Introduction

Returning to a Field?

During their lifetimes, anthropologists are involved in several research projects, working with individual research undertakings or as team members in, for example, multidisciplinary groups. Symptomatic for ethnographers is that they often change 'fields'. In her introduction to *The Restless Anthropologist*, an inventive title, Alma Gottlieb (2012b: 8–17) explores various structural and personal factors that drive scholars to venture to new sites of research. She and seven other ethnographers show how scholarly issues are intertwined with personal ones in ethnographers' life trajectories (Gottlieb 2012a).

Borrowing George Marcus's concepts of 'first project' and 'second project',[1] I am a good example of a contemporary European senior anthropologist whose first project took place in a specific culture area outside Europe and whose second project has arisen out of a clear personal connection. Often, with the so-called second project, there is an ambition 'to understand and map the object of study in all of its disseminations and traces' (Marcus 1998: 240). The privilege of working in a small village, or villages, in the Coast Region of Tanzania was the best lesson I could have had for trying to understand village life on an island in the Baltic (in the archipelago of the Åland Islands) in a comparative perspective a few years after my return to Finland. Both places had been focal points of immigrant groups in the past and were small-scale societies, self-sufficient but at the same time dependent on the outer world, leading to similarities in social and economic structures reflected in a number of similar cultural forms such as exchange economy, clan names and the role of older men. At the time I was mostly on maternity leave, and it would be

years before I defended my research conducted in Tanzania. Yet the sojourn time on the Åland Islands validated, in an almost tangible way, the fact that the same methods that I used in Tanzania were applicable in a society on another continent (cf. Eriksen 2001).

My 'first project' enabled me to assess the historical and cultural context of the development of ethnicity within a Tanzanian context (see Jerman 1997). Admittedly, the power of ethnic or other belonging – for example, in conflict situations – cannot be studied without considering specific historical conditions (Jerman 1991). My research in Tanzania supported a participatory research approach recognizing that 'researched people' are producers of knowledge. This approach also specifically emphasizes reflexivity, a basis for ethnographic studies.[2]

The inspiration from the aforementioned ideas and new theoretical reflections on ethnicity, and furthermore conducting interviews on (ethnic) belonging among Swedish-speaking children in Finland, gave me crucial tools for embarking on a study of the process of negotiating identity in a new context, namely that of a 'borderland'. Further, following the realization that fieldwork encounters are learning processes, this also provided a new experience for me as a researcher. Contrary to my earlier experience of going 'out' to the field, this time, I returned to a field. This comes close to James Clifford's suggestion that a diasporic scholar may 'return' to a place that they have 'never known personally but to which she or he ambivalently, powerfully "belongs"' (Clifford 1997: 208). From an autobiographical standpoint, I could also call the field 'one of my fields'. Sharing a past or a number of cultural forms with informants, not least a shared language, has given me the opportunity to get to know their narratives and current perceptions in a *dialogic interchange* (Marcus and Fischer 1986: 69). Referring to Maria Lepowsky's (2012) thoughts on how pieces of personal and intellectual biography are visibly woven into ethnographic research, Alma Gottlieb asks: 'In leaving one fieldsite in body, does one entirely leave the place in spirit?' (Gottlieb 2012b :13). Like the writers of *The Restless Anthropologist*, I recognize beyond a shadow of a doubt that former field sites have left both intellectual and emotional traces on my subsequent research.

My parents, and grandparents, arrived in Finland at the end of 1919, a few years after the Russian Revolution. Due to my upbringing, I am familiar with a variety of cultural forms in which the life of the Russian minority is enacted. When a child, my maternal language was Russian. However, the children of our family attended Swedish- and Finnish-speaking schools.

Anthropological studies have indicated that anthropology often, like a magnet, has attracted individuals with socially or culturally multiple backgrounds (Okely and Callaway 1992; Okely 2012), who themselves feel like 'Others', above all. The anthropologist Barbara Rylko-Bauer (2005: 8–9) considers it important to ask 'what this person's individual story tells us about larger historical processes that are still relevant today'. Relating his family background to his real move to anthropology, A.L. Epstein in turn noted: 'So one was aware, you know, . . . right from the outset, of being an outsider' (Yelvington 1997: 290). He emphasized making use of insights from one's personal experience in anthropological research. This pushes, of course, for self-reflection not to be mixed with narcissism. Vieda Skultans points out that the tragedy of Narcissus was not his immersion in his own image. Rather, his tragedy was that he was not able to recognize his own image, to examine it: 'The fault lay not in looking at himself, but not looking long and hard enough' (Skultans 2012).

The experiences and emotions of the anthropologist and the informant are entangled in complex ways. In this process of knowledge production, anthropologists must face their own specificity. Helena Wulff's research in a dance-related context must be mentioned here. Her enculturation into the ballet world and her embodied memory of dancing ballet – in her own words, her 'main expression' (Wulff 2008: 77) during her childhood and youth – is an excellent ethnographic lesson and at the same time a manifestation of knowledge construction in the anthropological research process. When exploring the relationship between perceptions of belonging and cultural resources among Russians crossing the borders between Finland and Russia, I have, above all, been much inspired by Skultans's insightful research when combining the role of the ethnographer, the informant and the writer (Skultans 2004; cf. Gallinat 2010: 40). Thus, I submit my autoethnographic data with confidence 'to the same kind of intellectual interrogation' (Skultans 2004: 306) as the rest of the ethnographic material of my study. Following Judith Okely (1996, 2012) and Skultans (2004), sensitive anthropology emphasizes 'the self' to understand 'the other'. Interjecting personal experience into my study, I suggest that, methodologically, aspects of my work here can be called ethnographic research into my own society (cf. Reed-Danahay 1997: 2).[3] I suggest that the development of the dialogic interchange between the informants and me has been possible through our relationship with the most important connections – a real or imagined common social or cultural background (cf. Skultans 1998). I do not know how successful I was in my attempt to have a non-hierarchical relationship

with the informants by investing my personal identity in the relationship.[4] What I know is that I found it difficult during the dialogues not to answer informants' questions as honestly as I could.

The first excerpt from my notebook in 2001, in which I reflect upon my research project (embodied in this book), which was finally in the making, reads:

> Why and how did I, then, start with this study? As a matter of fact, the idea came, in a sense, from the **other**, meaning friends and colleagues who do not share my specific background. **They** suggested that my interest in ethnic processes and my knowledge of Russian would be a perfect combination for a study on Russianness (or whatever they called it) in Finland from an anthropological perspective. But I hesitated; I felt the whole idea to be too close and too private.
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> But then it happened that some ten years ago, I was asked to present a short paper at a national conference on the music of ethnic minorities in Finland. 'Tell the public something about the Russian minority.' I did so, based on experience and some facts.[5] A short discussion with the Roma representative at the seminar about the essentialization of culture (although we did not use these concepts) was enough to give me a kick and an insight about how similar we 'others' are in our strategies of coping in the majority society. With the benefit of hindsight, this was probably the occasion on which I realized that you could be both in and out at the same time, but never in between. After this event, I started to write notes of a reflexive kind and collect newspaper cuttings, record tapes from Finnish TV about Russians and so on. In short, the idea for this project had been germinating inside me for several years.

For me, 'fieldwork at home' can be considered, on the one hand, an immersion in the field as a way of life. It involves a readiness for participant observation at any moment in time. On the other hand, this immersion in long-term fieldwork includes specific events that can be considered 'repeated short visits in the field'. These involve ethnographic interviews and participation in specific events such as festive occasions or travels. I suggest that both models are related. Rather than doing fieldwork, I experience it (cf. Borneman 2009; Okely 2012). In Okely's (2008: 63) words: 'an anticipated "break" from the research did not come easily', which means that fieldwork and personal life are merged. This often happens in an unexpected way, for example when people in everyday life comment upon themes close to my research, or when they comment on news in the media about migrants in Finland. Similar notes belong to my ethnographic research material.

Ethnicity and identity have been on the table as research questions in almost all the research projects that I have participated in. As the present study proceeded, it became clear to me that doing research with informants who shared with me some specific social forms of culture that I had acquired at an early age, first and foremost language, was a new experience in my sense of belonging among informants. This awareness of being a member of the target group of this study was similar to the one I had felt at the beginning of the 1980s during my stay as a visiting scholar in the African Sector of the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad. Then, for the first time in my life, I had the privilege to discuss research, argue, present papers and do whatever it is one does together with research colleagues at one's own department in one's native country – in the Russian language. I then realized that I did not have to *explain myself* all the time. As a member of a minority, I had always been expected by the majority of my country to explain myself, to present my ethnic background.

Without getting ahead of ourselves, this is also a crucial perception of the informants in my study and it is therefore worth mentioning at this early stage. So is a statement by the Pulitzer-awarded Vietnamese-born author and scholar Viet Thanh Nguyen. He arrived in the United States in 1975 as a 4-year-old refugee. Forty-five years later, he said: 'As a minority in a society, the majority expects all the time that you should explain yourself, translate your culture, background, history and food. If you become an author, the expectation persists.'[6]

Back to my sojourn in Leningrad. In heated discussions in a peer group or face to face in dialogue, I felt, on the contrary, that I was myself. 'This is ethnicity', I thought then: it is the way you talk, argue, listen, interrupt (or not), gesticulate. In short, it is the way you talk and the way you walk rather than your outlook.

For Amin Maalouf, a person's identity is made up of a string of elements, combined in a complex mixture (unique to each individual). Identity is singular but dynamic; it can mould itself into a vertical identity or a horizontal one. Various elements involved in this 'composite identity' are dominant in various historical contexts. This means that elements that are transmitted through tradition (religion, ancestors, ethnic affiliation) make up a person's vertical identity, whereas elements related to a person's contemporary life make up their horizontal identity. I think Maalouf's (2000: 3) thesis of identity resonates with my personal perceptions described above. This was

also the case with informants' perceptions of ethnic belonging whenever they brought them into our discussions.

Maalouf seems to make similar assumptions as the writers of *Inside European Identities* (edited by Sharon Macdonald, 1993), that persons themselves act as theoreticians when it comes to processing questions of social identity.[7] Although the horizontal sense of belonging is the more influential of the two identities, Maalouf maintains that vertical identity is most frequently invoked when it comes to perceptions of the self. This obviously happened to me in the context of my stay in Leningrad, in specific surroundings that invoked my 'vertical' belonging, whatever it was. I wish to stress that the elements of the 'string' can be either rational or emotional. Ultimately, I also claim that seen from the outside, ethnicity can be conceptualized as imaginary, partly based on an invisible subjective process of negotiation (meaning a person's negotiation with themselves), and partly on negotiation between a number of persons in an ever-present historical perspective.

In 2002 I thus set out to explore perceptions of ethnicity and identity in specific contexts among Russians in Finland. Informants' reminiscences and memories provided tools in the exploration of perceptions of identity or the 'self'. Further, my empirical material provided a specific meaning of the Finnish–Russian borderland as a transnational space, a consequence of a long-enduring historical process. My study (e.g. Jerman 2003, 2004, 2006)[8] showed that individual accounts of not only the past but also the present demonstrate how the social permeates the personal (Skultans 1998). These insights led me to further explore social memory, a phenomenon that points to a complex relationship between embodied memory, history, time and space (Jerman and Hautaniemi 2007). More specifically, I explored informants' reflections on mental and physical crossings of national borders, tying the local to the translocal and bridging the distance between the two.

Further on I delved deeper into an analysis of the ways in which cultural knowledge is related to memory. My research examined, for example, how the border is perceived in an often emotionally charged intergenerational context.[9] In what way is the border contested historically or in a transnational perspective? On the surface, scattered border crossings appear to be a modern phenomenon. However, these turned out to follow a recurrent social and political pattern that includes a number of historical layers of cultural practices and patterns. Migrants' senses of belonging somewhere must be considered in terms of a specific historical dimension that implies sharing history with Finns.

Forms of Culture as Sites of Memory

Acknowledging that there are many forms of memory, I rely on Lawrence J. Kirmayer (1996), who suggests that so-called declarative memory is episodic (what we have experienced) or semantic (what we know), or both.[10] In some narratives in my study, these two forms exist side by side, and sometimes they even merge; in some narratives they do not, at least not conspicuously. A person's reminiscences, immersed in their narrative, are always influenced by changing social discourses. This includes the idea that memories are always encompassed by materially and perceptually accessible cultural forms. Besides, people seem to interpret different social discourses in various ways, depending on age and experience, for example. Memories are, in other words, sensory components moulded by history. However, one has to bear in mind that an informant may present different versions of their narrative to different listeners – that is, the context and audience matter.[11] This makes considerable demands on the reflexivity of the researcher, as I have already tried to suggest.

Narratives of older Russians who were once children of refugees and evacuees – and who themselves have experienced war, displacements and emplacements to various places – disclose memories that unite both personal reminiscences and official history. The same can be said about Russian migrants' narratives anchored in the present century. The fall of the Soviet Union is closely related to Russians' reminiscences of reasons to cross the border into Finland, and further, to cross back to Russia. In other words: migrants react socially and culturally to events and crises that occur during various time periods in transnational society, a society distinguished by social interaction transgressing national boundaries (see also Levitt and Glick Schiller 2007).

Moving between different time perspectives with social actors, my contribution explores central concepts of cultural forms within specific social contexts. What kind of social forms of culture, essential for the sense of belonging, do informants in Finland enact in Finland or during their visits to Russia, for example? Which forms of culture cross the borders in the mind or during physical travels?

Sharing Experience

Applying a method that I have called *evaluation analysis*,[12] I identify and juxtapose key notions from personal narratives and public and political considerations related to them (specifically those manifested

on Finnish television) in a multitemporal context. The aim of evaluation analysis is to explore and identify possible points of convergence or apparent clashes. According to John Middleton, anthropologists' two fundamental aims should be 'to understand how societies "work" and the "modes of thought" of their members' (Fellow 1999: 229). I suggest that the crucial link of social memory to the dialectical relationship between the self and society complies with Middleton's succinct idea.

Building on both personal and historical sources, people's narratives are based on complex layers of memory. This means that family memories exist parallel to a cognitive knowledge of history that makes up two forms of historical consciousness.[13] Being mutually inclusive, historical sources and actors' perspectives add information not only about transnationalism, ethnicity and belonging, but also, and conspicuously so, about power relations in a multinational social space.

The narratives provide intricate concepts that have led me to explore domains outside the discipline of social anthropology.[14] Non-scientific literature is one of them. 'Novelists understand the world much better than anthropologists do', the anthropologist Ronnie Frankenberg once convincingly stated.[15] This means that I have needed to explore how concepts encountered in my study are enacted in different genres.[16]

Occasionally, thus, conceptions from novels intersect with fieldwork material from my study. Initially, Andrei Makine's novel *Dreams of my Russian Summers*[17] offered a context in which I could anchor my research. Similarly to the ethnic consciousness of the protagonist of the novel, Alyosha, informants in my study are affected by the 'majority' society. Alyosha constructs his identity during his adolescence in Siberia by listening to his grandmother's narratives from France. Some of her material objects, representing her ethnicity, provide elements in this construction process. Two different processes on the individual level can be discerned here. First, the grandmother selects certain elements from her life, consciously or unconsciously, articulating and mediating them to her grandson; and second, the boy, in turn, interprets these in his own way and picks out fitting pieces of these elements in the construction of his identity. The objects and the narratives provide tools for the construction of identity (cf. Skultans 1998: 68).

However, the boy's ethnicity is also confirmed or negotiated by the environment. One example from my study will suffice here. Listening to a scholar's lecture about emigrant Russian newspapers[18]

provided me with some clues for interpreting part of a story told previously by an informant. The story was about her grandmother's possible underground political activities. I provided the informant with feedback, and she connected her grandmother's odd actions with the behaviour of her mother during the informant's childhood and adolescence. This, in turn, had had a great impact on the informant's own strategies in life, her choice of education and her identification (in public) in Finnish society, for example. In other words, in a number of cases, what one may perceive now may not have been possible to verbalize some decades ago.[19]

Sandra Wallman (2002) has reflected on how different time perspectives relate to the anthropologist, the informants and the process of documentation. Discussing the 'truth' of objective data and subjective narratives, Wallman claims that what counts as science is the 'provisionality of truth', personal narratives included. Yet, according to her, 'perceptions are real in their consequences' (ibid.: 111–12). This brings me to ponder the question: Why is it that informants (and I) remember certain, specific things? Quoting Virginia Woolf (1985: 78), I could ask rhetorically, 'What then has remained interesting? Again, those moments of being.' Arguably, the nucleus of memory is emotion (love or hate, for example). In order to revive the emotion, there must be a context, such as the construction of oneself. I suggest that emotions are enacted in cultural forms as resources for social memory.[20] Objectivity and facts are therefore not the primary matters of memory, which, all the same, in Robert Archibald's (2002: 66) words, seem to be 'my consciousness and my identity, the stuff of me'. In this way, memory is enduring. The narratives lead us to the 'consequences' of actual or imagined experience mentioned by Wallman. In her analysis of layers of memories – the informants' as well as the anthropologist's – Wallman emphasizes the challenges connected to the production of a multivocal ethnography. She says: 'Memory is anthropology's life blood' (Wallman 2002: 116). In Joseph Brodsky's (1987: 489) words, 'memory contains precise details, not the whole picture; highlights, if you will, not the entire show.' Brodsky maintains further: 'more than anything, memory resembles a library in alphabetical disorder, and with no collected works by anyone.' Arguably, the task of research work (using an intersubjective research approach) is to produce a large amount of water for the 'small catch of fish', used as an allegory for memory.[21]

I suggest that informants are active agents. Their narratives of lived experience and perceptions as immigrants in Finland *and* as emigrants from the former Soviet Union[22] result in various actions. In

this way, they are agents and interpreters of a history that provides more private sides of human mobility. It is a history beyond public history.[23] In this respect, my analysis goes beyond the public manifestations of social change caused by the events of 1917 (the Russian Revolution), 1945 (the end of the Second World War) and 1990 (the fall of the Soviet Union). In their narratives, the informants return to recurrent phenomena or contexts that seem central for identity construction, disclosing a creation of belonging or otherness in a multitemporal perspective. The members of the second generation thus explore their perceptions mainly through memory. Voices of the first generation are indirectly heard in these informants' narratives. A.L. Epstein (1978) emphasizes the attachments and identifications of childhood as a process. Grandparents in particular to a high degree supplement parents and appear as symbols of cultural continuity.

As a theoretical and methodological procedure, ethnography above all refers to context that is 'inside our data, not outside'.[24] Beyond doubt, informants' life experience and the researcher's attitudes depend on the different contexts in which we live and have lived. For me, an open-ended research approach in ethnographic studies involves methodologically participating in acquiring empirical research material.[25] In a multisited, multitemporal and multivocal context, participation involves bodily engagement that nonetheless leads to switching between desk work and fieldwork during the whole research process. My experience of a similar practice stems from my research in Tanzania.[26] Michael Agar articulates a similar research procedure in a very succinct way. Although quoted in a number of anthropological textbooks, it deserves to be quoted here as well:

> [Y]ou learn something ('collect some data'), then you try to make sense out of it ('analysis'), then you go back to see if the interpretation makes sense in the light of new experience ('collect more data'), then you refine your interpretation ('more analysis'), and so on. The process is dialectic, not linear. (Agar 1996: 62)

This holistic perspective emphasizes connections between multiple phenomena, that is, research observations and their various aspects in their own contexts (cf. Agar 1996: 125). For Judith Okely (2012: 52), the anthropologist's professional practice encompasses 'absorbing experience through the very pores of the skin'. At times, I perceive that my embodiment is also a reflection of the informant's sensitive enactments of their experience, and our experiences are cast solid in charged moments. This means that informants' narratives are occasionally absorbing experiences for me. Moreover, Ottar Brox's

(1996: 119) perceptiveness in admitting that his 'participation' during his career had not always happened, in the first place, from a scholarly point of view is familiar to me, since similar insights and material have been of interest during the process of my study.

The Assumption of a Commonality in Encounters

The dialogues between the informants and me, together with the quest for secondary sources,[27] are elementary issues for a dialogical ethnography whereby research is an interchange of knowledge. In this process we have to differentiate between the informant and the researcher. My position as a researcher who shares aspects of identification with the informants certainly affects the data in a number of ways. Aware of the personal implications of my research, I could not foresee the resonance between my own memories and those of the informants (note, though, that the dialogues comprise more than memories). In general, a subjective interpretation of my position is that of being a *stranger within*.[28]

From the informants' point of view, my position varies during our discussions, and it can therefore be considered ambiguous (beyond the fact of me being an anthropologist intending to write an ethnographic monograph). More importantly, I am one of 'us' is often expressed by the words 'you know' in the oral flow of the narration. Informants' acknowledgement that I am 'one of us' can be expressed in Skultans's (1998: 1) words: 'The assumption of a common destiny was nearly always there.' My position as *one of us*, or *one of them* for that matter, led several informants to make a positive personal decision to participate in the research project. This is more a rule than an exception. Additionally, the personal encounter, as well as the overture of our dialogue, are affected by this circumstance. It seems, however, that it is impossible for the informants to be alert to this throughout their narratives. In the flow of narration, when the informants are immersed in their narratives, I find that my position is not as self-evident as it seemed at the beginning of the encounter. By saying this I agree with Kirin Narayan (1993: 678) on the importance of being alert to the ways in which the anthropologist is situated in relation to their informants, rather than examining who is an authentic insider. Admittedly, this last term invites confusion. Thus, the awareness of me being *one of us* correlates with the development of the narrative. Sometimes I was perceived as a stranger. I am inclined to interpret these two principal approaches or attitudes as two sides of the same coin. This means that it is impossible for the anthropologist to control the attitude of the informant (cf. Collins 1998).

The interviewer should be 'engaged', Peter Collins (1998) suggests. From a subjective point of view this exemplifies my position well, as, for example, embodied knowledge comes with participation (cf. Okely 1992: 16–17). Notably, participation or embodiment in the past (sharing similar strategies taken as a child to confront one's own otherness, for example) creates a feeling of commonality between the informant and me, whereas concrete participation in the present does not necessarily do so.

Encounters and dialogues are indeed complex social phenomena. In this respect, Georg Simmel's (Wolff 1964) discussion of a stranger as a *potential wanderer* who 'comes today and stays tomorrow' rather than 'comes today and goes tomorrow' must be mentioned.[29] I have taken the liberty of interpreting Simmel's 'particular spatial group' as a group in which people's relationships span boundaries (cf. Englund and Leach 2000). The shared process of knowledge production, a dialectical process, is about the interaction between the anthropologist and the informants. However, in Simmel's description of the position of the stranger in a group, my research approach would imply that the researcher imports new knowledge into the group.[30]

During the research process I had to stop to think several times, wondering where all this was leading me. Much inspired by Deborah Fellow's interview with John Middleton, I recognized and also realized at an early stage that people tell you what they want you to learn. Middleton asks rhetorically, 'Why should they tell you anything?' (Fellow 1999: 224).[31] The research theme thereby received new impulses and directions that I in no way could have imagined when I set out to study identity and ethnicity among Russians in Finland. Okely's (2012) study includes groundbreaking dialogues with a number of anthropologists about their pre-field assumptions on the one hand and what happened once their fieldwork proceeded on the other. It reveals that in most cases, and more often than not, the main focus of their studies changed. This happened not least because informants provided both subjects and topics to the anthropologists (ibid.: 54). In the same way, the informants in my study have had a considerable impact on its emphasis. Dialogue is a key to reciprocity.

Presentation of the Monograph

> He [the cosmonaut] had never been beyond his country's borders before. And suddenly there were no borders; the striped barriers, no-man's lands, border guards, German

> shepherds, and customs points all had disappeared. Now they seemed unnatural, ridiculous. Other things were difficult even to imagine: for instance, the idea of mandatory residency registration.
>
> —Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *Wild Berries*

This book looks at the Finnish–Russian borderland as a transnational space; an outcome of protracted historical processes and shifting borders. As a result of these, geographical and cognitive mobility across the borders has taken different forms, ranging from peaceful coexistence and cooperation to warfare and image construction in various circumstances and contexts. There is a need to understand the long-term effects of human mobility across the national border between Finland and Russia, a continuing process spanning several generations. Cross-cutting linkages of common trades and kinship relations that have developed since the eleventh century have deeply influenced and left their traces on the societies and their people on both sides of the shifting border (cf. Donnan 2015: 761). Since the fall of the Soviet Union, an increasing number of people have crossed these borders more or less permanently, for example through marriage or transnational business. The disjunction of place and culture is clear. Even those who remain in their places in the borderlands experience that the illusion of an essential connection between place and culture is broken. *Ideas* of culturally and ethnically distinct places become pronounced (Gupta and Ferguson 2003: 69). Analyses of nationalism show 'that states play a crucial role in the popular politics of place making and in the creation of naturalized links between places and people' (ibid.: 70).

Addressing 'cultures' on the move, within this framework there is a need for comparative research perspectives in a spatial and a temporal dimension. The latter helps avoid objectifying culture by showing it in transformation. In other words, this multitemporal approach[32] flows on several different time levels simultaneously, disclosing historical continuity and ruptures as characteristics of border-crossing networks.

In his book *Europe and the People without History* (1997), Eric Wolf emphasized the contacts, connections, linkages and interrelationships in history, urging us to learn to visualize human societies and cultures in their interrelationships and interdependencies in space and time. Accordingly, he emphasized that ethnography is urgently needed to find the answers to questions related to global capitalist expansion and the responses of people new to it. In a new

preface to his book, in 1997, Wolf wished to once more emphasize the importance of ethnographic research. He wrote: 'Only empirical inquiry can tell us how different peoples, in their particular varied circumstances, shape, adapt, or jettison their cultural understandings – or alternatively, find themselves blocked in doing so' (1997: xii–xiii). Inspired by Wolf, I argue that there is a need to understand the long-term effects of migration, a continuing process spanning several generations. Ethnographic studies can provide an understanding of social and cultural dynamics, often hidden from the public arenas in which notions of cultural difference and integration are reified.

Ethnography as a holistic anthropological process is an important methodological point of departure in the Finnish–Russian borderland, since the groups in focus in my research are occasionally mobile in time and space. My book explores informants' reflections on mental and physical crossings of national borders, tying the local to the translocal and bridging the distance between these. Apart from memory, oblivion and nostalgia, time as a phenomenal notion forces informants to take a stand in everyday life. Perceptions of belonging or Otherness and lived experience are in focus. Studying transnational human existence implies a multisited research perspective, suggesting a fundamental change, above all, in the conceptualization of movement and belonging.

Intergenerational histories, reminiscences and memories testify to manifold and multitemporal interactions across borders. My aim is to show some of the subtleties of social and cultural dynamics. People's experiences are marked by multiple events and situations ranging from intimate situations to huge state transformations. It is therefore important to understand how the political and the social work together in public as well as private dimensions.

The focus of my ethnographic research, which deals with perceptions of self and lived experience among Russians crossing national boundaries between Finland and Russia, is the Russian minority in Finland. This minority comprises two groups specifically, the first being descendants of the second and third generation of the 'old' Russian minority who arrived in the country after 1917, and the second a much larger group of Russians who have arrived in Finland since the 1990s after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989.[33] The former group also includes descendants of Russians who lived in Finland even before 1917, when Finland was an autonomous grand duchy and part of the Russian Empire (1809–1905 and 1908–17).[34]

When I talk about informants representing the former group, I will occasionally refer to 'old Russians' or second-, third- or fourth-

Map 0.3. Grand Duchy of Finland. Wikimedia Commons, used under Creative Commons License. CIA World Factbook (public domain).

generation representatives of 'old Russians'. The latter group (i.e. people who have arrived in Finland since the 1990s) are descendants of Russian Finns (citizens of the former Soviet Union with Finnish origins), and above all people with an Ingrian background who were granted the status of 'returned emigrants' by the Finnish government in 1990.[35] The label 'new Russians' is awkward since Russians who have moved to Finland do not acknowledge this name as an all-inclusive one for themselves. Informants have told me, almost accidentally, that

novye russkie (new Russians)[36] is reserved exclusively for Russians who are 'nouveaux riches' or 'these stinking rich'. I was probably the one who introduced these terms to research in Finland.[37]

The so-called Ingrians moved to the area around St Petersburg in the seventeenth century. When Germans occupied the region during the Second World War, more than sixty thousand Ingrians were evacuated to Finland. After the war, Finland had to send the Ingrians back home. These people were, however, deported to Siberia and other parts of the Soviet Union. Evidently some eight thousand persons managed to stay in Finland and some of them migrated to Sweden. It is noteworthy that Russian Finns and their descendants are historically a very heterogeneous group. Apart from Ingrians, who comprise the majority of re-migrants to Finland, descendants of the so-called Red emigrants who fled to Russia during and after the Finnish Civil War in 1918, and so-called defectors and their descendants, who escaped the major depression in Finland in the 1930s, are included in this group. Finns who relocated from the United States and Canada by invitation of the Soviet government in the 1930s to create a new state based on socialism also count as re-migrants.

The estimated number of the two groups together is 87,500.[38] With the exception of the Finland Swedes,[39] the Russian minority is numerically the largest one. The minority is, on the whole, socially, economically, politically and culturally heterogeneous. Further, people from the Russian minority often cross national borders between Russia and Finland, both mentally and physically. For the sake of description, not analysis, I will in general call the members of the minority Russians.

The Present Work

The empirical material of this book derives from participant observation, ethnographic interviews and discussions with informants in varying environments and contexts, for example in the informants' homes and work settings, in activity centres for migrants, in the hustle and bustle of the city and at various events, such as seminars and parties. The empirical material extends from the early 2000s up to the mid-2010s, with detours to both earlier and later observations and ethnographic discussions. The informants are men and women of different ages, from children to older people. Most of them are aged 30–60 and the oldest are more than 90 years old.[40] The interviews were conducted in Russian, Swedish or Finnish, depending on what language the informant had chosen for our mutual dialogues.

Together with informants, I have crossed the border between Finland and Russia a number of times, both physically during joint trips and mentally, in memory, during discussions. Encouraged by Selma Leydesdorff's description and account of her use of sources,[41] I have integrated personal accounts 'into the historical reconstruction as equal in validity to other types of documentation' (Leydesdorff 2017: 18).

It is widely acknowledged that the media plays a crucial role in constructing definitions of national and ethnic identities. Archive material consisting primarily of images of the Russian minority and 'Russianness' provided by the television in Finland[42] completes my primary material.

A History as Long as the Finnish–Russian Border

Acknowledging migration as a political and historical phenomenon, my study puts the focus more specifically on its existential and practical consequences.

I have chosen a multitemporal approach that explores how different events, concepts and persons are considered (by informants or in archives) at different times. This perspective on border-crossing networks of dispersed persons supports the idea that any (cultural) identity is constructed by multiple actors in various contexts. Do the experiences of 'old Russians' have any connections with experiences of persons from the former Soviet Union who entered Finland a hundred years later? Methodologically, a comparative perspective aims to bring out the relationship of present migration to past migration. How are events transmitted, for example, and by whom? How can hidden structures caused by changing discourses in Finnish society be revealed? It is important to analyse how social forms of culture, for example language or specific religious practices, survive and how they are apprehended, and how concepts change over time. In other words, I consider memory a complex but necessary site for studying the dialectics of individual and social processes. Since memory is socially constructed and mediated through social forms of culture, I also claim that it is central to the construction of identity (cf. Jerman and Hautaniemi 2007; Cole 2001).

My analysis thus shows, in a temporal sense, a number of layers of personal memories. At the same time, it attempts to elucidate the proper meaning of these memories. Expressions of belonging are based on the consciousness of the self and its intricate relationship to society. In this sense one can say that memory spans between persons and their social contexts (Skultans 1998).

I suggest that narrators, by disclosing their own lived experience and perceptions of self, construct a social reality that provides social and cultural resources for identity construction in contemporary transnational life, reflecting a Russia in flux. As mentioned, the transnational process lies beyond the labels of migrants, returnees or expatriates. This suggests that not only human experience, but also social practice and relationships have to be embedded in this web of cognitive and physical space.

What kind of themes were crystallized out of my empirical material? One above all was the specific phenomenon of Russians being hidden or hiding themselves in Finnish society. This phenomenon influenced questions of belonging and Otherness, often in an inter- or intragenerational context, and was enacted in ponderings about time and place. These ideas are deeply embedded in the self. When crossing borders in various contexts or leading a transnational life both in mind and in concrete mobility, the negotiation of identity is an everlasting and dynamic human project. How pieces of culture draw memory and place together can be said to be a main thread running through most sections of the book. The reader will accordingly recognize them along the way. This book tries to capture all these phenomena under five headings.

In Chapter 1 I look at the hidden Russian minority from different vantage points or levels, including historical, public and individual perspectives. I also discuss the low profile of the Russian minority in academic, national and media contexts. Due to the war between Ukraine and Russia, a postscript addressing the Russian minority in the media context ends the chapter.

Chapter 2 more closely introduces one of the methods that helped me, with the aid of the informants, to reveal how persons' belonging is disclosed by memory. The chapter also relates the background to my choice of a projective anthropological method for the study. The journeys into the (un)known described in this chapter embody, literally, the crossing of borders and the subtle connection or relationship between memory and place. Geographical, mental or both, the journey creates a space with temporal overtones. It puts a finger on the central core of the book, the interconnectedness between past, present and future in individual and social memory.

Focusing on two narratives that temporally extend over several years, Chapter 3 presents cases dealing specifically with identity and belonging in a transnational space, highlighting the actors' personal integrity and experiential knowledge. Moving between different time perspectives, the narratives illustrate how memory and place – two

seemingly different things – seem to reinforce each other and are tied up with nostalgia. Further, place holds together memories in the same way as human remembering draws together many moments and points in time.

Chapter 4 focuses on how the political border between Finland and Russia figures in an emotionally charged context between generations and within families. These form spaces of (imagined or real) memory transmissions. This chapter indicates how consequences of memory transmissions are encapsulated in informants' life trajectories. Evidently, kinship ties and language practices are also affected by how memories are passed on within families. A powerful form of culture, language seems to disclose an imagined or real essence of 'Russianness'.

Power relations have an impact on family networks stretching across political borders. In Chapter 5, informants encounter compelling regulations and laws, not only in a multinational social space but also locally. They show agency and ability in their social and cultural reactions, that is, their participation in society. Informants' perceptions and cognition indicate that citizenship is not an easy gateway to belonging. The concluding remarks of *The Hidden Minority* are intertwined with informants' narratives and comments that point to enactments of the self. These are in a beautiful way characterized by human, individual creativity.

Notes

1. See Chapter 10, 'Sticking with Ethnography through Thick and Thin', in Marcus (1998).
2. On different ways to apply participation in anthropological research, see Swantz (2016).
3. See also Reed-Danahay (1997: 1–17). In their interpretations of autoethnographic research, the book's contributors explore various intersections of possible relationships between ethnography and autobiography.
4. In this endeavour, I share a number of insights from interview situations with Ann Oakley (1981).
5. *Piilossa oleva venäläinen vähemmistö Suomessa* [The hidden Russian minority in Finland], paper presented at the Seminar on the Music of the Minorities, 1985, organized by Kansanmusiikin Keskusliitto [The Central Committee of Folk Music]. An edited version of this paper was published in Swedish as Jerman (1991).
6. Viet Thanh Nguyen in an interview with the Swedish cultural correspondent Ellen Swedenmark in 2020 (transcription by Ellen Sweden-

mark. Email correspondence between Ellen Swedenmark and Helena Jerman).

7. See Macdonald (1993: 7 and *passim*).
8. My exploratory study 'The Hidden Minority: Perceptions of Identity and Ethnicity among Russians in Finland' (2001–3), within the consortium 'Ethnic Relations, Difference and Transnational Processes', resulted in a few articles (Jerman 2003, 2004, 2006). It was part of the Academy of Finland Research Programme on Marginalization, Inequality and Ethnic Relations.
9. 'Perceptions of Self and Lived Experience among Russians Crossing National Boundaries' (2004–7). This was a subproject in the project 'Multi-Sited Lives in Transnational Russia: Questions of Identity, Belonging and Mutual Care' and part of the Academy of Finland Research Programme on 'Russia in Flux'. Further, 'Movement and Belonging: Perceptions of Self among Second and Third Generation Russians in Finland' was a subproject within the Academy of Finland project 'Ruptures and Continuity: Cross Cultural Perspectives on Belonging and Generations in Eastern Europe' (2007–11).
10. Kirmayer (1996: 177) also mentions procedural or implicit memory. This form of memory denotes commemorations through, for example, accent or gesture: 'they can be shown but not directly described.' In other words, this is embodied memory.
11. See Kaivola-Bregenhøj (2000) on 'variation'.
12. I developed this method in my work on ethnic processes in Tanzania (Jerman 1997).
13. See Rainer Schultze's (2004) thorough review article on research on memory in German history.
14. Cf. Epstein (1992: xxii), who recognizes in his own mind 'an interpenetration of the sociological and psychological domains'.
15. It was with these words that Ronnie Frankenberg introduced his presentation in the workshop 'Revisiting the Case Method of the Manchester School: Critics and Relevance for Current Anthropologies' during the EASA biennial conference in Copenhagen in 2002.
16. Indirectly related to this are Paul Stoller's ideas on the mixing of genres to explore the human condition in anthropology (Seremetakis 2008).
17. The original title of the book is *Le Testament Français* (1995).
18. The scholar was Julitta Suomela, whose research is based on a thorough scrutiny of newspaper archives (Suomela 2001).
19. Cf. e.g. Woolf (1985: 72, 147 and *passim*).
20. Skultans (2014) draws attention to the significance of emotions for cognitive functioning by referring to the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio's research. Accordingly, damage in the emotional centre of the brain disables a person in a cognitive sense. In this way, emotions are crucial for a person's social cognition.
21. I am grateful to Dubravka Ugrešić, who in her book *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* (1999) narrates a fictive dialogue between her

mother and Joseph Brodsky about memory. In this way, she brought my attention to Brodsky's (1987) comments on memory.

22. Including children or grandchildren of immigrants and emigrants.
23. Cf. Alison Baker's (1998) research in an entirely different context, exploring oral histories of Moroccan women.
24. Tonkin in a discussion on Ethnography in the workshop 'Ethnography - the Costs of Success' (WP28) during the 8th Biennial EASA Conference in Vienna, September 2004.
25. 'Ethnographic research is iterative-inductive', says Karen O'Reilly (2012: 30).
26. See Jerman (1997). I practised this research procedure with the close support of my colleague, the ethnomusicologist Philip Donner, who had long-standing expertise in this field.
27. Cf. Wolcott (1999), who claims that *any* document could be a valuable source for an ethnography and could be considered an archive.
28. Cf. Letherby (2000: 104–5). She does not, however, differentiate between being a 'stranger within' and the interpretations of the informant and the anthropologist.
29. Simmel wrote: '[The stranger] is fixed within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries. But his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself' (cited in Wolff 1964: 402).
30. Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2001: 36) writes: 'the researcher knows something essential that the native does not know.'
31. See also Hammoudi and Borneman (2009: 269).
32. The concept of a 'multitemporal approach' was coined by Sharon Macdonald (2002).
33. During the 1960s–90s, some migration from the Soviet Union took place through marriage.
34. The estimated number of people in this group was five thousand in 1981 (Donner et al. 1981). This means that the 'old' Russian minority group currently includes more people of the fourth generation than it did in 1981.
35. In a television interview in 1990, Finland's president at the time, Mauno Koivisto, said that the Ingrians are Finns and that this entitles them to remigration from the former Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union, their nationality in their passports was Finnish, not Ingrian. The term 'Ingrians' was coined in Finland after the fall of the Soviet Union.
36. See also Oushakine (2001: 292) on this concept. Apart from this, 'new Russians' and representatives of other 'new' ethnic minorities are called 'new Finns' in TV documentaries and in public. 'Old minorities' are, however, never called 'old Finns'.
37. *Den dolda minoriteten* [The hidden minority] (unpublished research plan, 1998). Presently, this terminology – i.e. 'old' and 'new' Russians – seems to have become standard among academics and the public.

38. According to Cultura Säätiö's preliminary report *Suomen venäjänkieliset 2022* [The Russian-speaking population of Finland 2022], there are an estimated 87,500 people in Finland whose native language is Russian.
39. The Finland Swedes, a linguistic Finnish minority, comprise about 5.2 per cent of the total Finnish population. Swedish is one of the two official national languages (along with Finnish) of the Republic of Finland. The two languages have formally equal status in legislation. Further, the Sami Language Act of 2003 made Sami an official language in four municipalities in Finnish Lapland.
40. In addition to anonymizing informants, I have blurred the names of the places where some of the interviews took place. Furthermore, besides analytical considerations, I have transcribed the recorded material myself for reasons of sensitivity.
41. See her book on Sasha Pechersky, who led a mass escape of prisoners from Sobibor, a Nazi death camp in Poland (Leydesdorff 2017).
42. This material includes approximately 350 documentary films (or excerpts of films) and news excerpts, which I copied and processed from Finnish TV programmes to DVDs in 1999–2013.