CHAPTER 14

Conclusions: Dealing with Difference

Jutta Ahlbeck, Ann-Catrin Östman, and Eija Stark

Focusing on the margins of retail, our volume has demonstrated the increasing flow of people and commodities in Northern Europe during the long nineteenth century, and it has examined exchanges between manifold locations and societies. Networks of petty trade extended through economically diverse regions, communities, and countries. From Russia to Finland, from Finland to Sweden, and so forth, itinerant traders traveled, sometimes quite long distances, along with their goods. The language used in these trading practices was often mixed. Russian sellers, for instance, quickly learned Finnish and Swedish, or at least enough to make themselves understood when trading.

The chapters in *Forgotten Livelihoods* have investigated significant and heterogeneous yet relatively underexplored groups of traders. For many marginalized groups, such as the rural and urban poor, as well as Roma, Tatar, and Russian Karelian peddlers, self-employment was often an

J. Ahlbeck (✉) • A.-C. Östman
Culture, History and Philosophy, Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland
e-mail: jutta.ahlbeck@abo.fi; aostman@abo.fi

E. Stark
The Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki, Finland
e-mail: eija.stark@finlit.fi

© The Author(s) 2022

J. Ahlbeck et al. (eds.), *Encounters and Practices of Petty Trade in Northern Europe, 1820–1960*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-98080-1_14

inevitability. Although countries in the Nordics and municipalities imposed various decrees on peddling and petty trade in the nineteenth century, peasants and other traders defied such restrictions and continued selling and bartering various commodities at fairs in small towns. In the Nordic context, like elsewhere, minority groups often relied on petty trade to earn a living.

Applying interdisciplinary approaches, the authors have made detailed and empirically rich historical, sociological, and ethnologic analyses of petty trade. Due to its informal character, peddling as well as market trade have left few and fragmented historical records. Through informed investigations of various empirical materials and sources, the chapters make a range of livelihoods visible.

In a methodologically and theoretically rich chapter, Otso Kortekangas addressed the economic importance of Sámi trade in marketplaces in the subarctic regions. Looking at how a seemingly simple product such as shoe-hay was prepared by the fishing Sámi and then sold to reindeer herders in exchange for reindeer meat, he revealed the existence of a high degree of specialization in production and supply. Though the sale of sex is seldom visible in contemporary sources, Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen demonstrated how the poorest of the sex workers—in this case, women examined for venereal disease—utilized markets to make a living. Travelling from one fair to the next, these women survived by means of petty crime and, seemingly, sex work. In a similar vein, women of color and extraordinary-bodied itinerant female performers displayed and “sold” their bodies and skills at fairs and markets. Utilizing searchable newspaper databases as well as other historical documents, Maren Jonasson provided a rare contribution to studies on petty trade and livelihoods by tracing African-American entertainers who traveled across the Nordic countries.

These cases exemplify how individuals living under poor and uncertain conditions utilized marketplaces in different ways to earn a living (see Fig. 14.1). While Roma women were supporting themselves and their families by trading their handcrafted laces, Roma men were engaged in trading horses. Moreover, Niklas Huldén demonstrated how Finnish and Estonian families participated in the seasonal expeditions across the Gulf of Finland, and women, too, took part in markets on the other side of the gulf. Although several chapters dealt with male ambulatory traders, women were also engaged in petty trade, as Ella Johansson and Eija Stark highlighted in their chapters on rural and working-class women.

Fig. 14.1 Fish was a product coveted by customers of all social classes. The fish market in Helsinki at the turn of the twentieth century was a space of many encounters and practices. (Photo by unknown. The Finnish Heritage Agency)

As the chapters in *Forgotten Livelihoods* have demonstrated, petty trade was practiced full-time, part-time, seasonally, or occasionally, during a period when multiple forms of employment were common or during times of unemployment. As petty trade was often informal, sellers operated in a grey zone between legal and illegal practices. By studying informal economic activities, we shed light on the conditions of uncertainty and poverty under which survivalist and opportunist livelihood strategies were widely used. To make a living, most people had many sources of income, and workers often had to resort to petty trade to sustain

themselves. During periods of social or economic crises, such as famine or years of bad crops, widowhood, wars, and economic depression, many commoners took to petty trade to survive. Eija Stark analyzed experiences of petty trade and how the rural poor regarded petty trading as a "last resort," as a strategy to cope with poverty. In the past, trade and small-scale business seldom offered a way to success. On the contrary, they were a form of livelihood for those who were unable to afford the heavy costs of renting a shop or setting up their own farm. Similarly, rural small-scale farmers and urban laborers, who were seasonally unemployed from factory work, took up selling practices for lack of a better alternative.

Such a lack of alternative sources of livelihood was usually the prime reason for practicing petty trade, especially among certain ethnic minorities in the Nordic region who had difficulties finding employment and did not own land or were not even allowed to rent land. For the Roma, people of color and other ethnicized groups, for example, petty trade can be regarded as an effect of their marginalized status in their everyday struggles for survival, in addition to facing racism and discrimination. Over time, some ethnicities specialized in selling or exchanging certain kinds of goods and items. These business practices relied strongly on internal ties and relations among members of the ethnic community, and on particular trading traditions. There is evidence that these groups were able to hand down their knowledge and traditions from one generation to the next within one ethnicity.[1] In Finland, for instance, Jews, Russians, and Roma practiced petty trade proportionally more often than members of the majority society, that is, the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking populations who were sedentary and engaged in farming, hunting, and fishing economies. Moreover, ethnic traders did not usually sell self-produced commodities; instead, they purchased goods wholesale or from producers, which they then resold in retail to rural consumers. Roma women, however, were skilled handcrafters, and sold and bartered laces, while Roma men manufactured horse-related gear.

As a form of livelihood, petty trade and retail were characterized by class, gender, and ethnic segregation. Petty trade belonged to the informal economy, and the majority of those who were engaged in peddling or market trade, rather than selling goods from stores, seem to have been very poor. As a result of more liberal legislation concerning retailing in the late nineteenth century, new shops and stores were able to be established, including in the countryside. Although economic life was increasingly deregulated and modernized at the turn of the century, traditional and

informal modes of trading were practiced up until the Second World War, and in the early postwar period.

Petty Trade in Society, Culture, and Memory

Drawing on a broad range of cross-disciplinary evidence, the chapters in our volume highlighted the societal meanings of trading activities as well as the cultural meanings connected to petty trade. The authors demonstrated how petty traders and peddlers became visible figures, both in public spaces as well as in the homes of their customers. Various forms of selling, exchanges, and informal trade practices laid the foundation for a variety of encounters in the Nordic region during the decades around the turn of the twentieth century.

Historically, popular knowledge about peddlers and itinerant traders was produced and distributed in folklore, oral history, and fiction. In the Nordics, male peddlers from Karelia ("Rucksack Russians") and female peddlers (*Dalkullor*) from Dalarna, for example, became famous, romanticized characters in folklore and cultural imagination. The fame of these traders partly reflected the importance of these two regions, Dalarna in Sweden, and Karelia in Finland, in the making of the nation-states of the two countries. Both Dalarna and Karelia were regarded as being the most culturally "authentic" areas of the countries, representing the origins of "Swedishness" and "Finnishness." Karelia, a historic province situated between Finland and Russia proper, and thus an area belonging to both Finland and Russia, was similarly presented in relation to "the origins" of Finland in terms of cultural traditions, language, and folklore.

Ella Johansson and Anna Sundelin explored how peddlers from these two regions were often saddled with stereotypical attributes, but their chapters also uncovered how the peddlers actively *used* the reputation of their home districts to their advantage in their economic practices. Sundelin investigated male peddlers from Karelia, the so-called "Rucksack Russians," who became famous peddlers in Finland. Their trade was geographically broad, reaching many customers across the country. The commodities they brought to rural customers were highly desirable and appreciated, as the rural poor rarely had the opportunity or means to acquire the consumption goods most often sold in cities. Johansson looked at the representations, strategies, and practices of female peddlers, the Dalkullor from Dalarna. The Dalkullor practiced petty trade in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, and became visible in the city landscape

by wearing traditional costumes with peaked hats. The Dalkullor thus utilized and profited from the romanticized fame of the region by dressing in local costumes. While many chapters in *Forgotten Livelihoods* addressed negative views of petty traders, particularly ethnicized sellers, the chapters discussed above, along with Niklas Huldén's contribution, also pointed to elements of nostalgia. Examining the trade between peasants in Finland and Estonia, Huldén showed how archival as well as published accounts presented trading encounters between Finnish peasants and their Estonian counterparts in a favorable light.

Although some peddlers have left traces in the archives, folklore, and collective memory—and in a favorable way, the lack of scholarly and archival interest in traders outside the mainstream—are rather striking. Ethnicized, racialized, classed, and gendered traders have seldom found their way into the archives, which can partly be explained by matters of national commemoration processes. When focusing on the peasantry, archives of folklore and ethnographic sources have in general aimed at creating a white, "homogeneous," nationalist past—an idealized and "polished" picture of the "history" of the nation. In doing so, the archives have participated in erasure, or at least in minimizing conflicts, such as "forgetting" about racial hierarchies, marginalization, and poverty.[2] This construction of a nationalist past becomes evident when looking at how trading activities of ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities have been documented—or, rather, not documented—in archival institutions. Thus, it seems safe to argue that these livelihoods have been forgotten both in the archives and in research. The economic activities of Sámi and Roma have been made invisible or recollected in biased, racialized ways. Kortekangas demonstrated how the educated elite used tropes of classical literature to describe the "strangeness" and otherness of Sámi groups, whereas Ahlbeck discussed how Roma livelihoods were not regarded as proper economic actives *whatsoever* but as disguised begging and unlawful trickeries, reflecting the majority's condescending and racialized view of the Roma minority.

Despite relatively few sources on trading activities, the authors in our volume have "dug deep" to find miscellaneous archival collections and data. Oral history interviews, written life-stories, ethnographic questionnaires, court records, fiction, interrogation documents, and collected folklore memories mirror everyday struggles for survival. They are stories of coping with poverty, sorrow, and happiness, as well as successes and failures. By drawing upon this variety of sources, the chapters unfolded

important traces of grassroots economic activities and practices of selling and buying, while uncovering changing consumption patterns.

Meanings of petty trade were negotiated as customers and traders encountered one another, and stories and experiences of exciting, "exotic" or dangerous traders were published in the newspapers. This is where common people could read about traders, what they sold and how they moved from one town, village, or municipality to another. Much like the historical records of the public authorities, newspapers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries wrote frequently on issues of petty trade, marketplace vending, and the (often unlawful) behavior of traders. For Nordic scholars of history, searchable databases of digitized newspapers, a major archival project which has been pursued in the Nordic countries in the past decade, have opened new opportunities for research. Many of the chapters in this volume have utilized these databases to find newspaper writings or rather short press items on petty trade and peddling. In this way, they have made visible fragments of stories, tracing how they are linked together and analyzing the complex puzzle to better understand the discourses and understandings of petty trade.

Anna Kuismin located and explored fiction and newspaper texts discussing fairs. Using the concept of "liminal space," Kuismin examined the subversive practices of commoners as represented in these texts. Newspapers mostly presented pejorative attitudes toward ethnicized traders as well as the consumption of commoners. The trading activities of peddlers were affected by how they were viewed as members of specific groups and to a growing extent were ascribed the role of the "other," which pushed them to the margins of society. These groups could be difficult to place in hierarchies of rural and urban communities, and to some degree they remained in inferior positions, performing economic activities that "respectable" subjects and citizens tended to avoid.

Peddlers from groups regarded as "ethnic others" seem to have awakened anxieties about the social order as well as class and gender among established groups. In general, during this period, people with mobile lifestyles were considered threatening and illegal, due to vagrancy legislation. Using the concept of "enemy image," Johanna Wassholm examined how preconceived negative notions of Russian Jewish traders regarding both ethnicity and religion echoed major social fears in the Finnish press. Hostile accounts of these peddlers must be understood in the context of Finland involuntarily being a Grand Duchy and part of Russia. Hence, it is fair to say that Russian Jewish traders were used as political figures in

public discourses in Finland and Sweden to construct “the East” as uncivilized and threatening, presenting Russia as a military aggressor.

Newspaper writers often took the authorities’ view on marketplace activities and had similar interests in condemning illicit trade. Both newspapers and authorities resisted the ever-growing consumption of the lower classes, whom those in power regarded as jeopardizing the traditional regime and social hierarchies. Overstepping class boundaries, for instance, was condemned; the habits of consumption of the poor were in general depicted as immoral, conspicuous, and unnecessary. Such biased sources illustrate the need to not rely too much on normative, prejudiced, and deceptive accounts. Instead, as discussed above, scholars determined to study marginalized economies have a responsibility to be innovative and find alternative sources, perhaps found in archives that do not necessarily deal with trade in an explicit way.

The sources analyzed in the chapters convey an array of collective memories, emotions, nostalgia, and popular stereotypes. Ann-Catrin Östman discussed how the elite depicted common people and traders in homogenizing and monolithic ways. However, in more personal accounts, like memories, ethnographic questionnaires and oral histories, customers recollected peddlers, mentioning them by name and giving them a kind of integrity. In her chapter, Sundelin suggested that Russian Karelian peddlers made an impact on local communities in the countryside, being more than impersonal passersby. Some peddlers became successful local businessmen, opening stores and becoming integrated into these communities. Sundelin underlined these traders’ extraordinary social skills, wide networks, and economic know-how. In small rural communities, customers often came to know the peddlers personally, befriending them, and some of the traders even married local women.

On Gendered, Classed, and Ethnicized Practices

For a long time, scholars of gender have called for explorations of the ways in which the meanings and knowledge of gendered differences are constructed and used to signify power relations. In her classic account of gender, Joan Scott defines gender as an inseparable part of the reproduction of social order.[3] Influenced by this approach, we show how notions of gender structured interpretations of petty trade as well as constructed potential problems. In late nineteenth-century Europe and the Western world, social Darwinist understandings of gender, class, and ethnicity were

flourishing in science and culture. The social Darwinist discourse was built upon the idea of difference and evolution. The lower social classes, not to mention non-white individuals, were regarded as less "developed," less "evolved," and more "animal-like" compared to the middle, upper, and educated classes, who were more "evolved" and "civilized"—following Darwin's notions but applied to humans. It is in this sociohistorical context that petty traders worked; thus, it should come as no surprise that both traders and their customers, often belonging to either the poor and/or ethnic minorities, were depicted as "others," as less civilized and unrespectable.

Scholars informed by postcolonial thought address the intersections between gender, ethnicity/race, and class. Gender is pivotal here, as it functioned as a catalyst for understanding "civilization," "development," and ethnicity. American historian Gail Bederman discusses how women and men were placed at different stages of cultural and evolutionary progress, to be endowed with different gendered moral qualities and characteristics in the late nineteenth century.[4] Informed by feminist scholars, including Judith Butler's notion of performative gender,[5] we take seriously Michel de Certeau's playful investigations when we are looking into routine everyday practices. In the Introduction, we discussed how de Certeau makes a distinction between "strategies" and "tactics," where "strategies" are linked with structures of power ("producers"); while individuals not included in the power apparatus, "common people", are described as "consumers." However, common people are not powerless, and de Certeau emphasizes the significance of the "practices of the weak" or the subaltern.[6] Groups such as migrants, workers, migrants, and subaltern ethnic minorities can utilize "tactics" as resistance stemming from daily life practices, for instance, in different forms of consumption.[7] Thus, despite repressive actions by those in power, ordinary people can enact creative resistance to power structures, which is in line with Michel Foucault's idea of power as productive, and resistance as inherent in all power relations.[8] The chapters in our volume disclose how traders could employ, re-employ, and sometimes alter existing social orders by the use of different performative tactics. Naturally, traders' actions and behavior were constrained by social structures and cultural expectations, but they were not, however, completely determined by these circumstances. Gender, for instance, could be enacted differently depending upon the context, and by bending or strengthening gendered norms, both female and male traders tactically encountered their consumers.

To adjust to changing and precarious situations and contexts, traders employed a multiplicity of tactics, such as sometimes using prejudices and cultural notions to their benefit. Traders could, for instance, *emphasize* their difference or uniqueness by dressing in specific clothes as a tactic to secure their livelihoods. Alternatively, African-American entertainers in the white Nordics used their black bodies to display both difference and exotism as a livelihood practice. Others were probably forced to downplay their otherness, instead of aiming at "melting in," behaving respectfully and, more importantly, looking like the majority population.

Trade practices, commodities, exchanges, and encounters, as well as sellers, were frequently depicted in gendered terms. As itinerant selling often took place outdoors at fairs and in marketplaces, spatial aspects impacted patterns of trading, including how women and men utilized space in different ways. Married women were more often trading in marketplaces, a fixed location, whereas unmarried women often worked in groups, traveling, and peddling together, as in the case of the maids (Dalkullor) from central Sweden. These women wore traditional local costumes to "brand" their economic activities and perform respectable femininity.[9] Female sellers were thus gendered in terms of both economic practices and materiality. When peddling in the public space, they dressed and performed in ways that the customers would consider respectable.

Stories of male traders interacting with female customers sometimes fed anxieties. The fact that many peddlers and other traders belonged to ethnic minorities contributed to the gendered stereotyping discourses on "foreign men coming to take our women" or "deceiving our innocent women." In such accounts, mobility in relation to trade played a part in constructing fears and perceived dangers. Vagrancy laws and restrictions contributed to the negative view of itinerant trade, particularly practiced by "other" men, so understandings of masculinities were often an issue.

Similarly, as trade, consumption was gendered, classed, and ethnicized in historical records. The consumption among the poor and lower social classes was constructed as conspicuous, but women's consumption especially was seen as harmful. Thus, the habits of women and notions of femininity were at stake.

Sellers could also introduce new practices of trading, which in some cases clashed with deep-rooted local customs and traditions. In addition to this, cultural clashes occurred as traders belonged to minorities, sometimes being foreigners or of working class. In some cases, male traders were ascribed ambiguous gendered qualities. From time to time,

newspapers depicted them as "too loud," and their language and conduct "too dramatic." Male sellers could be regarded as "unmanly," practicing trade in a childish, ungentlemanly, or unrespectable manner. Their conduct toward women was discussed in certain cases, and traders could be accused of attempting to "lure" and "deceive" women and other groups considered to be vulnerable. While some of the traders were ascribed special charisma, being handsome, sometimes this was a problem as they were "too masculine" and charming, thus threatening local masculinities. It seems clear that many traders were aware of potential negative reactions toward their economic activities and themselves, and they accentuated respectable behavior. Naturally, it was important to be considered trustworthy and upstanding when it came to relations with potential customers (see Fig. 14.2).

Both female and male petty traders could be depicted as humble, poor, and fringe figures. One could say that they *sometimes* passed as almost

Fig. 14.2 A male peddler with his horse and commodities, surrounded by female middle-class customers in the Finnish eastern countryside at the border of Russia and Finland in the 1910s. (Photo by Edith Södergran. The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland)

genderless. Earlier, practices of petty trade were at times considered informal social welfare or poor relief, and town licenses for street vending were often given to the widowed, elderly, and disabled (i.e., to those who had few other possibilities for supporting themselves).[10] Implicitly, these informal entitlements characterized understandings of petty trade, as some traders remained dependent on the goodwill of others. Impoverished women and the elderly could invoke understandings of petty trade as a form of social rights provided for the deserving poor. Femininity was often associated with powerlessness, but the poverty-stricken could also allude to perceptions of petty trade as an entitlement.

Commodities and Trading Encounters

The chapters in *Forgotten Livelihoods* suggested that commodities were also important to the lower social strata (subjugated groups), and thus they made visible the possibilities of vernacular consumption in the rural North. Commodities as *things* were not only pivotal in both enabling and shaping trading encounters between different social groups, but they also had value in their own right. Culturally significant commodities could be empowering, allowing a more respectable status for traders as well as consumers. Historical records reveal little or nothing about the meanings that customers may have ascribed to the commodities purchased from petty traders. Yet, the very fact that these trading activities continued and persisted over a long period of time indicates that there was a real demand for consumer goods and that the commodities had significance.

Studying trading practices where sellers often belonged to minority groups and customers to the majority population, we see commodities—things—as important actors in the shaping of these relationships and in the perceptions of individuals who did not belong to the resident local communities. In this respect, the volume is aligned with international studies on materiality. Political philosopher Jane Bennett has introduced the concept of "thing-power": "so-called inanimate things have a life of their own, that deep within them is an inexplicable vitality or energy, a moment of independence from and resistance to us and to other things".[11] Consequently, things have power or things can be used as tools of power. According to Bennett, types of inorganic matter, such as consumer goods, are not passive and inert but play a decisive role in trading encounters. As things affect other bodies, they have the power of enhancing or weakening them.[12]

Furthermore, this volume has aimed to trace what Lorraine Daston calls "things that talk,"[13] or what Arjun Appudaraj identifies as the "social life of things" or the "cultural biography of things" (i.e., how objects circulate and become redefined as consumer goods in different ways depending on the cultural context).[14] Anna Sundelin and Johanna Wassholm followed how rags traveled and circulated across local and regional boundaries. From being worthless items for the individual, they transformed into necessities, as rags were used and needed in the manufacturing of paper. Commodities could sometimes take the shape of *gifts* in economic exchanges, as Niklas Huldén demonstrated in his chapter on Finnish-Estonian barter trade.

However, despite our wide array of sources, the commodities are difficult to discover, and they often remain invisible, even in sources that expressly deal with petty trade. It seems as if not only the subordinate livelihoods of petty traders have been forgotten, but the consumer goods have been as well. Commodities, such as agricultural produce needed for survival in the cities, were described positively, whereas conspicuous consumption, particularly among the poor, was depicted as redundant, even immoral. Conspicuous goods were "luxury" items, "unnecessary" goods such as shawls, and "nicer" clothes (i.e., often products targeted to women customers). Thus, goods were criticized when consumed by certain segments of the community, such as by women or buyers from lower social strata.[15]

Trading Encounters as *Third Space*

We have examined the dynamics and entanglements between social practices, the materiality of commodities, norms, and the discursive meanings attached to trading practices. Petty traders in Northern Europe often operated in informal ways, sometimes illegally, and they not only encountered different communities but also existing traditions, norms, and legal cultures. Although many traders lacked citizenship rights and the right to pursue trade, and they did not belong to the communities they visited, they managed to establish a position in local communities or at least some of them.

People involved in trading used, practiced, and created spaces. Michel de Certeau's notion of "space as a practiced place",[16] in which "place" transforms into "space," addresses the different meanings (the different spaces) a specific geographical place can have. Trading encounters took

place in different spaces, both tangible and "imaginary." In a fascinating manner, Kuismin, in her chapter, approached the fair as a "liminal space;" Jonasson understood the marketplace as a "show space"; and Ahlbeck regarded the marketplace as a "narrated nostalgic space."

The overall increase in consumption in the long nineteenth century had broad cultural and social consequences that greatly affected social, ethnic, and language relations in the Nordics. In highlighting the specific dynamics of trading, we would propose that Homi K. Bhabha's theory of the "third space"—or "in-between space"—clarifies these encounters as "cultural encounters."[17] Following scholars who have studied cross-cultural mobile trade in an era of nation-building, globalization, and modernization with new forms of racism, we recognize power relations in trading. The "third space" emerges out of a tension between cultures and can be understood as a cross-cultural exchange. Bhabha introduces his concept of "hybridity" as the idea that no culture is authentic without influences from elsewhere, as it is always in contact with other cultures. As cultures come together, interact, and intersect, they form something "new," such as new identities, new practices, or new versions of historic memory.

The ideals of cultural homogeneity tend to be stronger in peripheral small-scale societies, like the Nordic countries. Approaching trading encounters as the "third space" challenges our understanding of the existing historical categories once employed in local communities. Moments of encounters in trade involved local, regional, global, and transnational entanglements in spaces, where newcomers and/or strangers interacted with local sedentary groups, both rural and urban, women and men. The following postcolonial statement by Bhabha invites us to think beyond binaries and unitary cultures: "These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new sights of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself."[18]

As both itinerant traders and resident consumers often belonged to subordinate groups, it was a space where marginalities converged. These encounters involved both human subjects and different materialities and commodities. Bhabha suggests that something new can emerge from a social encounter.[19] Social encounters in trade seemed to generate not only confusion and tension but also creative misunderstandings that changed the structuration of the social. Peddling, consumption, and the growth of trade had the capacity to simultaneously increase and decrease the gap between social groups, thus functioning as a laboratory of social contact.

Both traders and consumers benefited from the mutual exchange that trading entailed. Transnational alliances and interregional relations enhanced the traders' possibilities, and they communicated new forms of consumption to rural groups. The chapters here have suggested that trading with peddlers was especially appealing to women, young people, laborers, and servants. Thus, lower-class customers gained social and cultural resources by means of petty trade, yet the livelihood was for the poor.

Trading encounters in the third space functioned both as an opportunity and as a site of struggle. As the chapters in *Forgotten Livelihoods* have demonstrated, encounters between sellers and buyers were not always harmonious and unproblematic. On the contrary, deals were complex and hierarchical, embedded in power relations, often resulting in tensions and upheaval. The users of these spaces had to adapt to different situations, and the same deployments did not always produce equal effects. The livelihoods of petty traders were affected by how they were viewed as members of particular groups, which were often ethnicized or otherwise subordinate. People were highly aware of social roles, their own and those of others, even within class boundaries. These boundaries were complex and open to multiple interpretations.

To the customers of the lower social strata for whom new commodities were important, traders brought a sense of luxury and modernity as well as the consumer goods needed for inclusion in modernizing societies. Among other things, petty traders offered clothes, shoes, and other items that empowered and facilitated social activities. Commodities (for instance, new clothes) gave customers possibilities to perform respectability and worth in a culturally acceptable way. The contradiction here is that the consumer goods offered by scorned traders brought modernity and respectability, as well as a touch of cultivation, to the popular classes.

The history of small-scale trade in Northern Europe is a story of change, as all histories are, but also of persistent continuities in terms of socioeconomic inequalities. Even if petty trade, peddling, and other forms of itinerant trade are no longer as visible or common as they once were in today's welfare states of Northern Europe and elsewhere, Roma and migrants are still found engaged in petty trading or begging in the streets. Some inequalities seem to be persistent, particularly when it comes to ethnicized groups and minorities.

Forgotten Livelihoods seeks to bridge the research gap in the interdisciplinary field of marginalized livelihoods, informal economies, minorities, and petty trade. Offering comprehensive historical research on trade

practices among different minority groups, our volume sheds light on the diversity of Northern Europe, particularly the Nordics, a region that is often interpreted in terms of homogeneity. Here, the history of petty trade is manifold and contradictory. A hundred years ago, itinerant traders brought longstanding public concerns about mobility to the fore, but they also created new apprehensions. Yet, petty trade could be empowering for subjugated groups, both traders and their customers. The scholarly and societal significance of our research lies not only in its socially and ethically relevant topic, or in its ability to trace historical reasons and discourses on anxieties and fears connected to ambulatory groups, but also in that it helps to make sense of challenges that today's ethnic minorities are confronted with.

Notes

1. E.g., Laura Ekholm. 2019. "Jews, Second-Hand Trade and Upward Economic Mobility. Introducing the Ready-to-Wear Business in Industrializing Helsinki, 1880–1930"; Miika Tervonen. 2010. *"Gypsies", "Travellers" and "Peasants". A Study on Ethnic Boundary Drawing in Finland and Sweden, c.1860–1925*; Raluca Bianca Roman. 2016. *Kaale Belongings and Evanceligal Becomings. Faith, Commitment and Social Outreach among the Finnish Kaale (Finnish Roma)*.
2. Skott 2008, p. 21; Miika Tervonen. 2014. "Historiankirjoitus ja myytti yhden kulttuurin Suomesta"; Kati Mikkola, Pia Olsson, and Eija Stark. 2019. "Minority Cultures and the Making of Cultural Heritage Archives in Finland".
3. Joan Scott's leading statement on gender as an analytical tool involves two parts: "gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a way of signifying relations of power." See Scott 1988, p. 42.
4. Gail Bederman. 1995. *Manliness and Civilization. A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917*.
5. Judith Butler. 1990. *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*; Judith Butler. 1993. *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of Sex*.
6. De Certeau 1984, p. 37.
7. See de Certeau 1984, p. 17.
8. Michel Foucault. 1978. *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction, Vol. I.*; Michel Foucault. 1984. "Truth and Power".
9. See Beverley Skeggs. 1997. *Formations of Class and Gender. Becoming Respectable*.

10. E.g., Sigrid Wadauer. 2012. "Asking for the Privilege to Work: Applications for a Peddling License (Austria in the 1920s and 1930s)".
11. Bennett 2004, p. 358.
12. Bennett 2004, p. 122.
13. Daston 2004, p. 9.
14. Arjun Appadurai. 1986. *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*; see, also Ivan Gaskell. 2018. "History of Things."
15. See e.g., Daniel Miller. 2002. "Artefacts and the Meaning of Things".
16. De Certeau 1984, p. 117.
17. Homi K. Bhabha. 1994. *The Location of Culture*.
18. Bhabha 1994, p. 2.
19. Bhabha 2004, pp. 56, 296–312.

Bibliography

Appadurai, Arjun. *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization. A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Bennett, Jane. "The Force of Things. Steps toward an Ecology of Matter." *Political Theory* 32, no. 3 (2004): 347–372. https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591703260853.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York, London: Routledge, 1990.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York, London: Routledge, 1993.

Daston, Lorraine (ed.). *Things That Talk. Object Lessons from Art and Science*. New York: Zone Books, 2004.

De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Ekholm, Laura Katarina. "Jews, Second-Hand Trade and Upward Economic Mobility. Introducing the Ready-to-Wear Business in Industrializing Helsinki, 1880–1930." *Business History* 61, no. 1 (2019): 73–92. https://doi.org/10.1080/00076791.2018.1546694.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction, Vol. I*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

Foucault, Michel. "Truth and Power", in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow, 51–75. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.

Gaskell, Ivan. “History of Things”, in *Debating New Approaches in History*, edited by Marek Tamm and Peter Burke, 217–246. Bloomsbury: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.

Mikkola, Kati, Olsson, Pia, and Stark, Eija. “Minority Cultures and the Making of Cultural Heritage Archives in Finland.” *Ethnologia Europaea* 49, no. 1 (2019): 58–73. https://doi.org/10.16995/ee.818.

Miller, Daniel. “Artefacts and the Meaning of Things,’ in *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, edited by Tim Ingold, 396–419. London: Routledge, 2002.

Roman, Raluca Bianca. *Kaale Belongings and Evanceligal Becomings. Faith, Commitment and Social Outreach among the Finnish Kaale (Finnish Roma)*. PhD Thesis. St Andrews: University of St Andrews, 2016.

Scott, Joan. *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

Skeggs, Beverley. *Formations of Class and Gender. Becoming Respectable*. London: Sage, 1997.

Skott, Fredrik. *Folkets minnen. Traditionsinsamling i idé och praktik 1919–1964.* Göteborg: Institutet för språk och folkminnen & Göteborgs universitet, 2008.

Tervonen, Miika. *“Gypsies”, “Travellers” and “Peasants.” A Study on Ethnic Boundary Drawing in Finland and Sweden, c.1860-1925*. PhD Thesis. Florence: European University Institute, 2010.

Tervonen, Miika. “Historiankirjoitus ja myytti yhden kulttuurin Suomesta”, in *Kotiseutu ja kansakunta. Miten suomalaista historiaa on rakennettu*, edited by Pirjo Markkola, Hanna Snellman and Ann-Catrin Östman, 137–162. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2014.

Wadauer, Sigrid. “Asking for the Privilege to Work: Applications for a Peddling License (Austria in the 1920s and 1930s)”, in *Poverty and Sickness in Modern Europe. Narratives of the Sick Poor, 1780–1938*, edited by Andreas Gestrich, Elizabeth Hurren, and Steven King, 225–246. London, New York: Continuum, 2012.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.