CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Encounters and Trading Practices

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The long nineteenth century was a period of changing modes of labor and consumption. New livelihood opportunities opened up for the landless and poor as globalization made labor mobile. At the same time, the circulation and exchange of various goods increased considerably, which affected trade on the global, regional, and local levels. This multidisciplinary collection, *Encounters and Practices of Petty Trade in Northern Europe, 1820–1960: Forgotten Livelihoods* (henceforth *Forgotten Livelihoods*), uncovers one important yet neglected form of these emerging itinerant livelihoods—namely, petty trade—and how it was practiced in Northern Europe during the period 1820–1960 (see map in Fig. 1.1). Transnational and interregional relations characterized this sparsely

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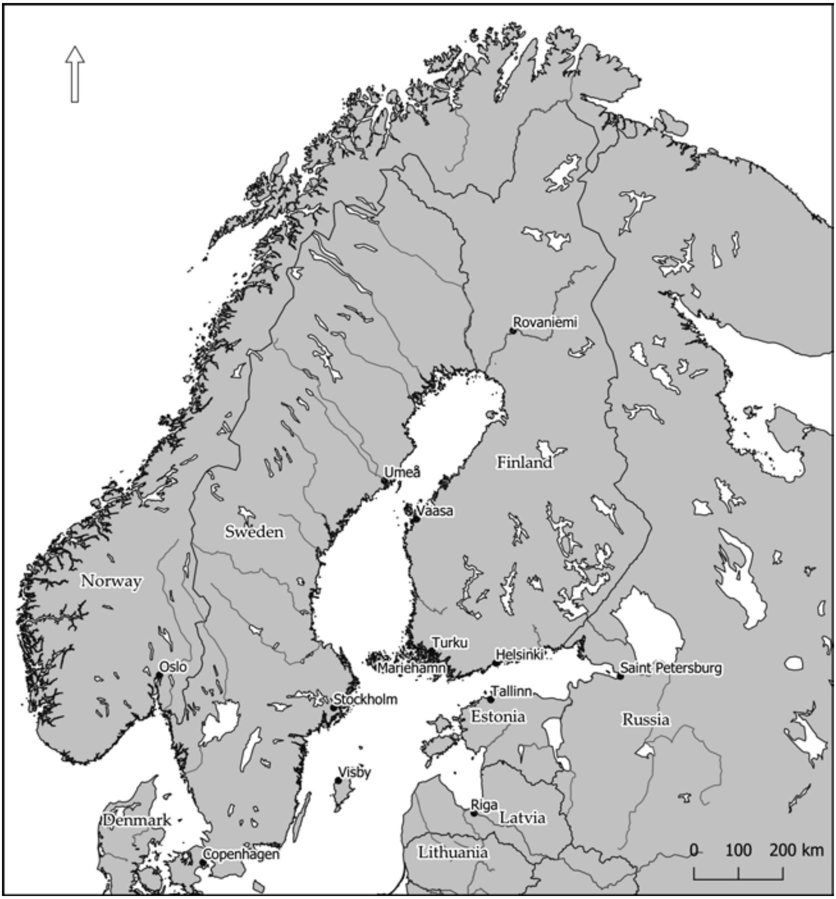
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Fig. 1.1 Map of Northern Europe. (Map by Niklas Huldén. With permission from Huldén)

populated region, where disparate groups in terms of religion, ethnicity, and language interacted.

We explore how the overall increase in consumption had wide cultural and social consequences by investigating how traders and customers interacted in different spaces. Here, ambulatory trade is considered an arena of encounters and everyday social practices. In the Nordics, as elsewhere, mobile petty traders often belonged to subjugated social groups, like ethnic minorities, migrants, and the poverty-stricken, whereas their customers belonged to the resident population. Thus, our volume asks, how were these mobile traders perceived and described? What goods did they peddle and how did these commodities enable and shape trading encounters? By approaching petty trade in terms of consumption history *and* by addressing the marginalization of particular social groups, this collection offers insights into livelihood practices at a grassroots level—an account that previous research has overlooked.

Petty trade has been, and still is, an integral part of social, cultural, and economic life in many regions of the world. As a term, *petty trade* refers to an economic activity that involves selling and buying goods—agricultural as well as consumer goods and services—on a small scale. In the nineteenth century, traditional and vernacular forms of retail, such as peddling and trade in marketplaces, continued to meet the basic needs of many customers. Petty traders, such as "peddlers," "mongers," "hucksters," "hawkers," "vendors," and "bootleggers," were all engaged in small-scale trade, and the epithets attached to these sellers were often pejorative, sometimes referring to their multiple levels of strangeness. Itinerant performers, sex workers, and professional photographers also used marketplaces and other venues to gain income from the entertainment and services they offered.

We emphasize the importance of studying how marginalized groups tried to ensure their means of support. Although there is a rich supply of fine historical works on livelihood-related struggles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, relatively few of them deal with the mixture of livelihoods, tangible everyday encounters, and ethnographies of material cultures. *Forgotten Livelihoods* undertakes a historical exploration into many aspects of mixed livelihoods that were familiar to European societies in the relatively recent past.

Petty trade has not been elaborated or studied in detail in the broad field of consumption history and the history of retail. To some extent, various forms of small-scale trade are touched upon in Ian Mitchell's impressive study *Tradition and Innovation in English Retailing, 1700 to 1850* (2014). Trading activities at fairs and urban markets in Europe have mainly been studied by scholars of early modern history, such as David Pennington in his monograph *Going to Market: Women, Trade and Social Relations in Early Modern English Towns, c. 1550–1650* (2015). Laurence Fontaine has explored peddling and petty trade in her groundbreaking *History of Pedlars in Europe* (1996).[1]

These studies suggest that petty trade engaged various groups, arguing that trading was of great importance for the lower strata in society. A few studies on labor and work practices in early-modern Sweden demonstrate that women were also largely engaged in trading activities.[2] Several studies on trading encounters and social relations draw on E. P. Thompson's concept of "moral economy." While customers are frequently presented as subordinate, neither the vulnerable position of *petty traders* nor ethnical hierarchies are adequately addressed in these studies.[3]

In his groundbreaking study *Peddlers and Princes* (1963), anthropologist Clifford Geertz demonstrates how petty traders who belonged to ethnic and/or religious minorities were indispensable to the operation of regional and national economies in periods of economic growth. Internationally, historians have analyzed itinerant trade and addressed its importance for economic development. Some scholars note that petty trade involved various groups, arguing that trading was of great importance for itinerant persons in periods of modernization.[4] However, these explorations' focus lies in governmental policies toward itinerants, not the daily practices of traders and their customers. An important study is Hasia R. Diner's *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way* (2015), in which she demonstrates how peddling was often the first occupation of Jewish migrants in new countries and how their activities attracted other economically vulnerable social groups. Diner addresses the vulnerable position of petty traders and ethnic hierarchies.[5]

Arguing that hierarchies that circumscribed the lives of trading groups have been neither sufficiently studied nor problematized, we investigate the livelihoods of subjugated groups and minorities in the North. Secondly, our volume takes seriously the "material turn" in historical and social science research and we address the agency of "things" and "artifacts". We maintain that new commodities both shaped and altered social relations, thus commodities had the power not only to enable livelihoods but also at times confer higher social status to both sellers and buyers.

Encounters in the North

Northern Europe, here including the Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark), the Arctic and Subarctic Europe, and northern Estonia, offer an interesting case for studying petty trade during a period of economic growth and liberalization as well as nation-building. As a result of rapid economic development and the liberalization of trading regulations, there was a quick expansion and flood of goods in the Nordic region, where consumer culture was undeveloped. Especially in peripheral and mainly rural settings, peddlers and other petty traders introduced the opportunity for consumer goods to be purchased during a period, when "common people" started having the means to consume goods above the subsistence level. There was actual demand for goods among consumers, and sometimes such merchandise represented a better standard of living for rural and working-class customers, many of whom were women and young people (i.e., groups in subordinate social positions). Peddlers played an important role in providing rural and urban customers with affordable products. Still, in the nineteenth century, traditional urban marketplaces were important trading spaces in small towns. Following longstanding regulations, itinerant petty traders, and rural dealers as well as traveling performers visited towns at a certain time of the year. The marketplace was a traditional retail arena, where dealers operated from humble premises, and a place that could be used by visitors and sojourners.[6]

The Nordics comprised a large geographical, yet sparsely populated region, predominantly rural with smaller towns, the capitals of Stockholm and Helsinki, and only one metropolis, Saint Petersburg. It was situated between the West and East, and between the North and South. Finland was part of Sweden until 1809, after which it became an autonomous part of the Russian Empire as the Grand Duchy of Finland. At the turn of the century, the number of Russians increased in Finland, and strong elements of Russophobia were prevalent in all Nordic countries. Starting from 1899, Russia tightened its grip on Finland by proposing similar legislation for Finland and the rest of the Russian Empire. Finland finally gained independence in 1917, yet conflicts and tensions as to how the young nation was to be governed continued until civil war broke out in 1918.[7]

The close geographical, social, and historical relations between Finland, Sweden, Estonia, and Russia laid the foundation for diverse encounters. Petty traders often traveled across borders, and their livelihoods were transnational. In the Nordics, ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities, like Roma, Russians, Sámi, Jews, and Tatars, often engaged in petty trade, along with vagrants, peasants, and the rural poor (see Fig. 1.2).

Petty trade thus connected and affected relations between indigenous groups and settlers. In the northern parts of Sweden, Norway, and Finland, there were many layers of entanglement between Sámi groups and the resident populations. Scandinavia's arctic and subarctic areas belonging to

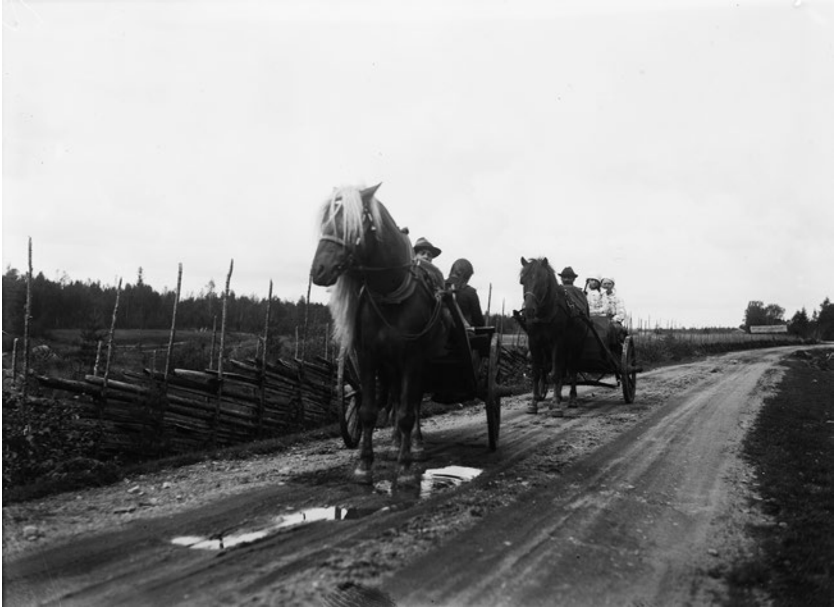

Fig. 1.2 Itinerant livelihoods. Roma peddlers in Finland in 1928. (Photo by Samuli Paulaharju 1928. The Finnish Heritage Agency)

Sámi had partly been taken over by the respective states or by settlers coming from other areas. In addition to this, racist perceptions of Sámi were flourishing; they were considered less “civilized” and situated at a lower stage of cultural and evolutionary progress, but simultaneously regarded as more “authentic” and closer to nature. The Roma comprised another old minority group, which had arrived in Finland and Sweden in the sixteenth century and was generally despised in public discourses. Specific “Gypsy Laws” were passed to control and govern itinerant Roma. Similarly, as in the rest of Europe, notions of antiziganism and anti-Semitism were deeply rooted in these peripheral areas.

In addition to Russians, Sámi, and Roma, other linguistic minorities included Finnish-speaking groups in the north of Sweden and Norway, and the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. At the turn of the century, the latter amounted to 12.9 percent of the population (about 350,000 people).[8] Although the upper class and the nobility in Finland had historically been Swedish-speaking, commoners, workers, fishermen, and farmers belonged to the Swedish-speaking population as well.

In terms of social boundaries and class hierarchies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the vast majority were commoners not included in the old estate society. The traditional estate society consisted of the nobility, the clergy, burghers, and the landowning peasants. In Finland, for example, some 70% of the whole population in 1890 were commoners.[9] Cottagers, tenants of farms, itinerant petty traders, farm servants and rural craftsmen as well as industrial workers were tied up with hard physical labor. In terms of poverty, persons working sporadic odd jobs and small-scale hunters and fishermen were also considered commoners, since they, too, regularly knew destitution and their livelihoods were precarious.

By analyzing transnational and interregional connections in Northern Europe, this volume contributes to international research on the multilayered importance of consumption and petty trade for social relations. The chapters in *Forgotten Livelihoods* include analyses of itinerant market performers (Jonasson), stories of hidden economies (Huldén), working-class experiences of petty trade (Stark), Roma horse traders (Ahlbeck), submissive and unruly peasant traders (Östman), fictional representations of market goers (Kuismin), Sámi livelihoods (Kortekangas), Jewish and Tatar salesmen (Wassholm), women's traditional outfits as a trading strategy (Johansson), rag collectors from Russian Karelia (Sundelin and Wassholm), and Russian peddlers settling down in Finland (Sundelin). What emerges is a complex narrative of vulnerable livelihoods, often marginalized in their own time and overlooked in previous research.

Livelihoods in the Margins

The micro perspective of *Forgotten Livelihoods* enables us to uncover power relations and hierarchies that circumscribed the lives and livelihoods of petty traders—something that previous research has not sufficiently addressed. This collection contributes to broadening the scholarly fields on itinerant livelihoods and consumption history. Each chapter approaches precarious positions and relations of selling and buying, as well as addresses the specific power relations that once defined these transactions. By focusing on ethnicity, gender, class, and religion, the book provides new perspectives of itinerant trade and marketed commodities, as well as the practices, representations, and experiences of both traders and consumers.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the growth of trade was accompanied by new laws and regulations. However, peddlers and other petty traders often operated in informal ways, sometimes illegally.[10] In Finland and Sweden, trade in the countryside was legalized in the 1840s and 1850s, which meant that shops could also be opened outside towns. As rural shops were few, however, there was still demand for the goods offered by peddlers, many of whom worked without licenses. During these years, market trade—an old and traditional form of commerce—was gradually regarded by the authorities as old-fashioned and unnecessary. After public debate in the 1860s, regulations on markets were made stricter and licenses were withdrawn. Yet, at the same time as new cultures and traditions of buying and selling emerged in the latter part of the century, older and informal forms of trade remained important in many regions. Even if local authorities tried to control urban market spaces, carnivalesque fairs took place in many towns. In a similar vein, the poor could still invoke understandings of petty trade as a form of social welfare, which permitted certain individuals—such as the widowed, elderly, and handicapped—to vend.

The chapters in this book demonstrate how small-scale traders and their customers interacted and came together in different spaces. Unlike today, when a customer goes to a grocery store or a shopping mall, or shops online, traders in the past visited and operated in both private (homes) and public outdoor spaces (town markets, fairs, door to door). Thus, the chapters explore the nexus of practices and how traders appropriated places and created multilayered spaces. The open-air market represented a traditional retail arena, where vendors operated from relatively simple premises and according to customary practices. Some peddlers remained in one fixed location, using a market stall that was locked up and left under the supervision of a watchman when not in use. Others used horse carts, mobile stalls, or rucksacks. Itinerant peddlers carried their merchandise on a horse cart or on their back in a rucksack (see Fig. 1.3). Some sold their items to passengers-by, while some made door-to-door deliveries.[11]

This volume takes its point of departure in a broad intersectional approach, but gendered aspects of petty trade are pivotal. By studying how trading encounters as well as commodities were gendered, the authors open up new perspectives. Through the concept of space, we address questions of how hierarchies and differences were manifested and changed. The chapters demonstrate gender as a central part of the using and taking of spaces, and the gendered dichotomy of the private and the public that

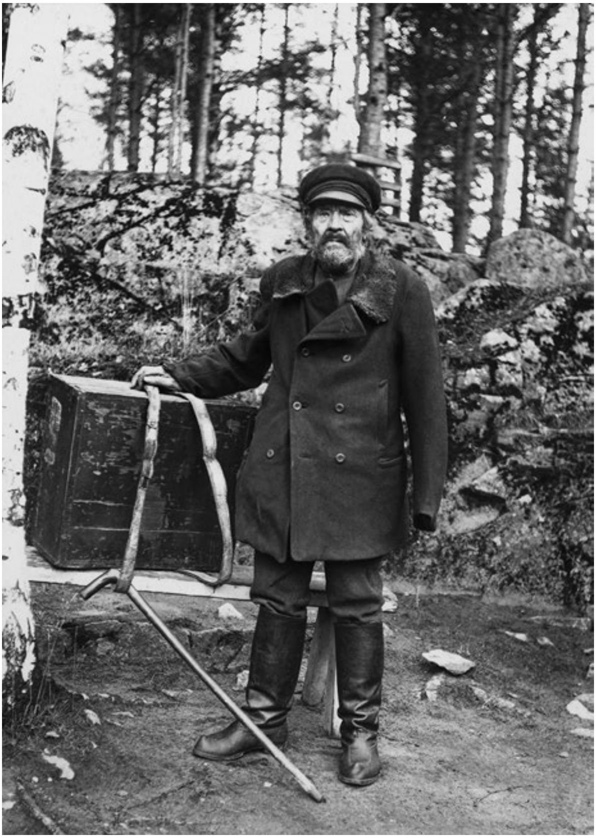

Fig. 1.3 The peddler Juho Monthan on his 80th birthday in 1929. (Photographer unknown. The Finnish Heritage Agency)

was created and reconstructed in everyday practices. Both women and men were involved in trading spaces, in marketplaces, and in domestic spaces in homes. By scrutinizing everyday social practices and laypeople, the book makes the repertoires of women and men visible and thereby studies the intertwined making of gender and space.[12]

The relatively homogeneous and quickly developed North provides an interesting case to investigate social relations not only across borders, but also across social class, ethnicity, and language relations. Nowadays, the Nordics are famous for their social democracies, gender equality, welfare benefits, and low level of corruption. Up until the mid-twentieth century, most countries in the North were predominantly agrarian, as industrialization began only in the late 1800s. The majority of the population were peasants (farmers or farmhands) or employed by town industries that were dramatically increasing.

Peddling was often the first occupation of migrants in their new countries, and these activities often attracted other economically vulnerable social groups. However, as an effect of the overall increase in consumption, peddling and the growth in trade decreased the hierarchical gap between social groups. Selling food became increasingly important to feed the burgeoning town populations in this era of industrial expansion. Hence, sellers belonging to subjugated groups started appealing to the middle and upper classes with much-needed products, services, and food. For example, food was sold in local food markets or by vendors selling their wares door to door in ways that connected the upper class with traders.[13] Moreover, encounters with distinctive ethnicities became more frequent in the contexts of marketplaces and street vending in towns. Just like ethnic minorities, women took part in petty trade as capable actors, creating a gendered niche of economic opportunity through the capitalization of their cooking and vending skills.[14]

Trading Practices: Creative Uses of the Social Order

Theoretically, the collection follows Michel de Certeau's (1984) notion of *practices* in emphasizing the potential significance of seemingly trivial and routine everyday activities, such as walking, talking, reading, or selling and buying commodities. We argue that there is a need to think in a more nuanced way about daily encounters between mobile groups and the resident population.

These encounters were physical and tangible. As social relations and subjectivities were constructed in a constantly ongoing process of performance, interactions between traders and consumers were mutually constitutive. In their selling and buying practices, subjects were "making" and performing ethnicity, gender, and class. Inspired by de Certeau, we approach petty trade as sets of heterogeneous and changing practices, shaped and used in particular spaces. In his plea for the study of the political aspects of everyday practices, de Certeau sheds light on ordinary rituals and the utilization of urban spaces.[15] All the chapters investigate practices, rituals, and forms of interactions that over time became attached to the daily routines of buying and selling. In addition to this, the chapters point to the ways in which traders and customers made use of various geographical places, transforming them into economic spaces of trading (see Fig. 1.4).

The concept of practice thus relates to *space*, which we understand as "a practiced place," in which subjugated ("the weak") and ruling ("the strong") groups come together.[16] De Certeau opens up questions about how informal practices and material encounters in the marketplace can be understood. Rejecting dichotomies, de Certeau describes the tangible and momentary tactics people develop to pursue their goals and adapt to their surroundings. These tactics were embodied as well as mental, being inscribed in posture, manners, clothing, and modes of speaking.

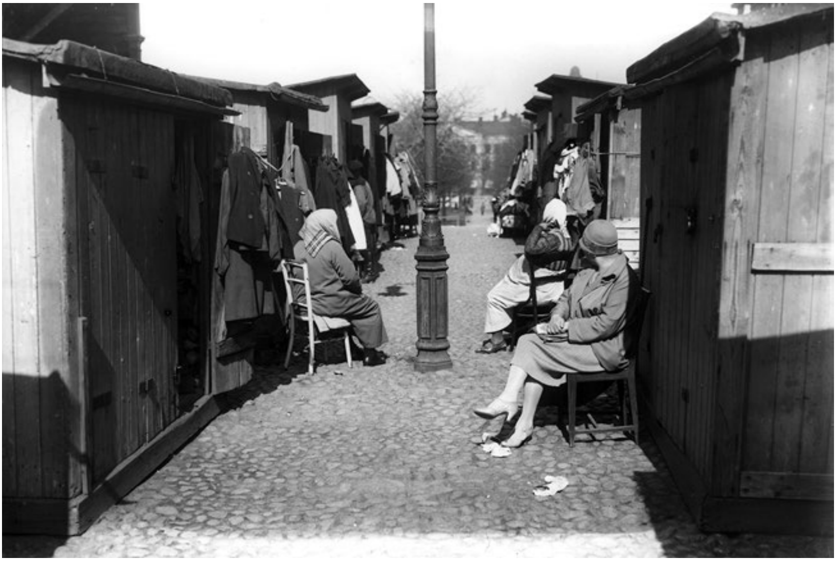

Fig. 1.4 Jewish traders selling clothes at the *Narinkka*, a market square in central Helsinki, Finland, in 1929. Jewish and Russian traders were given the right to trade only in this place. The name of the market square is derived from the Russian expression на рынке (na rynke), which means "at the marketplace". (Photo by Rafael Roos. Helsinki City Museum)

In our volume, we look at how customary and informal as well as formal practices were enacted, enunciated, transformed, and invented. Despite local government authorities' efforts to control the market space and selling encounters, in addition to their general hostility toward mobile peddlers, residents continued to buy goods and foods from petty traders.[17] The majority of these peddlers worked without licenses, thus bending regulations and laws. Although local and state authorities regulated—and even withdrew—permissions and authorizations for market trade in Nordic towns in the late nineteenth century, peasants and other traders defied strictures and continued selling and bartering various commodities at annual or quarterly fairs in small towns.

Making use of the dominant social order and displaying forms of resistance, or what de Certeau calls tactics, "ordinary people" are not to be understood as passive and submissive but rather as active, capable of manipulating and (re)shaping the environments around them through everyday actions. De Certeau approaches situated practices as examples of how "the weak make use of the strong," which "lends a political dimension to everyday practices."[18] Despite repressive societal structures (that always exist in a society), ordinary people enact elements of creative tactics to make use of the very same structures—an account echoing Foucault's notions of power and resistance.[19] The task is to scrutinize uncountable and small transformations of and within dominant systems.[20]

Following the trajectory outlined by de Certeau, *Forgotten Livelihoods* makes visible the countless, seemingly insignificant practices by means of which both sellers and customers leverage specific circumstances and positions.[21] Our volume discloses how petty trade could be practiced in a myriad of ways, both informally and illegally, as well as based on creative understandings of the legal order and formal restrictions.

Encounters between sellers and buyers consisted of marketing tactics that included performance and interaction; for example, sellers would holler and cry their wares, and they would dress up in a certain way. The appearance of a seller was adjusted to meet the expectations of buyers and, more broadly, city culture. Similarly, petty traders could provide entertainment by singing, dancing, fortune telling, storytelling, or exhibiting their "extraordinary" and "exotic" bodies, sometimes exaggerating their ethnic difference, or playing with their exoticism and mythological appearance to attract the audience and ultimately get money (see Jonasson; Johansson; Wassholm in this volume).

On Things and Materiality

Scholarship on the history of things has pointed to their capacity to mediate human relationships among social groups across space and time.[22] We are thus interested in the meanings given to the actual items (i.e., the consumer goods) and, following theories of material cultures, we understand artifacts, objects, and things not as passive, but rather as social agents, or "actans," actively shaping the social.[23] We are further informed by anthropologist Daniel Miller, who maintains that to go beyond a dualistic approach means "recognizing that the continual process by which meaning is given to things is the same process by which meaning is given to [human] lives."[24] In his pioneering work, Arjun Appadurai talks about "the social life of things,"[25] giving an apt description of how things circulate and are redefined: "… today's gift is tomorrow's commodity. Yesterday's commodity is tomorrow's found art object. Today's art object is tomorrow's junk. And yesterday's junk is tomorrow's heirloom."[26] Moreover, "things" are commodified as they travel and are given new meanings in different contexts. Rags, for instance, usually worthless to the individual, could be redefined as valuable materials and pivotal economic goods, because they were needed and used in paper production in the early 1800s (see Sundelin and Wassholm in this volume).

Commodities undeniably played an important role in enabling encounters between petty traders and their customers, not only as things for sale (see Fig. 1.5). Goods also embodied, shaped, and altered social relations, thereby representing a sort of materialization of such relations. Commodities were also gendered, classed, and ethnicized, as were economic activities, spheres, and practices. Postcolonial studies have drawn attention to the potential empowerment for subjugated social groups by means of artifacts.[27] Yet, petty trade could also have an oppressive force, in that it was often an enforced form of livelihood for poor and vulnerable social groups. Feminist scholars have demonstrated how gendered relations are among the social relations that artifacts clearly embody, convey, and shape.[28] Gender can be imprinted onto objects through associations with gendered divisions of labor, and through associations with gender symbols and myths. These aspects were visible in petty trade, in which gendered artifacts contributed to the maintenance of gendered social relations, especially relations of power (particularly in relation to the sedentary community), but also reciprocal relations.

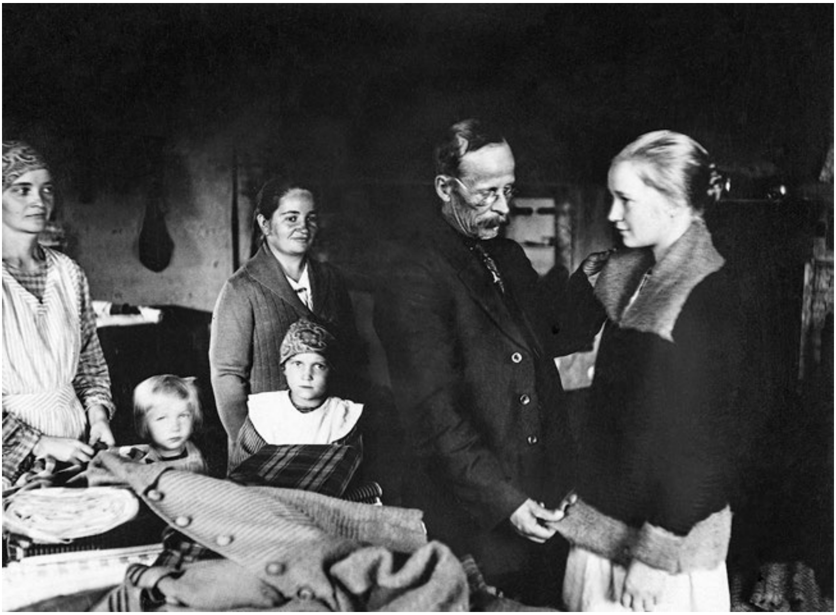

Fig. 1.5 The Karelian peddler Stepan Stepanoff fitting on clothes for his customers in Northern Karelia in 1926. (Photo by H. Tarkkonen 1926. The Finnish Heritage Agency)

For instance, Roma men became associated with horses, whereas Roma women were seen in relation to handicrafts, particularly laces (see Ahlbeck in this volume). Commodities carried meanings and strategies. Laces and textiles were not only coveted commodities; they also served as a means to establish trust and respectability and to strengthen social relations between petty traders and peasants. By donating or exchanging laces (for food and shelter), Roma women could establish close contact with the matrons and other women of the house, thus ensuring entry the next time the family came to the village.

What do we mean when we say that practices or materials were ethnicized? Not only gender but also ethnicity was imprinted onto both livelihoods and artifacts. For example, "Gypsy horse trading," "Rucksack-Russian peddling," and "Sámi reindeer herding" were ethnicized in the sense that they were identified exclusively through particular practices (see chapters by Ahlbeck; Sundelin; Kortekangas in this volume). Consequently, their commodities were ethnicized; for instance, laces and horses were strongly associated with "gypsies," and textiles with Russian peddlers. The way traders were regarded by their customers, or how they were portrayed in the public discourse, affected how their goods were looked upon. The racist stereotypes of Roma peddlers and Afro-American entertainers, for example, meant that "Gypsy things" and "indecent Negro shows" were, like the traders themselves, presented as undesirable and worthless: Roma's horses were in bad shape and not suitable for proper farm work, their handicrafts and other commodities were of poor quality, the entertainment provided by Afro-American women was lousy, and so forth.

Not only nonhuman things, but also human bodies were commodified, traded, and consumed similarly as goods. Female bodies, in particular, became visible at fairs and in marketplaces, some as prostitutes or sellers of sex (Vainio-Korhonen in this volume), others exhibiting their "exotic" bodies—in this case, black bodies[29]—as entertainment to be gazed at (Jonasson in this volume). Female traders also displayed their bodies through specific clothes and costumes, which enabled them to establish themselves as sellers or workers specialized in certain trades (Johansson in this volume). These cases illustrate practices of selling and consumption of female bodies in different ways. While commodification is often understood as oppressive in that it regulates female bodies in an objectifying way, the chapters in our volume look at how female traders *used* their bodies to their own advantage, employing performative "tactics," recognizing that their bodies were marketable commodities.

Although these female traders' activities may be regarded as subversive, the women were nevertheless responding to poverty, vulnerability, and marginalization, often lacking other livelihood options, which reflects the importance not only of gender but also social class and race. In addition, we do not know how the women themselves experienced their livelihoods, as we do not have personal (first-person) accounts, only sources written by authorities and the public.

TRAPPED IN TRADITIONS: ON SOURCES, METHODS, AND ETHICS

The manifold materials and sources used in this volume consist of public writings (e.g., newspapers), ethnological questionnaires, popular descriptions, oral history interviews, fiscal and legal sources, police archives, reminiscences, illustrations, photographs, fiction, and memoirs. Given the visible nature of petty trade and materiality regarding vending, surprisingly little is known about the social encounters and practices of small-scale trade. Certainly, due to taxation and legislation on trade, there are several extant historical documents on petty trade in various Nordic national and provincial archives. In official archival sources, however, traders were often depicted from the perspectives of the resident groups or from the top-down view of the authorities, whereas the "voices" of the subordinate groups remained silent. Our volume discloses examples of both life writings (see Stark in this volume) and attempts to outline biographies of traders, insofar as the sources allow (see chapters by Vainio-Korhonen and Sundelin in this volume).

In exploring the vulnerable livelihoods often pursued by marginalized social and ethnic groups in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we need to address the problematic power asymmetries concerning historical sources. Public documents, newspapers, and ethnographic sources, like folklore collections, unmistakably illustrate the hierarchical nature of cultural knowledge, that is, how cultural memory was produced, collected, and shaped by ideological and political motives, such as nation-building forces. Albeit official records and writings may reveal how petty trade was practiced and (re)presented in public discourses, more personal accounts—such as how traders looked upon their work, why some ended up as full- or part-time petty traders, how they created social networks, and the consumption patterns of the lower social classes—are difficult to trace.

Ethnographic and cultural archives in the Nordic countries were long seen only as a means of promoting the representative characteristics of the national (majority) and of serving the nation-state project. As organizations endowed with institutional power, therefore, archives have not only been depositories of collectibles but active agents of inclusion and exclusion.[30] One obvious reason for the absence of folksy types of petty trade, consumer goods and entertainment, is the modern nature of the phenomenon. From the nineteenth century onwards, European scholars interpreted mainly rural people as possessing oral as well as material traditions, which were considered to have been handed down from previous generations. Among scholars, the commoners have usually been called "the folk" (Swedish: *allmoge*, *bonde*; Finnish: *kansa*, *rahvas*).

Scholars and ethnographers, who dealt with the culture they themselves were not part of, objectified the rural, non-educated people and their vernacular culture, thereby removing these people's own possibility to act as protagonists and to make their own interpretations of their culture. Often this top-down relationship was stated in the letters, questionnaires, and instructions of the archives sent to lay collectors.[31] When discussing the concept "ordinary people," Michel de Certeau points at the marginality of the majority, emphasizing that most people can be considered "un-seen" and "un-read." Depicting marginality as universal, he nevertheless pays attention to how various groups are positioned hierarchically within the dominant cultural economy.[32] Thus, the majority is by no means homogeneous; the possibilities of deployments of practices and utilization of space are related to power relations and different relationships of force.

Since many of the traditional minorities resorted to street vending or ambulatory petty trade, their livelihoods were seen as marginal and not fitting the grand narrative based on sedentary peasant ideals. Thus, petty trade as a specific livelihood of ethnic minorities was long neglected. For example, the Archives of the Finnish Literature Society organized dozens of ethnographic questionnaires in 1936–1968, but none focused on marketplaces or the petty trade of consumer goods. Contrary to the Finnish Literature Society, however, Swedish-speaking cultural heritage archives in Finland organized questionnaires on Russian itinerant peddlers in 1957 and 1968.[33]

Many of the chapters in this volume deal with social groups that were not in power but rather in marginal and vulnerable positions, due to their ethnicity and lack of resources—that is, poverty. By taking seriously the subjugated voices that do exist and the ones we are able to trace, *Forgotten Livelihoods* sheds more light on social and cultural encounters, tense or peaceful, and experiences concerning petty trade and economic change. Ethical sensitivity and source criticism are part of our methodological awareness. By taking seriously subordinate experience, insofar as it is possible, we aim at producing ethically sustainable research.

Presentation of Chapters

Each chapter delves into different forms of itinerant livelihoods and consumption in Northern Europe, during a time of increasing modernization and globalization, suggesting how these phenomena can be analyzed and understood. Collectively, the contributions develop novel approaches to such important themes as marginalization, ethnic relations, poverty, and possibilities of social mobility, namely, large social phenomena over time and space.

Otso Kortekangas investigates trade, a forgotten Sámi livelihood, as portrayed in the journals of two nineteenth-century Nordic clergymen, Jacob Fellman (Finland) and Petrus Læstadius (Sweden). Kortekangas argues that studying trade involves an *unearthing* of forgotten Sámi livelihoods in two ways. First, detaching Sámi livelihoods from a strong connection to land enables us to see livelihoods and practices beyond the somewhat limiting stereotype of indigenous peoples as innately attached to landscape or the environment. Secondly, following the more conventional connotation of the verb 'to *unearth*,' indicating that the traditional Sámi way of life was not a monoculture of reindeer, paints a more complex and richer understanding of the history of Scandinavia's arctic and subarctic expanses.

In her chapter, **Ella Johansson** examines late nineteenth-century Swedish female peddlers, the *Dalkullor* from the district of Dalarna (or Dalecarlia), and more specifically how these women used traditional clothing as "marketing strategies." During this period, this county located in central Sweden came to symbolize the most representative region of "Swedishness." Seen as a link to a glorious past, this region was admired for its archaic and authentic material culture. Johansson suggests that this "ethnification" was a livelihood strategy for the poor.

Anna Sundelin and **Johanna Wassholm** trace a forgotten, yet important itinerant means of livelihood, namely, rag collecting. Rags played an essential role as raw material for the paper and textile industries in the nineteenth century. The chapter identifies a business logic based on the idea that material perceived by one individual as worthless could be turned into something of economic value. As rags were commodified, they acquired new value in a different context. By analyzing newspapers, periodical articles, and responses to ethnographic questionnaires, the authors follow a group of rag collectors from the Karelian Isthmus, who utilized their favorable geographic location to gain a livelihood from a circular flow of goods. Sundelin and Wassholm demonstrate how an earthenware pot could be bartered for a discarded garment, which in turn became a piece of the puzzle in the process that kept industry and economic growth going.

Ann-Catrin Östman investigates informal market gatherings in Western Finnish towns, where traders operated from humble premises and according to customary rules. Peasant traders marketed food, firewood, and other agricultural products, as well as animals and handicrafts, in towns. When economic regulations were liberalized in the middle of the nineteenth century, market trade—a vernacular form of commerce—was increasingly viewed as disruptive and immoral, as well as old-fashioned and unnecessary. Influenced by Michel de Certeau's understanding of practices, Östman focuses on the complex relationships between regulations, practices, cultural environment, and social hierarchies.

In a similar vein, **Niklas Huldén** looks at the long tradition of barter trade between peasants, fishermen, and other inhabitants of Estonia and Finland. This commerce established encounters over the Gulf of Finland that were mutually beneficial, as the parties could trade their surplus means, exporting mainly salted herring from Finland and receiving grain products, mainly rye, from Estonia. Trade strongly depended on developing personal acquaintances with traders from the other side of the gulf, forming a sort of partnership called *sepra* that could last for a season or even years and decades. Huldén's analysis includes the diverse goods that were traded and the practices of the gift-giving tradition.

Jutta Ahlbeck explores Roma livelihoods, particularly horse trading. Until the mid-twentieth century, the Finnish Roma (Kaale) supported themselves by means of small-scale itinerant trade, such as peddling and market trade. The chapter traces the Roma's strategies of survival in the first half of the twentieth century by analyzing interviews with members of this group. The Roma narratives emphasize respectability, inclusion, and belonging in terms of livelihood, thus defying the majority's persistent view of "Gypsies" as beggars and swindlers. Respectable horse trading was constructed in relation to Roma masculinity and, concomitantly, respectability was gendered as masculine. Ahlbeck suggests that these performative accounts are critical for understanding subjugated groups, with particular significance for Roma, marginalized within dominant discourses.

Following the theme of gendered livelihoods, **Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen** investigates women's sex trade in early nineteenth-century Finland. In addition to doing cleaning work or laboring as tavern maids, petty traders, or servants for families, sex work was one way for poor women to earn a living. Vainio-Korhonen demonstrates how sex trade in early modern towns seldom had its own separate space or place. It was practiced indoors and outdoors, in taverns, in the streets and marketplaces, at dances, and on excursions and picnics. The selling of sex spread across the town and beyond its borders.

Sex and female bodies could hence be employed as means of livelihood, as “entertainment” for customers and viewers. **Maren Jonasson** examines the livelihoods of six itinerant artists with “extraordinary” bodies who performed, and were exhibited, in the Nordic countries in 1860–1910. They traveled extensively and were put on display to varied audiences in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland at town markets, in restaurants, and at other locations and events where large crowds were expected to gather. These performing artists made their living and supported their families by exhibiting their “deviant” or “exotic” bodies to a paying audience. Jonasson discusses the agency of these artists, their marketing strategies and merchandise, and the ways in which they framed their bodies.

Entertainment as merchandise is additionally elaborated in the chapter by **Anna Kuismin**. She investigates representations of popular amusements in Finnish newspapers, periodicals, and fiction from the 1870s to the 1910s. The focus is on broadside ballads and on how these texts portrayed sellers of songs more generally, but the chapter also explores how these traders were seen by the people who bought their commodities. The period has been called “the golden age of broadside ballads,” during which the culture of creating, selling, and consuming (singing and reading) these texts belonged to the unschooled common people, while educated writers repeatedly attacked such activities. Kuismin argues that fairs represented a space in which carnivalesque elements disrupted the monotonous daily life. Again, the lower classes enjoyed the amusements, while newspapers and fictional texts complained about the noise, excess drinking, and the petty crimes found at fairs.

Johanna Wassholm explores how “Rucksack Russians,” Tatars, Eastern Jews, and saw grinders were portrayed as a threat in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Nordic countries. By analyzing newspaper writings, Wassholm demonstrates how itinerant traders coming from outside local communities stirred ambivalent emotions among the majority population. Theoretically speaking, such newspapers’ depictions are analyzed through the concept of enemy image, defined as a stereotypical and negative evaluation of the “Other.” The enemy image emanates in a perception of the unfamiliar or strange and is utilized with an aim to evoke negative emotions toward outsiders. Wassholm offers a multifaceted picture of the specific contexts in which mobile traders from the outside were welcomed and rejected, respectively.

Experiences of petty trade are also examined by **Eija Stark**, who analyzes written autobiographies of working-class rural Finns and stresses the strategies of petty trade for coping with poverty, as well as its social consequences, during the rise and formation of the modern welfare state. The chapter approaches petty trade as a form of livelihood among the rural working class and as a visible sign of consumerism represented in personal narratives. Moreover, Stark examines what kind of class conflicts as well as cultural clashes petty trade comprised.

The individual chapters end with an exploration of the shift from itinerant to sedentary life. **Anna Sundelin** analyzes mobile traders from Russian Karelia who abandoned their itinerant livelihood and settled down in Finland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of these former peddlers opened up stores in the Finnish countryside, making use of their skills as traders and previously formed networks to keep their stores well supplied. Sundelin combines a multitude of sources, such as business licenses, photographs, and advertisements, and offers new insights into the transition from itinerant peddling to storekeeping, as well as the experiences of migrant entrepreneurs.

In the conclusions, editors **Jutta Ahlbeck**, **Eija Stark**, and **Ann-Catrin Östman** discuss how both trading encounters and commodities were charged with meaning, and intimately connected to gendered, ethnicized, and classed practices. The editors ask whether, in an ambiguous way, communities aimed at securing the flow of goods by keeping the trading groups in the margins and by accentuating their otherness. On the other hand, traders themselves sometimes *emphasized* their difference as a strategy to secure their own livelihood. Thus, traders were forced to deal with difference, whether they tried to escape the norms that defined them or chose to stay in the margins.

Forgotten Livelihoods demonstrates how open flows of goods and adjacent trading encounters changed the position of peripheral and/or marginal groups, including traders as well as customers. In the nineteenth century, new livelihood opportunities emerged for itinerant traders, who distributed the increasing supply of colonial and industrial commodities, handicrafts, and drapery. These traders not only gained their livelihoods from petty trade, but they also acted as important intermediaries in providing rural and urban customers, often from lower social strata, with reasonably priced merchandise. More importantly, people from different backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities came together in new ways, with petty trade functioning as a significant social arena for such encounters.

How did the customers regard petty traders who belonged to other social, ethnic, or religious groups? How and where did encounters between sellers and buyers take place? How did traders and consumers interact? Where did they meet? Were economic practices, individual products, and encounters gendered, ethnicized, classed, or racialized—and, if so, how? To what extent were these relations based on reciprocity and inclusionary practices, or, conversely, on subordination and discrimination?

Forgotten Livelihoods uncovers the ambiguous and forgotten histories of petty trade and demonstrates how some of the peddlers became visible figures, sometimes despised "Others" and at other times familiar guests, or even spouses, in both textual discourses and public spaces. It addresses the asymmetry of narratives and how the stories of peddlers and itinerant trade belong to the cultural domain of the resident population. Public documents, folklore, popular imagination, and archival institutions concerning peddling reflect the views of the majority. By attempting to trace the voices of the traders themselves, we offer an ethically sound and more complex understanding of what it meant to be a peddler, and thereby contribute to the history of subordinate groups.

NOTES

1. To some extent, market trade and other forms of petty trade in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe are touched upon in Jon Stobart and Ilja Van Damme's (eds.) *Modernity and the Second-Hand Trade. European Consumption Cultures and Practices, 1700–1900* (2010) and in Michael K. Goodman, David Goodman & Michael Redclift's (eds.) *Consuming Space. Placing Consumption in Perspective* (2010).
2. E.g., Maria Ågren. 2016. *Making a Living, Making a Difference: Gender and Work in Early Modern European Society.*
3. See, David Pennington. 2015. *Going to Market. Women, Trade and Social Relations in Early Modern English Towns, c. 1550–1650*; Adrian Randall and Andrew Charlesworth (eds.). 2000. *The Moral Economy and Popular Protest*; Norbert Götz. 2015. "Moral Economy: Its Conceptual History and Analytical Prospects." See also Graham, 2010, pp. 4–7.
4. See, e.g., Leo Lucassen, Wim Willems, and Annemarie Cottaar. 1998. *Gypsies and Other Itinerant Groups. A Socio-Historical Approach.*
5. See, e.g., Fontaine 2011, pp. 37–40; Wassholm and Sundelin 2018b, pp. 191–197; Wadauer 2012, pp. 225–230.
6. Wassholm and Sundelin 2018b, pp. 191–197; Wassholm 2020, pp. 11–14.
7. The Finnish Civil War was a fight for the leadership and control of *Finland* between White *Finland* and the *Finnish* Socialist Workers' Republic (Red

Finland) during the country's transition from being a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire to an independent state.

8. SÅF 1916 [*The Yearbook of Finland's Statistics*, 2016].
9. Alapuro 1988, p. 33.
10. Johanna Wassholm and Anna Sundelin. 2018a. "Emotions, Trading Practices and Communication in Transnational Itinerant Trade"; Sigrid Wadauer. 2011. "Mobility and Irregularities: Itinerant Sales in Vienna in the 1920s and 1930s."
11. Bromley 2000, p. 2.
12. Michel De Certeau. 1984. *Practices of Everyday Life*; Doreen Massey. 1994. *Space, Place, and Gender*; Heuvel 2018, pp. 694–696.
13. See, Teubner 2019, p. 240; Graham 2010, pp. 33–42.
14. See, Teubner 2019, p. 232.
15. De Certeau 1984, pp. xiv–xvi.
16. De Certeau 1984, pp. xix, 117–118.
17. E.g., Pekka Nevalainen. 2016. *Kulkukauppiaista kauppaneuvoksiin. Itäkarjalaisten liiketoiminta Suomessa*.
18. De Certeau 1984, p. xvii.
19. Foucault 1978, p. 95.
20. De Certeau 1984, pp. xii–xiv.
21. De Certeau 1984, p. xv.
22. See, e.g., historian Ivan Gaskell in his extensive studies, especially 2018, p. 218. See also Ulrich et al. (eds.) 2015. *Tangible Things. Making History through Objects*.
23. E.g., Bruno Latour. 2005. *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. The fields of material cultures, actor-network-theory, science and technology studies, "thing theory," posthumanism, new materialism, and so forth are extensive and cannot be elaborated within the scope of this chapter. Given the broad remit of these studies, it is not surprising that there is no strict consensus as to what precisely is meant by "materiality" or to what extent things can be regarded as "having" agency; see, e.g., Gaskell 2018, pp. 217–218.
24. Miller 2002, p. 417.
25. Arjun Appadurai. 1986. "The Social Life of Things. Commodities" in *Commodities in Cultural Perspective*.
26. Appadurai 2006, p. 15.
27. E.g., Mihesuah. 2010. *Repatriation Reader. Who Owns American Indian Remains*?; de Witte and Meyer 2012, pp. 47–48; Harlin 2019, pp. 258–259.
28. Anne-Jorunn Berg and Merere Lie. 1995. "Feminism and Constructivism. Do Artifacts Have Gender?"; Maureen Daly Goggin and Tobin Fowkes. 2009. *Women and Things, 1750–1950. Gendered Material Strategies*; Carla

Bittel, Elaine Leong, and Christine von Oertzen. 2019. *Working with Paper. Gendered Practices in the History of Knowledge*.

29. There is a long tradition of feminist postcolonial thought that problematizes the commodification of black female bodies. bell hooks (1992) argues that western culture produces, promotes, and perpetuates what she calls the "commodification of Otherness" (p. 21) through the exploitation of the black female body. This commodification has included the sexualization of black women.
30. Anttonen 2012, p. 328.
31. Lilja 1996, pp. 189–191; Mikkola et al. 2019, p. 62.
32. De Certeau 1984, pp. xvi–xvii.
33. See, Wassholm and Sundelin 2018b, p. 135.

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