help to the fore. This tradition of collective nurturing still exists. Mothers with children become grandmothers with grandchildren. Almost all the women I know have kept the tradition alive. They have taken care of one or several of their grandchildren either on their own or at least at times.

Roma women are often labelled as voiceless and repressed victims, and proper or improper observance of the customs is either praised or criticized. In the stereotypical portrayal by the majority population, Roma people are 'free spirits', while their life is disciplined with rules and regulations on purity, impurity, honor, and shame. This applies to women and men alike, but a Romani woman has a double duty: she must take care of men's honor too with her behavior and dressing. (Markkanen 2003, 138.) A woman's indecency brings shame on the husband and family as well. The hair of a woman accused of infidelity is cut off, and in the past her face could be mutilated; for example, the nose of an unfaithful wife could be chopped off.

A woman's outfit, the dress (*hame*) or long garments (*pitkät vaatteet*), as the women call them, is an important sign of being a Gypsy. Dressing up in Gypsy clothing is a distinct marker of the female gender, signifying women as carriers of culture. A young Roma woman carries her outfit upright in high-heeled shoes. Via this, women are also categorized as recipients of culture, cultural conflicts, and meanings – and women become visible as a gender. A woman's honor is tied to her chastity, which is the most important thing for her to treasure. (Viljanen 2012; Markkanen field notes, June 22, 2010.)

Rules for Roma women's purity and honor can be tough. A man can condemn a woman as dirty and polluted if she is not faithful – or if the man thinks she is not. These rules are gendered and judge only women. Women's improper behavior has often legitimized violence towards them. Still, discussion about violence is one of the shamed and silent issues among Roma. This has also been a question of communal trust: shared silence surrounding traditions that are not shared with the dominant population. This means that many women, then, have suffered alone and in silence. During my long stay in the research field, I became familiar also with this dark side of the mirror – and in the circle of our mutual trust, I feel I was given the promission to also reflect this in the following sub-chapter.

The Other Side of the Mirror: Difficult themes to discuss?

Among Roma, *natural behavior* is valued, even though their life with all its behavioral norms is highly regulated and controlled. In this sub-chapter I turn the scrutiny towards issues that are often silenced within the socioculturally correct Romani discourse: abuse, abandonment, violence, and crime. All these create cracks in the picture of a proper Romani and cultural purity. The main content of the chapter is formed by discussion on violence targeted against women, but other communal problems are also discussed.

In one interview a young, educated Roma woman – I call her Miranda – told me how she had to divorce her violent Roma husband. She left him with her small

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children. A few months after their divorce the man heard the woman had been talking to another Roma man on the phone. He got angry, proceeded to assault her, cut off her hair and took the children. He was not able to take care of the children and brought them back but did not stop harassing his former wife. The woman had to move to another neighborhood, but the assaults continued. Finally, the man was given a four-month suspended sentence for the assaults. The consequences for the woman's life were also immense. After the events, she gave up her Romani outfit because her hair had been cut off and she had been disgraced. (Markkanen field notes October 12, 2012.)

This is not an unusual story; to a Roma man, the woman is and will always be property. Recently, the silence around this phenomenon has been tried to break down. The data for this chapter contain interviews with two Roma women, Aila and Anita, about how they have experienced, through their work with the Roma, the abuse directed toward Roma women. The group interview was conducted under the auspices of the SPEAK OUT! Project.[1] The project focused on the importance of making gendered violence visible. I call these two women Aila and Anita[2] and consider them experts in issues dealing with gendered violence in Roma communities. Aila is a middle-aged Roma woman. She told me that her joining the project and having a job in a Romani association taught her to see *the whole spectrum* of the Romani population. When she was living among her own family and friends, the sociocultural field had not been visible to her in the same way. Anita is a younger Roma woman who now works in various Romani organizations and associations.

Even though Miranda's story and destiny are not rare among Roma (or women more widely), according to Aila and Anita, talking about gender abuse among Roma people is still difficult. Roma women are labelled as social minorities in many ways and must negotiate their positions and rights within age-based male-female conflicts and Finnish-Roma conflicts. They must avoid being labelled and judged by their own community and its women, as well by members of the majority culture. When discussing, for example, abuse, they often become cautious and avoid using 'heavy' terminology with the researcher, too. In this, such phenomena as abuse, for example, become expressed in terms of protection and care. For Aila and Anita, mental, institutional, and economic abuse of Roma women is a tough issue. For them, a big question is, how much information should women be given of different forms of abuse, as women with no money of their own have not been seen as victims of any kind of abuse.In the following citation, Aila analyses these kinds of cultural 'secrets' in Romani life and refers to the challenges in catching them within the conceptual and discursive means of the dominant culture.

1 The EU funded project SPEAK OUT! (2011–2013) sought to empower women of immigrant and ethnic minorities against gender violence. The project had two Finnish partners, Alexander Institute of University of Helsinki, and Monika, the Multicultural Women's Association in Finland. Other collaborations came from Southern and Central Europe. The six Finnish focus groups were moderated by Aino Saarinen and Kaarina Aitamurto. I invited Romani women to the discussions, and I am grateful for the opportunity to join this part of the project. The findings have been edited and published by the Italian coordinator Franca Bimbi (2013) and Saarinen, Aitamurto and Tanttu (2013).

2 All Roma interviewees' names have been changed. I received permission to use the interviews from Aila and Anita as well as from Aino Saarinen and Franca Bimbi.

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> Then there's the taboo stuff that in a way gives a totally other meaning to gestures, movements, and postures, even to place and space and the way it's occupied. The dominant population may not observe these at all in the same way. And they don't take it into account and don't know how to because the needs and the ability to occupy a space and opportunities are all different. And these are points where conflicts occur if you think about the task of communicating. It's as though you're there, in-between, when you're needed. (Aila's and Anita's interview November 26, 2011.)

Within the interview of Aila and Anita (October 26, 2011), practical problems that Roma women face when they seek help after experiencing abuse were discussed. Is it possible for them to get help at all? This question is relevant as there are many sociocultural factors to consider when seeking help from Finnish authorities, for example. It can often be seen reasonable to be silent about abuse that happens in their midst – at least if they do not wish the police, social service, and other authorities to intervene in their lives. The authorities of the majority population are not trusted, because throughout history they have been violent towards Roma. In my research data, there is an interview with a woman who recounted a nightmarish night from her childhood in Mäkkylä, when the police came with their German shepherds and tore apart a large Gypsy camp. A tent was burned down, inflicting burns on children. There were many children walking around with the adults clothed in rags and barefooted. This is not just past history: news still emerge of the police acting violently towards Roma quite often. Thus, the threshold to seek formal help is often high. Abuse, in the end, is a hard taboo and a shame – but also an issue to be culturally understood. Silence has often been needed to preserve wider social relations and the community:

> Roma culture has various reasons to cover up the abuse, there's no reason in a healthy relationship for the man to beat up the spouse or for the woman to beat up the kids. The violence is there. It's more of the domestic kind. The Finnish society recognizes the problem in a way. The problems have been solved there (the Romani community), it's been even more secretive. Discipline is part of a tough life. (Aila's and Anita's interview, October 26, 2011.)

According to Aila, in the Romani ideology with its gendered nature, punishing a provocative woman is allowed, and the abuser is the one to be communally protected. When women are controlled and punished, the communal hierarchy and order are protected. Roma men, women and older Roma sometimes tell a woman subjected to abuse*:* 'Look at how you're dressed, did you provoke him, why didn't you tell him to calm down? There's no right for women'. (Aila's and Anita's interview October 26, 2011.)

When reflecting solutions to this rightless situation of Roma women, Aila and Anita think it would be beneficial to accept that people live in different sociocultural communities with their own rationalities, traditions, discourses, and conceptual landscapes. When there is abuse within a community, the problem is not individual but communal. As such, it would be fruitless to bring concepts of 'human rights' into a community that is not ready for them. In the fight for women's rights, Roma communities with their secretive and covert features must be taken into consideration. One of those features is the honor of girls and women and how the

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behavior of especially young women is under scrutiny. Chastity is one of the most stressed characteristics: Roma women are to be loyal to their husbands. In this, a long historical trait can be seen that is hard to get rid of.

> In the past, a woman couldn't go anywhere alone. The man had be with her like a guard – – it wasn't perceived as abuse, it still isn't. It's part of the protective side of the culture. That can be a problem, like who are you protected from? Didn't even cross anyone's mind [to think of it] as abuse, it was protection. And mental abuse, come on, what's that? (Aila's and Anita's interview, October 26, 2011.)

Indeed, should a Roma woman always be afraid if she has or has had an abusive husband? I was told that *it depends on the family.* Aila and Anita know that there have been cases when the woman has had to flee with the children who have been her responsibility. They also agree that there should be a shelter in a secret location for these women. Currently, women regularly return to their abusive environments, and there are women and children whom no one helps. According to my informants, 'a small community has its pros and cons, sometimes older Gypsies say that they were helped by "good people"'. Social workers, for example, have sometimes been 'good people' of today who have taken care of victims of gendered abuse, and the so called Ensikodit ('First Homes' for single mothers) or Turvakodit ('Safe Homes' for victims of domestic violence).

Gender relations in Roma culture contain many social regulations and rituals that appear as moral responsibilities. If these cultural scripts are not followed, the consequence is shame. According to these traditional scripts, when a girl starts dating, she must hide it from older Roma. A young couple elopes for a while from the sight of parents and relatives. In ritualized proceedings, men of the family go in pursuit the couple and bring the girl back home. If the family is a single-parent household and the girl only has a mother and no brothers or any appropriate male relatives, the mother or an aunt may retrieve the girl. A young Roma woman told me how her aunt retrieved her after she had eloped with a boy. She was so embarrassed that she had to cover her head during the drive and did not dare to speak at all. (Markkanen 2003.) Homosexuality is also considered impure. A gay man told me that the Roma know which bars the gay and lesbian Roma frequent. Sometimes they are confronted by other Roma waiting in the vicinity of the bars, often with violent consequences. Some young homosexual Romani I knew were not able to stand the shame and communal pressure but committed suicide. Homosexuality is also sometimes hidden with artificial marriage, which in turn leads to the spouse suffering from the unhappiness that brings along. (Markkanen, field notes 2007.)

Abuse by men is not the only communal secret discussed in my research data. Women can behave in a way that causes individual harm, as well. For example, if a divorced woman forms a relationship with a new man, he may not accept the children from the previous marriage or relationship. Children are then given away to relatives or put into orphanages, and 'it's horrifyingly abusive to the children' (Markkanen 2003). I have discussed this issue with an elderly Roma woman – I call her Sonja – who still remembers how her mother took her to her grandmother by train, left her and cut her off from her life:

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> I remember sleeping on a wooden box with a coat covering me when I was brought to grandma. I was probably four years old. Ramona (mother) took me to grandma; I kept looking out the train window. She bought me a meal at the Helsinki station, it was macaroni casserole. It was the first time I ate at a restaurant and the first time I had food that tasted good. It was also the last meal my mom ever treated me to. The rumour mill had done its job, and because grandma had asked me to come live with her, she wasn't at all fond of children. I think it was just decided on a whim, and it was too late to regret when I had been brought all the way to her. (Sonja's interview, July 13, 2006.)

She continued her narrative by saying that her mother and her relatives never came back to see her. This treatment had a shattering effect on her whole life:

> Nobody (from the mother's side of the family) kept any kind of contact. I was completely alone. Ramona had several kids with different men. She took me to grandma's and left right away. Mom's dead to me. Then and there, on that wooden box I started a new life, barefooted. I didn't miss her because I had no connection to her. The word 'mother' is not part of my vocabulary. I, of course, call myself a mother now. Now that I've seen my own children and been a grandma, I call them the harbingers of goodwill. Children are so perfect, and the closeness of a child is wonderful. But I haven't had a childhood in a good sense of the word. In the morning I had to wash my face with cold water. When I went to school, grandma woke me up with a gentle kick to my side, not with a gentle hand. (Sonja's interview, July 13, 2006.)

Unlike Sonja, many elderly Roma look back to the past with nostalgia: according to their memories, vagabond begging did not bring problems, illness, or sorrow. In their narratives, Finnish individualism and the current *competitive society* have introduced arrogance and disintegration into the Romani community of today. Consequently, the Roma are in constant discussion about the good old days that are lost, comparing the past to the present reality. The informants of my analysis recognize also more focused targets in their criticism: some young men have behaved in a way that breaks down the cultural image of protective males. Aila, for example, maintains that it is impossible for a young Roma girl to visit Itäkeskus (a large shopping centre) in Helsinki, because it is a meeting place for young Roma boys who use and deal drugs. There are also many other places in the city that lone Roma girls avoid. Within this theme, more taboos become discussed in our interview as well, such as drug use and crimes of young Romani men.

> There used to be no problem taking another person's kid into your home [in the past]. Now, in Itäkeskus older people don't dare to get involved [with how the Roma youth behave]. A young girl, an unmarried woman doesn't walk alone in Itäkeskus. The druggies can order the girl around, they can command her to drive the car, regardless of whether there are guns, drugs, no driver's licenses, not knowing whose car it is. A girl said she doesn't walk alone there with the gang around. (Aila's interview, October 26, 2011.)

For elderly Roma people, drugs are impure and shameful. Some Romani drug users have contracted hepatitis C or HIV from dirty needles. These illnesses are felt as impure by many in the majority population, let alone by the Roma for whom the

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aspects of purity and impurity are important both symbolically and literally. My data consist of interviews and observations from a Roma couple who are HIV positive because of dirty drug needles. In the eyes of an outsider, their common life seems fine: today, they are sober, they have a child who is not infected, and another child on the way. Still, the man has been in prison for over 25 years (more than half of his life) for property crime. Now they start their day by reading the Bible and praying, leaning on Jesus to help them keep their sobriety. Indeed, many Roma women seem to start the day by praying for their children and grandchildren. Especially if their children or grandchildren have drug problems, for example, there is no end to women's prayers. 'One's behavior is stripped from all honor and respect by drugs, it's natural,' I have been told.

The sociocultural rules and traditional ideas of cultural purity are difficult to maintain and defend in the contemporary cultural in-between phase of Roma people. Today, it is hard to maintain and keep 'pure' the isolated nature of Romani culture and communities. When I asked what causes the contemporary Romani life and customs to disintegrate, crumble and change, Aila described the difficulties in regulating and controlling people's behavior and the lack of culturally 'proper' sources of information and consciousness:

> In a way, all education and integration break up the boundary of community – – there's Facebook, internet, television, etc. People didn't watch TV before, there's a taboo of generations, genders, but now there's the net that the kids watch and they watch TV alone, the influences are the same [as for the majority population]. – – You can use a nickname on the Internet, it disintegrates – – what they say there is so horrible, the majority population can't even grasp that horror – – when the language is so different. (Aila's interview, October 26, 2011.)

Facebook, for example, is a information channel that is mainly used by the younger Roma. Through it, sensitive and previously forbidden issues may be published or written about, and photos of young girls that have disappeared or left with their boyfriends can be shared. It is now difficult to keep secrets and hide taboos within the community. Knowledge that is considered immoral and was previously forbidden is now easily available, and protection through control is now much more difficult than it was in the past (cf. Seland & Hyggen 2021). In this, especially the elderly Roma people seem to share a quite common concern about the corrupting nature and risks of social media in the lives of youth (Livingstone & Blum-Ross 2020).

I have interviewed Roma men also in prison. For them, the worst part of having committed a crime is that their *own people* will suffer. Criminal Roma men are afraid when they are out of prison, especially if there are family feuds or they have committed homicide. Problems will also arise if members of certain families with underlying serious issues between them are placed in the same prison. My observation data from prisons show that there is a strong feeling of community also among the Roma there. Prisoned men take care of each other and worry about how their families are doing and what is happening to them. The families of the prisoners reciprocate: Roma prisoners have more frequent visits and by larger groups than other prisoners (Markkanen 2003).

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In addition to crime and drug use, those who work with Roma parents and youth are widely concerned about the difficult position of Roma youth in the Finnish education system. One of the biggest obstacles for children and youth is dropping out of school, which complicates applying for further education. Without education, entering the labour market is difficult, which in turn leads to financial difficulties and a plethora of other problems. Many Romani experts, such as politicians, recognize that Roma children and youth face problems because school has not been a regular part of their lives. In a society that gives high value to formal schooling, educational exclusion can be quite fatal. Also, this dimension of the current Romani life has historical roots: Aila finds that Romani history is different, their way of learning has been different, and their way of using and acquiring information has been different from the mainstream society. Interests have differed as well: communal interaction by verbal communication has played an important role.

In this chapter, I have brought to attention certain problems that seldom are discussed within research-based interaction with and among Roma people. Still, we should bear in mind that violence, for example, is not something to be generalized as a feature of Roma culture. I have spent much time in the home of a Roma woman who winces every time she hears news of a violent act, hoping there were no Roma involved. Through their work, Aila and Anita have noticed that 'in the end there aren't that many differences; cultural differences, yes, but the worries and joys of emotional life are the same for everyone, whoever you are. Yes, the same joy, same sorrow, everyone has them'. (Aila's and Anita's interview October 26, 2011.)

Conclusion

It is important to learn about the lives of the Roma today. It is also easier now; in the past few years, the Roma have increasingly opened to the public. When I started fieldwork in 1992, there was a cautious attitude toward both myself and the research on the part of the 'common' Roma people as well as the activist Roma. The situation is entirely different now, and even issues that have been silenced this far, can now be taken under scrutiny. Without a trustful research interaction this, however, is not possible.

In this chapter, I have discussed issues that cannot be brushed off if we are to speak about Romani life truthfully. Romani culture accentuates a constructed, negotiated course of events and behavior. Romani life is not, however, simply about following ancient rules; traditions live and change – and become challenged as well. Roma culture is not only unisonous and restricted. Instead, various voices can be found in the margins, and it is beneficial for a researcher forming an ethnography to listen to those voices and convey the information to the reader as well.

In an ideal and honorable Romani world, the elderly, the infirm, and the children of the community are taken care of with the help of the whole community. However, the ideal model does not always work. There has been an obvious cultural change from vagrant to suburban existence in the lives of the Roma, and the customs of camps and carts are now discussed in the present conditions of life in apartment buildings and new sociocultural surroundings, mostly in different sub-urban areas. The new

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generation is growing up in a totally different environment and has never lived a vagrant life. It is important to note that vagrant life was actually not as good as it has been depicted. For example, an interviewee told me about being abandoned by her mother without any knowledge of her father. She was taken to her grandmother and the grandmother's family to be raised. They kept telling her, 'She doesn't *vippuustaa* [resemble] us at all.' They were keen to point out that the girl did not resemble them or did not belong to them – was not *one of us*. All her life she had felt like 'I'm no one's' or 'I don't belong to anyone'.

Romani research published especially in the 1970s was strictly categorized regarding shame, honor, purity, and impurity, as though life was mechanically structured into categories. However, customs cannot be dictated as strictly categorically, for there is always flexibility and overlap. Customs also change and are challenged. Conflicts do exist, the Roma themselves discuss them, and the conflicts can also be observed in everyday life by researchers staying with the Roma for longer periods. Studying and writing about abuse can be an uncomfortable issue, but progress has nevertheless been made, as can be seen in the much-needed publication in 2014 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on intimate partner violence and family violence as experienced by Roma women. (Törmä, Tuokkola & Hurtig 2014.) Progress has been made, for example, in the way violence and abuse is written about. These problems can now be addressed analytically. A few years ago, I discussed the matter with President Tarja Halonen in the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Finnish Society for the Study of Ethnic Relations and International Migration (ETMU). She was amazed that a report on this issue had been published at all. Thirty years ago, when she chaired the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs (1993–1996), it would have been impossible to publish such a report. And yet, the plays, books, interviews, and paintings by the Roma artist Kiba Lumberg have already for decades portrayed the violence and abuse suffered by Roma women.

While many details about Roma life and customs may at first seem like separate fragments, these pieces belong to a bigger picture. It may not be a coherent or a uniform picture, but it is where the Romani live and act, nonetheless. The ethnographic challenge is to see and understand this entity. Even though I have focused on difficult issues in this analysis, I have also lived, heard, and seen many joyous and humorous things when living with the Roma. For example, an elderly woman told me she didn't always want go to school as a young girl. In the morning she packed her school bag with a towel and some soap and went to a nearby public sauna where she sat from morning till late afternoon and talked with the old women there. Whenever a woman left, another took her place. The proprietor commented that 'even if she bathed every day, she was as black as ever'.

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Abstract

This anthology '*The Culture of the Finnish Roma*' is a highly needed collection of articles intended for a wide audience, in Finland and internationally. The editors of the anthology, when participating in many international conferences and seminars, have often been asked: Is there Roma research in Finland? What is it like? Which perspectives does it utilize?

The main function of this anthology is to reply to those questions. It compiles an array of contemporary Roma research done in present day Finland, both by Finnish, Finnish Roma, and international scholars. It will be of interest to both academic as well as lay readers interested in Roma culture and Roma life in Finland, past and present.

The chapters focus on the research and the life of Roma in Finland. Bringing to light the various sides of the Romani way of life, scholars from different fields include historians, linguists, anthropologists, and cultural and social researchers.

Many of the previous books have suffered from a recycling of materials that mythologize and stereotype Romani people. Including the viewpoint of Roma scholars and diverse research branches ranging from culture, language, religion, and gender, the anthology aims at overcoming the stereotypes and bring knowledge of aspects of Romani life.

The eternal contemplation and negotiation of identities lies in the heart of any culture. We hope that the way *The Culture of the Finnish Roma* discusses these issues brings forth interesting topics to consider for any reader, regardless of national or ethnic origin.

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