

Networks in Trade

The Arhippainen Family as Peddlers, Shopkeepers, and Bridge-builders in Russia and Finland, 1850–1940

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In the 1920s and 1930s, three brothers from White Sea Karelia in north-western Russia – V(asili) J(ohannes), Juho, and Simo Arhippainen¹ – kept shops in Karjaa, a small town in a predominantly Swedish-speaking region of south-western Finland. Like many other White Sea Karelian shopkeepers, they had begun their careers as peddlers in the late nineteenth century, at a time when Finland was a semi-autonomous grand duchy of the Russian Empire. Due to the geographic proximity and political connection, people from the multi-ethnic empire, such as ethnic Russians, Jews, and Tatars, played an important role in Finnish petty trade. The White Sea Karelian peddlers, commonly called “rucksack Russians” (*Laukkuryssä*) or “Arkangelites” – a reference to their homeland being situated in the Arkhangelsk Governorate – constituted the most numerous category. They had been a common sight in rural Finland for centuries, differing from their local customers by their clothing, language, and Orthodox faith (Storå 1989:34). Over time, many permanently settled in Finland as shopkeepers. Many also stayed in Finland after 1917, when the grand duchy transformed into an independent republic in the wake of the Russian Revolution.

In this article, we examine the functions of the various networks that the Arhippainen family was involved in and created. Networks were of great importance when family members were engaged in peddling, which was forbidden for non-Finnish citizens, when its members started to establish stationary shops and settled in Finland permanently, and when they engaged in organizations founded by White Sea Karelian traders in Finland.

Our theoretical point of departure, following international research, is that various types of economic and social networks have played a seminal role in petty trade (Fontaine 2014). This applies not least to groups from the “outside”, who have often been marginalized in foreign local communities and in new homelands in terms of economy, legislation, and culture. In such marginalized positions, formal and/or informal networks have been able to provide access to financial and material resources, in addition to creating group solidarity and upholding traditions and attitudes that have encouraged entrepreneurship (Light & Karageorgis 1994:659–660).

We examine the functions of the networks in three different contexts. In the first section, we ask how the Arhippainen family utilized networks to counter the challenges they met when conducting formally illicit peddling in the late nineteenth century. In the second, we analyse the connections that contributed to the family members being able to establish themselves as stationary shopkeepers in Finland from the early twentieth century. And in the third, we examine the family’s role in creating and maintaining networks between their former homeland and Finland, being members of the organizations that aimed to support the economic and cultural development of White Sea Karelia from 1906. By following a single family over two generations, we aim to illustrate how a variety of connections enabled traders from the outside to battle the challenges they encountered in a foreign environment, and over time to become established local merchants and social actors.

To address these areas, we analyse four types of sources that represent the

Arhippainen family's own perceptions of their path from peddlers to established shopkeepers. First, we use interviews conducted by the historian Maiju Keynäs in 1950–1955 with former Russian peddlers in Finland (Naakka-Korhonen 1988:6–7), including Juho and V.J. Arhippainen. Second, we study a privately owned notebook, primarily written by V.J. Arhippainen in the early twentieth century, which among other things contains notes about the family's origins, its history in Finland, and its contacts with the White Sea Karelian homeland. Third, we analyse periodicals published by organizations representing the interests of White Sea Karelian peddlers and shopkeepers in Finland, which were published from 1906 and to which members of the Arhippainen family contributed as authors: *Karjalaisten Pakinoita* (1906–1907), *Karjalan Kävijä* (1908–09), *Karjalaisten Sanomat* (1917–1920), *Toukomies* (1925–1935), *Viena-Aunus* (1935–1944), and *Karjalan Heimo* (1944–). Finally, we study early twentieth-century newspaper advertisements to investigate the Arhippainen family's networks in light of their business activities.

Due to its informal character and its marginal existence in a grey zone between the legal and illegal, petty trade in its various forms has left fragmented and few traces in written documents (Mikkola & Stark 2009:4–6; Wassholm & Östman 2021:17–19). In addition, sources such as administrative records, newspapers, and ethnographic questionnaires all tend to convey a one-sided and even distorted view of peddlers from the outside. Newspapers often contain pejorative rhetoric, including moral judgments about both the trade as such and the traders, as well as their customers. They usually reflect the attitudes

of the authorities, who perceived peddlers as a potential risk vis-à-vis their efforts to maintain order in the local community, or local merchants, who saw them as a threat to their own business. While ethnographic questionnaires can nuance this picture, they tend to represent the customers' viewpoint rather than the traders' (Wassholm & Sundelin 2018a:203). Considering this, access to sources that give a voice to the peddlers' own depictions of their contacts and networks is essential if we wish to illuminate the various relations that played a role for outsiders seeking to find a livelihood as peddlers, opening a shop and settling down permanently.

The White Sea Karelian peddlers in Finland have been studied by Pekka Nevalainen in his survey of their history, *Kulkukauppiaista kauppaneuvoksiin: Itäkarjalaisten liiketoiminta Suomessa* (2016), in Mervi Naakka-Korhonen's book *Halpa hinta, pitkä mitta* (1988), based on the interviews made by Keynäs, and in articles written by the ethnologist Nils Storå (1989; 1991). Members of the Arhippainen family are mentioned in passing in some of these works, as well as in texts on local history in Karjaa (Bergman 2014:44–49; Hummelin & Hummelin 1990–1993:184–185). While there are some studies of individual White Sea Karelian merchant families, such as Sofronoff (Ranta 1995), Mitro (Mitro 1936), Afanasjeff-Rinne (Leppänen 2009), and Andronoff (Vaara 2010), there is to date no extensive investigation of the Arhippainen family or the function of networks from the point of view of a single family of Russian peddlers in Finland.

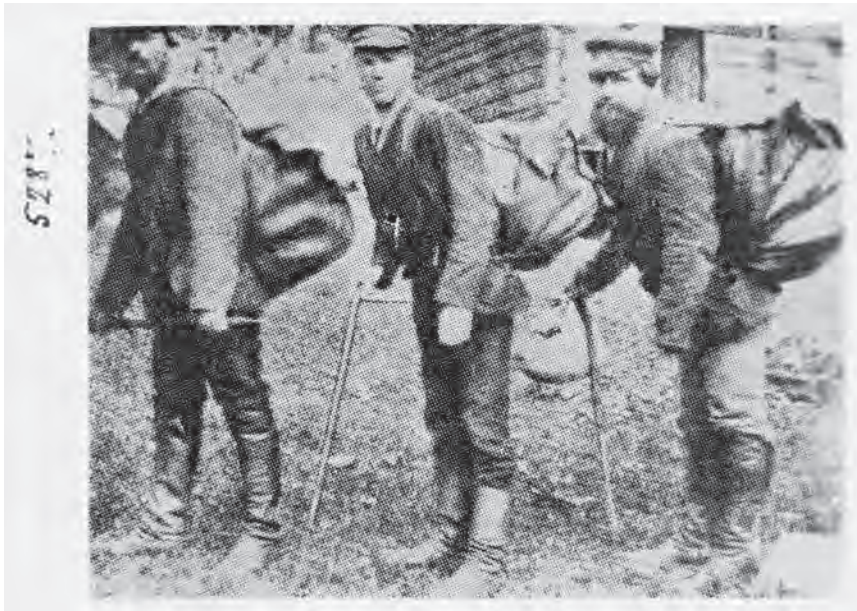
Peddlers on the Margins of Society

The Arhippainen family was one of nu-

merous White Sea Karelian families who peddled in Finland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. White Sea Karelia comprised the region between the Finnish-Russian border and the White Sea, where mobile trade had been an important livelihood since medieval times. Pekka Nevalainen estimates that 1,400–2,000 men from the region annually traded in Finland in the late nineteenth century. The barren soil could not support the population in the secluded and underdeveloped region all year round, which forced or attracted many to seek a more profitable livelihood in neighbouring Finland, which was economically more developed (Nevalainen 2016:28–33, 49–51). The homeland's barren soil is also the reason V.J. Arhippainen mentions for the men in the family hav-

ing become peddlers (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:28). The family originated from the village of Kiisjoki in Kiestinki in the northern part of White Sea Karelia, while their name was derived from their farm, which was called Arhippala (V.J. Arhippainen's notebook; Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:16–17).

The peddlers from Kiestinki primarily traded in the Swedish-speaking regions of south-western Finland and the Åland Islands (Nevalainen 2016:60). The first two members of the Arhippainen family to peddle in Finland were two brothers, Iivana and Jaakko. Iivana Arhippainen (Ivan Arhipoff, b. 1828), the father of V.J., Juho, and Simo, only peddled in the region for a couple of years but for decades conducted mobile trade in northern Finland



1. The families from Kiestinki traveled together and co-operated in so called trading companies in Finland. Members of the Arhippainen, Kusmin, and Minin families gathered regularly on the island Lohjansaari. Photo: Tilma Haimari, Finno-ugric picture lingen, Museiverket, Helsingfors.

and Sweden. His younger brother Jaakko (b. 1832), in turn, stayed in the region for the rest of his life (V.J. Arhippainen's notebook; Interviews with J. Arhippainen and V.J. Arhippainen).

The business success of the White Sea Karelian peddlers depended on networks that supported their mobile lifestyle, granted access to goods, and offered security. V.J. and Juho Arhippainen reflect the collective character of the trade, starting from depictions of how peddlers from Kiestinki departed for Finland together, usually in the late summer after harvesting was finished. The groups consisted of up to 25 men, who would cover a distance of more than 1,000 kilometres. Most would first head to the coastal town of Oulu on foot and by waterways, to continue south from there along the coast – or, after the railway to Oulu was completed in 1886 – by train. In an article published in 1927, Juho describes the solemn atmosphere at home as he was ready to depart for his first journey to Finland in 1894 at the age of 14, and how relatives of peddlers already residing in Finland sent wares along with him. Along the journey, which lasted two weeks, men parted from the group as they reached their respective trading areas. On the last stretch to Karjaa, Juho found himself the only one remaining of those who had left Kiestinki together (*Toukomiä* 5/1927:69–71; Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:23–24, 27).

Upon arrival in Karjaa, Juho was met by his uncle Jaakko and his older brother Miitrej, who were already working as peddlers in the region (*Toukomiä* 5/1927:69–71). It was common among peddling families for sons and nephews to accompany their older relatives on trade journeys, so that they could learn the practices of ped-

dling from a young age. However, it was important to carefully consider who in the next generation was best suited for the trade. Success in the business not only required social skills but also an ability to master different weight and length measures and convert currency from Russian roubles to Finnish marks. These were not skills that everyone had, as V.J. Arhippainen mentions that it was not uncommon for youngsters who were taken on the journeys to fail (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:13, 29).

In the predominantly Swedish-speaking Karjaa region, language posed an additional challenge. The peddlers' native language was Karelian, at the time considered a dialect of Finnish; therefore, communication was not an issue in Finnish-speaking areas. By contrast, peddlers who arrived in Swedish-speaking regions initially lacked a common language with their customers, and there is evidence to suggest that in some cases this may have evoked negative attitudes (*Karjalan Heimo* 5–6/1989:79). However, research has also shown that the lack of a shared language was rarely an insurmountable problem (Storå 1991:78–79; Nevalainen 2016:67; Naakka-Korhonen 1988:79). This is confirmed by Juho Arhippainen, who recounts that he initially did not even know the names of all his articles in Swedish but maintains that he quickly learned basic Swedish vocabulary and that language was no obstacle to trade exchanges (Interview with J. Arhippainen). His view is consistent with answers to ethnographic questionnaires in Swedish-speaking regions, which indicate that while communicative challenges did exist in the form of broken language, for example, most newly arrived peddlers quickly learned the necessary commer-

cial vocabulary and over time developed more advanced language skills (KIVA 9 M 677:2; M 2091:1).

The peddlers were organized in so-called trading companies, associations where several mobile traders participated in the acquisition of goods, shared the risk, and divided the local market among themselves (Storå 1989:81–82; Naakka-Korhonen 1988:151–156). Each company was established at a specific place – and as several companies tended to co-operate, certain locations, such as Perniö, Tenhola, and Lohjansaari between Karjaa and Lohja, became centres for Russian peddlers in the area. Of the five companies that gathered on the island of Lohjansaari, one was headed by Jaakko Arhippainen and another by the Loskin family, who also hailed from Kiisjoki and mainly peddled in the Lohja region (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:25–26; Interview with J. Arhippainen). According to Juho Arhippainen, Lohjansaari became a centre for peddlers due to its isolated location, far from the main roads. As the White Sea Karelian peddlers lacked citizenship rights in the Finnish grand duchy and were therefore prohibited by Finnish law from peddling, they preferred to gather in places that the local law enforcement rarely visited (Interview with J. Arhippainen).

The company's main function was to procure commodities for its members, a task handled by the most experienced and reliable among them. Thus, Jaakko Arhippainen was responsible for procuring goods for his company on Lohjansaari. One of the competitive advantages enjoyed by the White Sea Karelian peddlers was that they had access to established trade networks that extended all the way

to Moscow and other important trade centres in the Russian interior. While Jaakko Arhippainen provisioned commodities from both St Petersburg and Moscow, the other company members kept themselves busy selling the old stock, gathering again to divide the new goods among them when they arrived. The division was made according to ability, which meant that a more skilled peddler received more than a less skilled one. Those company members who lacked money of their own conducted sales as servants for other more affluent members (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:25–26; Interview with J. Arhippainen; *Karjalan Kävijä* 8/1908:11).

Transport and distribution of the goods over long distances to the remote Lohjansaari was a challenge, but transportation became more effective after a railway line connecting Hanko to Hyvinkää was completed in 1873 (*Karis fordom och nu* 1970:142–146). However, newspaper notices suggest that the commodities were partly delivered illegally, or at least there were suspicions of such offences. For example, in 1876, newspapers reported that the rural police in Karjaa seized a consignment of goods that had arrived by train at Mustio station, close to Lohjansaari; it was suspected that these were destined for the peddlers in the area (*Hufvudstadsbladet* 5.2.1876). Locally, the peddlers mainly moved on foot, although some had access to horses and carts. For this reason, peddlers preferred lightweight goods that were easy to carry on their back, either in leather bags or in large wooden boxes with small compartments where items could be sorted. Among the goods offered for sale were sewing accessories such as needles, thread, ribbon, and buttons, as well

as medicines, various prints, and sundry groceries. However, the main commodity was comprised of fabrics of various kinds, with ready-made clothes becoming more common from the beginning of the twentieth century (Naakka-Korhonen 1988:135; Nevalainen 2016:27).

In addition to providing the peddlers with goods, the company sites played an important role in terms of security. Peddlers, who often moved alone in remote places, were at risk of being robbed or even murdered (Nevalainen 2016:125–131; Diner 2015:127–130; Blom 1996:95–103). V.J. Arhippainen mentions that a peddler from Kiisjoki had allegedly been murdered in connection with an attempted robbery in Karjaa in the late nineteenth century (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:32). This is confirmed by a newspaper report stating that a local farmhand was convicted of murdering a peddler in the vicinity of Karjaa in 1895 (*Västra Nyland* 6.8.1895). The security issue underlines the importance of the companies, as they gathered regularly and could take action if a member did not show up at the agreed time (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:14).

Peddling was formally illegal according to Finnish law, and peddlers constantly ran the risk of being caught by the police. V.J. Arhippainen notes that some police officers were particularly zealous in this respect (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:42; see also Lindroos 1983:191). A recollection written by Iivana Arhippainen in 1908 claims that his brother Jaakko had his bags confiscated no less than 14 times during his 40 years as a peddler in the region (*Karjalan Kävijä* 8/1908:11). Examples of this are also found in the newspapers. For instance, in 1876, a local officer from

Karjaa in co-operation with his colleague confiscated three peddlers' well-packed, large leather bags in neighbouring Inkoo (*Hufvudstadsbladet* 5.2.1876). The stories also contain anecdotes of peddlers daring to defy law enforcement. V.J. Arhippainen recounts how a peddler from Kiestinki escaped from a police officer in Karjaa, refusing to come back even though the latter threatened to use his weapon (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:30–32).

However, it is well known that both customers and the authorities often ignored the fact that peddling was illicit and that customers tended to side with the peddlers in conflicts with the police (Wassholm 2020:16). V.J. Arhippainen mentions how a wealthy farmer near Karjaa vehemently defended a peddler from Kiisjoki when the police arrived and threatened to confiscate the goods that he was selling there. Even the courts occasionally sided with peddlers. In one such case, the local court ordered the police to return the fox and squirrel skins that they had confiscated from peddlers, after it was revealed in the trial that even members of law enforcement had sold skins and furs to the peddlers (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:30–32). Along with berries, birds, and braids of human hair, furs and skins were part of the barter that the peddlers practised on occasion (Wassholm & Sundelin 2018b:138).

V.J. Arhippainen maintains that the fact that peddling persisted, despite it being illegal, was proof of the popularity of Russian peddlers, as without that they would not have been able to operate. The reason behind the popularity, according to him, was the lack of permanent stores in the sparsely populated area, and that customers were attracted by the new goods that the peddlers

offered. In some cases, influential people in the local community also set an example. A peddler received several orders for furs after a local priest purchased one for his wife (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:30–32). The encounters between the peddlers and their customers took place in the private homes of their customers in the villages, where their visits were often perceived as a welcome break from a monotonous everyday life. In previous research, the success of peddling has been explained not only in terms of granting access to sought-after goods but also the excitement and entertainment that skilled peddlers offered in the form of lively bargaining and the demonstration of novelty goods (Rosander 1980:80; Fontaine 1996:81; Wassholm & Sundelin 2018b:139–142). This was a talent which, according to Nils Storå, also applied to the White Sea Karelians (Storå 1989:34; 1991:90–93).

However, friendly relations with the locals did not always guarantee protection. Attitudes towards peddlers became particularly negative in connection with the Finnish-Russian political conflict; this culminated in the issuing of the so-called February Manifesto in 1899, which many in Finland viewed as a coup d'état that stripped Finns of their political self-determination. The indignation it caused sparked a political propaganda campaign in the Finnish press, with Russian peddlers being accused of acting as agitators who, among other things, spread false rumours about land division among the landless population in order to cause unrest and split the Finnish nation (Tommila 1999:245–256). Juho Arhippainen mentions that the campaign turned many of the previously benevolent local customers

against the peddlers, forcing many to leave Finland temporarily. Someone even made the claim that it was right to kill peddlers (Interview with J. Arhippainen). At the same time, the pressure on the White Sea Karelians brought about a strengthening of their internal networks. They organized to deliver a petition to Governor General Nikolai Bobrikov, arguing that they were victims of a hate campaign and pleading with him to change the law in their favour. Iivana Arhippainen was among the signatories (*Karjalan Heimo* 3–4 / 2006:48–51). The petition was a success, as a Russian decree that made peddling in Finland legal for all Russian subjects was issued in July 1900 (Nevalainen 2016:106–107).

In the nineteenth century, many White Sea Karelians peddled seasonally, returning from Finland to their home region every few months or years. Over time, many remained in Finland for longer periods, eventually settling down permanently. The first generation of the Arhippainen family followed different paths in this respect. Iivana Arhippainen stopped peddling altogether in his older days, settling in Kiisjoki for the remainder of his life, compared to his brother Jaakko, who first arrived in Finland in 1850 at the age of 18 and lived in Karjaa until his death in 1913 (*Karjalan Kävijä* 8/1908:11). The second generation initially moved back and forth between Kiestinki and Karjaa, where they learned the trade while working for their uncle Jaakko. For instance, Juho Arhippainen first came to Karjaa in 1894, returning to Kiestinki after three years. In 1903, he went south for two more years, returned to Kiestinki, and finally moved to Finland permanently in 1907. Some years later, he brought along his family (Interview with J. Arhippainen;

Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:27). By the early 1920s, all three brothers were permanently residing in Finland.

The Second Generation as Shopkeepers

A respondent to an ethnographic questionnaire about itinerant Russian traders in Finland recalls that three brothers named Arhippainen had formerly peddled in the Karjaa region, having at some point abandoned their ambulatory livelihood to found cloth shops (KIVA 9 M 689:1). In this respect, the family followed a pattern typical of White Sea Karelian peddlers, many of whom over time became stationary shopkeepers in Finland (Nevalainen 2016:214; Storå 1989:94). The second generation, who all started out as peddlers, commuting between Kiestinki and Karjaa, permanently settled down in Karjaa in the first dec-

ades of the twentieth century (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:27).

Of the three brothers, V.J. Arhippainen (b. 1882) was the first to set up a shop in Karjaa. In 1908, after having seasonally peddled in the region for years, he took over the trading rights of a local merchant who had kept a shop in the village of Kasaby since the early 1870s (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:23; *Karis fordom och nu* 1970:91; *Hufvudstadsbladet* 18.6.1908). In retrospect, his transformation from peddler to shopkeeper is described as a huge effort for a man who was self-taught in writing and had only acquired a limited amount of basic education (*Viena-Aunus* 18.4.1942:6). With his business – and with that his lifestyle – becoming stationary, V.J. Arhippainen could also afford to bring his family from Kiestinki to Finland. His wife and children arrived in Karjaa a few days



2. The Arhippainen brothers became stationary shopkeepers in Karjaa in the 1920s. The photograph shows Juho (Janne) Arhippainen's shop på Kauppiaskatu 12. Photo: Local Archive Arresten, Karjaa.

before the official opening of the shop in February 1908. His younger brother Simo was also present, assisting V.J. in running the shop before opening his own business in the 1920s (V.J. Arhippainen's notebook).

Keeping a shop was a more advanced form of business and in most cases offered a more stable income than peddling and other forms of petty trade. At the same time, establishing a shop required more initial efforts and resources, for example, in terms of capital, with shopkeepers being dependent on credit networks and having a set customer base, to a greater extent than peddlers who gained their livelihood from itineracy (Boyd 2010:318–319). In the last decades of the nineteenth century, setting up shops became possible for more people in Finland due to a general liberalization of the economy. The Freedom of Trade Act, issued in 1879, made it easier to open shops throughout Finland, but non-Finnish citizens who wanted to do so were subject to certain requirements: they had to apply for a permit from the local governor, have a good reputation, and pay a guarantee (Nevalainen 2016:146–147).

Furthermore, a recommendation from the municipal assembly was at times a prerequisite to open a shop, a practice that seems to have become an obstacle for many potential shopkeepers with origins outside the local community (Alanen 1957:214–215). In Karjaa, too, the municipal assembly rejected several applications made by White Sea Karelian peddlers with the argument that applicants had previously been fined for illegal beer sales and Sabbath violations or because they were suspected of attracting local customers to bad and morally degrading businesses (*Karis fordorn och nu* 1970:91). Shopkeeping was not a simple

task, and many newly opened shops were closed soon after being established due to a lack of capital or other financial troubles. However, if a shop owner succeeded in his venture, the shop could quickly become an important local centre, not least in rural regions (Alanen 1957:311–312; Kaarniranta 2001:81–83). As there were many tasks associated with shopkeeping, wives were often involved in the running of daily errands (Diner 2015: 15), and this was also the case with the newly established shops in Karjaa.

Combined with the negative attitudes of the local authorities and merchants, the requirements made it both complicated and time-consuming for non-Finnish citizens to start a business under their own name. However, for those peddlers who had a long history of trading in the area and who were on friendly terms with the local inhabitants, there was one solution to the dilemma. V.J. Arhippainen maintains that the helpfulness that the residents showed towards the itinerant traders was a necessity if they wanted to settle down and venture into shopkeeping. According to him, it was common for locals to help traders by lending their name to support the business. Sometimes they did so in exchange for money but more often it was purely out of a willingness to help. Furthermore, he notes that he is not aware of any cases where the Finnish citizen demanded to also run the shop in the end (Interview with V.J. Arhippainen:12).

V.J. Arhippainen's two brothers, Juho (b. 1879) and Simo (b. 1887), who had previously peddled seasonally and worked for him as shop assistants, established their own shops selling fabrics and clothing in Karjaa only after Finland gained independence from Russia in 1917 (Vuoristo

1996:215). Both brothers opened their shops in 1919, selling textiles of various sorts (*Toukomies*, 1.10.1929; *Tiklas* 1.10.1937). Previous research has stressed that access to places where many people gathered, such as churches, taverns, or dairies, were of crucial importance for itinerant traders who sought to set up permanent businesses. Another key element was good communications, including functioning transport and proximity to main roads and railway lines (Baad Pedersen 1983:33–39). The location of Karjaa was favourable in this respect, as roads, waterways, and from 1873 the Hanko–Hyvinkää railway converged there. The opening of the railway line between Turku and Helsinki in the early twentieth century made Karjaa a junction, and due to its location it came to play a significant role for business and culture in the region (*Karis fordom och nu* 1970:142–146).

As stationary shopkeepers, the former itinerant traders continued to offer a wide range of goods, usually fabrics, to a degree that was not found in other rural stores at the time (Nevalainen 2016:214). In 1926, Juho Arhippainen advertised that he had 250 kinds of woollen fabrics suitable for dresses and 100 kinds of flannel for sale in his shop (*Västra Nyland* 4.12.1926). Newspaper advertising makes it possible to find more detailed information about the goods that were sold, compared to the informal peddling that has left few traces in written sources. Advertising also reflects the increased consumption in Finland over time. On average, from the late nineteenth century Finns acquired more money to spend on other things than food and housing, and inspiration for purchases came partly from the increased number of ad-

vertisements in the newspapers. In terms of consumption, newspapers played a key role as mediators of change (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001:25, 32; Kuusanmäki 1936:100–101).

In the early twentieth century, newspaper advertisements consisted mainly of short descriptions of the supply of goods in a specific store, without images or any mention of prices (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001:32). The number of goods and the variation in qualities mentioned in the advertisements offer insight into the supply of the shop. In 1919, Juho Arhippainen advertised in the local newspaper *Västra Nyland* that he had set up a shop called Karjaan Uusi Kangaskauppa in a house along the main street in Karjaa. He informs the potential customers that he has 22 years of experience selling fabrics, ready-made clothes, and mercery in the region (*Västra Nyland* 4.9.1919:3). Subsequent advertisements show that he also provided his customers with tailoring services, including making uniforms for railway workers (*Västra Nyland* 27.2.1934; *Västra Nyland* 10.11.1928; *Västra Nyland* 17.8.1929). In addition to selling goods for cash, Juho also practised barter, exchanging wool and rags for yarn, shawls, and blankets, as well as for other merchandise (*Västra Nyland* 23.2.1929; 16.9.1933). Thus, as a stationary shopkeeper he continued the barter that he had engaged in as a peddler.

Around the year 1930, Juho Arhippainen's business was described as the community's "oldest and largest specialty store in the fabric and clothing industry" (*Västra Nyland* 6.10.1931; Vuoristo 1996:215). In 1933, he went bankrupt, like many other shopkeepers during the economic depression (Nevalainen 2016:211). However, with the

aid of his brother Simo, the firm was resurrected as a limited company under the name Oy J. Arhippainen Ab (Vuoristo 1996:215; *Iltta-Sanomat* 22.4.1933; *Kauppalehtis protestilista* 11.9.1934).

In the late 1920s, V.J. Arhippainen opened a second store in Karjaa under the name Karjaan kangas- ja vaate-tusliike (“The cloth and clothes store of Karjaa”). This became his main shop, while he kept his original store in Kasaby as a side business; it was later taken over by his son Alexej, born in 1910 (*Västra Nyland* 23.4.1927; Vuoristo 1996:25; V.J. Arhippainen’s notebook). Thus, new generations became involved in the retail business, leveraging the networks that the previous generation had created. It was also typical for shopkeepers from a certain region to offer work to others from the same region (V.J. Arhippainen’s notebook).

Like the White Sea Karelian peddlers in general, the Arhippainen family also furthered their business by strengthening their networks with other White Sea Karelian peddlers, especially with those hailing from the same region. These networks continued the co-operation of the trading companies that they had previously formed as peddlers, leading, for instance, to frequent marriages between members of families with the same background. Many families of shopkeepers who settled in south-western Finland originated in Kiestinki (for instance, the Semenoff and Jakovleff families from the village of Valasjoki and the Karppanen and Loskin families from the village of Kiisjoki). The Arhippainen family had particularly strong ties with the Loskin family, who established several shops in the region of Lohja, east of Karjaa. For instance, Simo Arhippainen was

married to Katri Loskin (*Västra Nyland* 15.4.1930:1) and V.J. Arhippainen to Maria Karppanen (V.J. Arhippainen’s notebook). Three of their sisters – Mari, Iro, and Anni – were married to members of the Loskin family, and a fourth, Maria, to a member of the Salomaa family (Documentation of the Arhippainen family, Local Archive Aresti). The Salomaa (Semenoff in Russian) family, also originating in Kiestinki, were established shopkeepers in nearby Kemiö (Vuoristo 2006).

Various kinds of networks were of importance for the Arhippainen family when they permanently settled down as shopkeepers. On one hand, they could require bureaucratic assistance from local networks when applying for permits to open a shop, while the local customer networks that they had established as peddlers likely played a role as a primary customer base. On the other hand, they utilized the networks that they had established already as peddlers with other families from Kiestinki. These types of social networks were important in trade, not least for outside groups who may have been marginalized in their new homeland in terms of jurisdiction, political rights, and ethnic prejudice. In addition to providing access to financial and material resources, such networks contributed to group solidarity and offered a tradition that encouraged new generations to become traders (Light & Karageorgis 1994:659–660).

Owning a business in many cases also offers a path to social advancement. In this respect, members of the Arhippainen family followed a path that was typical for immigrants and ethnic minorities. As Boyd points out, shopkeeping has often been a means to gain a livelihood in a foreign environment for groups that have found

themselves marginalized due to lack of education, language skills, discriminatory legislation, or negative attitudes (Boyd 2010:318–319). While the first generation of the Arhippainen family started out as peddlers on the margins of society, becoming stationary opened possibilities for social advancement for the second generation. As shopkeepers and permanent residents, they could more easily become engaged in social and business life, both locally in south-western Finland and in organizations established to further the contacts between White Sea Karelians in general.

Building Networks between the Old and the New Homelands

Like many White Sea Karelian traders, members of the Arhippainen family in the early twentieth century belonged to Vienan Karjalaisten Liitto (VKL), an association founded in 1906 to advance White Sea Karelia's economic and cultural development. The need for such development in the disadvantaged region was urgent, a circumstance that the author and explorer A.V. Ervasti had stressed as early as 1880 in his famous travelogue *Muistelmia matkalta Venäjän Karjalassa kesällä 1879* ("Recollections from a Journey in Russian Karelia in the Summer of 1879") (Ervasti 1880). However, organized activity for this cause became possible only after the revolution of 1905, which enabled a citizen's society in the empire and temporarily ended the Russification measures in the grand duchy (Lincoln 1990:202–203).

In August 1906, Iivana Arhippainen was among the 40 participants at a meeting in Tampere who founded Vienan Karjalaisten Liitto. The event was a continuation of a meeting held in Vaasa in April 1906, where

twelve traders originating in White Sea Karelia, headed by A. Mitrofanoff, had prepared for the founding. One third of the participants in Tampere were Finns, primarily academics and intellectuals who were interested in the region as the cradle of Finnish culture. Among them was O.A. Hainari, a renowned Karelianist and teacher at Sordavala Seminary and the association's first president (*Viena-Aunus* 1–6/1936:37). The association's purpose was to improve material conditions and communications in White Sea Karelia and to offer education by publishing newspapers and establishing libraries, reading rooms, and an ambulatory school where children were to be taught basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics (*Karjalaisten Pakinoita* 1/1906:7–8; 3/1907). Iivana Arhippainen became involved in the founding of the reading rooms and the ambulatory school, and responsible for distributing literature and teaching materials in Finnish and Karelian in the region (*Karjalaisten Pakinoita* 1/1906:7–8; 3/1907:8–9; Ranta 1997:11–19, 199–200).

V.J. Arhippainen was present in Tampere alongside his father, becoming a member of the association's board (1908–1911) and assisting in the establishment of reading rooms in the home region (*Karjalan Heimo* 3–4/1952:28–29). His brother Juho was also active at a grassroots level, engaging in municipal affairs and organizing religious education in Kiisjoki, distributing informational literature, and founding reading rooms. He also acted as ombudsman in White Sea Karelia for the periodical *Aamun Koitto*, whose background forces aimed to create an Orthodox identity based on the Finnish language in Russian Karelia (*Toukomiies* 10/1929:137; Laitila 2019:76–77).

It was no coincidence that individuals who had a background as mobile traders in Finland took leading roles in the association (see, for example, *Karjalaisten Pakinoita/Karjalan Joulu* II 12/1907:27; *Tidskrift utgiven av Pedagogiska föreningen i Finland* 2–3/1907:84–85). Being mobile, peddlers had acquired knowledge of national and linguistic conditions, as well as economic development in Finland, while at the same time becoming aware of the backwardness of their home region. In articles that V.J. Arhippainen authored for the association's periodicals, he urged his colleagues to take responsibility for spreading the knowledge that they had acquired in Finland to White Sea Karelia, in order to bring about a national revival there. The younger generation of peddlers was considered suitable for this task, as they were proficient in reading and writing in Finnish, the language that the Karelians should consider their mother tongue (*Karjalaisten Pakinoita* 0/1906:7; *Karjalaisten Pakinoita/Karjalan Joulu* II 12/1907:27). For example, Juho Arhippainen's competence in grassroot work is explained by his writing skills in both Finnish and Russian (*Toukomi* 10/1929:137).

The association also strove to improve the legal status of Karelian peddlers in Finland, an activity that V.J. Arhippainen was involved in. In April 1907, he chaired a regional meeting for traders from White Sea Karelia in Karjaa, summoning around 30 participants. The purpose was to submit a petition to the governor general of Finland, drawing his attention to the unclear legal status of Russian peddlers in the grand duchy. The participants were authorized to sign the petition for dozens of others who could not attend. By the end

of May, similar meetings were held in ten other locations around Finland, and in the summer of 1907 V.J. Arhippainen was appointed as a member of the delegation that was to hand over the petition to the governor general in Helsinki (*Karjalaisten Pakinoita* 8–9/1907:31; *Karjalan Heimo* 3–4/2006:51–52).

The background to the petition concerned the ambiguities surrounding the right of Russian subjects without Finnish citizenship to pursue peddling in the grand duchy. Since 1900, the Finnish Trade Act of 1879 had stood in conflict with the Russian decree of 1900, which allowed peddling for all Russian subjects in Finland. After the November Manifesto of 1905 abolished the Russification measures that had been imposed since 1899, the Governor General's Office received queries from local authorities who did not know how they should deal with Russian subjects. In his replies, the governor general maintained that the decree of 1900 should be followed until the Finnish Trade Act was amended (*Kotka Nyheter* 10.4.1906:3). The petitions aimed to secure the rights of Russian subjects without citizenship rights to pursue peddling in the grand duchy, in the same way as the petition submitted in 1900 had led to a change of the law. However, this time the petition was to no avail; despite lively debates on the matter (see, e.g., *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* 8.2.1906:1; 13.6.1907:1; *Nya Pressen* 28.5.1907:5; *Wiborgs Nyheter* 27.5.1907:2), the conflicting Finnish and Russian interests and the repeated dissolutions of the Finnish Diet meant that the conflict remained unresolved (Nevalainen 2016:108).

Another question that engaged VKL was the reclaiming of Karelian surnames,

which through the Russian administrative apparatus had acquired Russian forms over time. In an article in *Karjalaisten Pakinoita*, Iivana Arhippainen in 1907 remarked that the Finns disapproved of the original Karelian names having been distorted into “foreign” forms. He himself had become aware of this fact in a conversation with O.A. Hainari, who while staying on Lohjansaari during summers in the 1890s collected information about White Sea Karelia from the peddlers residing there. When Hainari once asked for their names, with the aim of documenting them, Iivana stated his official name as he had been taught: Ivan Ivanovich Arhipoff. When asked if he was really known under the name Arhipoff in Kiestinki, he replied that he had been called Arhippainen there and that the Russian ending “-off” had been added in school. The Russian form of the name was copied onto the report card, and from there to passports and other official documents (*Karjalaisten Pakinoita* 1/1907:9–10; Ranta 1997:207).

Already the previous year, the Finnish author Ilmari Calamnius had called on the White Sea Karelians to get rid of Russian endings such as “-jeff”, “-joff”, and “-koff” in their names. He pointed out that the White Sea Karelians viewed themselves as members of the “Finnish tribe” and that their original names resembled Finnish ones, which many Russian Karelians residing close to the Finnish border had retained. Now the time had come to shed the Russian influence and the strange mixture of languages that had led, for example, to Remssunen being distorted into Remshujeff and Kieleväinen into Kieleväjeff (C[alamnius] 1/1906:13). Such changes must be seen in context of a paral-

lel process of Finns changing their Swedish names to Finnish ones, which culminated in 25,000 Finns changing their names in 1906, in commemoration of the centenary of J.V. Snellman’s birth (Paikkala 2004:514–522). Calamnius himself was among those who changed his name into Finnish – Kianto – the name he would later become known under as a celebrated author.

Among those who heeded the call was V.J. Arhippainen, who signed a poem published in *Karjalan Pakinoita* (2/1906:4): “V.I. Arhipoff, from now on Arhippainen”. Lists of dozens of other Karelians who changed their names were published in the periodical. However, in administrative records most names remained in the Russian form throughout the period that Finland was part of the Russian Empire. Already Calamnius (*Karjalan Pakinoita* 1/1906:13) had pointed out that if the Russian authorities would not allow a formal change of the name, at least the Karelian or Finnish form should be used in unofficial contexts. Thus, the name Arhipoff was still used in official documents. In the short notices that were published in Finnish newspapers in 1921, informing that V.J. and Simo Arhippainen had become Finnish citizens, their surname was written in the form “Arhippainen (Arhipoff)” (*Dagens Press* 8.10.1921:2; *Iltalehti* 8.10.1921:2).

After only a few years, Russian authorities and nationalist circles began to view the activities of the VKL as a form of “pan-Finnish propaganda”, a reflection of a sort of tug-of-war between Russian and Finnish interests in Russian Karelia. The Russians suspected that the association strove to tie White Sea Karelia closer to Finland by strengthening the region’s

economic relations westward, by offering education in Finnish, and, worst of all, by conducting Lutheran missions among the Orthodox Karelians. An association called the Karelian Brotherhood led by the priest and monk Kiprian was founded in 1907 to counteract this development through a strengthening of the Russian and Orthodox culture in the region (*Viena-Aunus* 1–6/1936:37; Vituhnovskaja 2004:382). This soon made the VKL's activities difficult: the association was prohibited from publishing its periodical, the ambulatory school was closed, and some of its active members in White Sea Karelia were even arrested. According to an article published in *Toukomiies* (10/1929:137), the growing pressure from the Russian side was a factor that forced Juho Arhippainen to migrate to Finland permanently.

The First World War considerably diminished the number of White Sea Karelians in Finland, as most male Russian under the age of 50 were conscripted into the Russian army. After the defeat of Russia and the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, Finland declared itself independent, which in turn resulted in a civil war between “Reds” and “Whites” in the spring of 1918. Meanwhile, the political and military situation in White Sea Karelia became extremely chaotic (Ranta 1997:201–202; Nevalainen 2016:149–151). Between 1918 and 1922, the region was drawn into the Russian civil war, as the Bolsheviks fought the Russian White Army, British and French allied troops, and Finnish military expeditions seeking to “liberate” White Sea Karelia and incorporate it into Finland. In this complex situation, V.J. Arhippainen was appointed representative of the White Sea Karelians in Finland, with the task of

furthering their interests in relation to the Finnish government (*Helsingin Sanomat* 25.4.1918). The situation only calmed in 1922, with the Bolsheviks taking control of the region and the founding of the Soviet Union.

As all three brothers decided to stay in the newly independent Finland, and as the founding of the Soviet Union closed the border, their contacts with the homeland were cut from the early 1920s. However, the Arhippainen brothers continued to be active in the White Sea Karelian association, which now operated solely within Finland under a new name, Karjalan Sivistysseura. Both V.J. and Juho acted as board members and V.J. set up a fund bearing his name in 1942, with the aim of supporting the education of White Sea Karelian students. Juho, in turn, donated a rucksack to the National Museum of Finland in 1938 with the aim of keeping the memory of the White Sea Karelian peddlers alive (*Viena-Aunus* 1–6/1936:40; *Karjalan Heimo* 3–4 /1952: 28–29; 3–4/2006: 47). For their decades-long commitment to the White Sea Karelian organizations, Karjalan Sivistysseura awarded Juho Arhippainen a medal of merit in the 1930s and V.J. Arhippainen was made an honorary member at the beginning of the 1940s (Vuoristo 1996:201–202).

Conclusion

In this article, we have examined the various functions that networks had for members of a single family from White Sea Karelia, who started out as peddlers in Finland in the mid-nineteenth century and became settled retailers and active members of White Sea Karelian organizations in the first half of the twentieth century.

As peddlers, members of the Arhippainen family relied on their family network and, in a broader sense, on the relationships that they had formed with other mobile families from their homeland in White Sea Karelia. These networks formed a structure in which the younger generations were introduced to a business tradition that encouraged peddling and granted access to diverse types of useful resources from an early age. The local and regional contacts with other White Sea Karelians were of seminal importance for the possibility to find a livelihood peddling in Finland, as the formally illicit ambulatory trade placed the peddlers on the margins of local society. In this environment, co-operation provided efficiency in terms of mobility over short and long distances, access to commodities, and a certain degree of security. These connections prevailed when the White Sea Karelian families started to move from the periphery of society towards a central and more established position as stationary shopkeepers. Even from the early 1920s, after the second generation of the Arhippainen family became Finnish citizens, the networks with other White Sea Karelian families prevailed. The close ties are illustrated, for example, by the marriages between White Sea Karelians, in the case of the Arhippainen not least with members of the Loskin family in nearby Lohja.

In addition to the contacts with other White Sea Karelians, functioning networks with people in the local society in south-western Finland played a vital role for the traders. The very fact that a demand for the peddlers' commodities was a prerequisite for their success meant that they needed to form positive personal relations with the locals. Especially in cases in which local law enforcement tried to detain the

peddlers for illicit trade, connections with locals who sided with them and protected them proved important. Support from the local society was also of value when setting up a stationary shop, as this was no easy task for persons without citizenship rights in Finland, especially since local merchants and the municipal board sometimes strove to counteract such ambitions.

Members of the Arhippainen family were also actively engaged in the organizations that White Sea Karelians in Finland established from 1906, which aimed to support the interests of White Sea Karelian traders in Finland and to strengthen the cultural and material development of the homeland. This organizational work continued to maintain the ties between the merchants of independent Finland, even after the establishment of the Soviet Union in the early 1920s closed the border between Finland and White Sea Karelia. While the border cut the trading families' contacts to their home region, the networks that had originally been formed there continued to function within Finland, supporting and maintaining a White Sea Karelian identity and culture outside its geographical borders.

This article highlights the ways in which networks were significant for the members of the Arhippainen family as peddlers and shopkeepers, and how they themselves were also active in creating them. By following a single family over two generations and in changing contexts, it becomes clear that various types of connections enabled peddlers from the outside to meet the challenges that they encountered in a foreign environment, and to move from the margins of society to become established merchants in their new environment. In

this regard, access to sources that reflect the family members' own views of their business activities, such as interviews, notebooks, and articles that they themselves and their peers authored, have been of central importance for this study. The sources not only highlight the relevance of connections for the Arhippainen family's business activities but also provide a more multifaceted picture of the business than other types of sources, such as newspapers and ethnographic questionnaires, which primarily reflect the perceptions and attitudes of the customers, authorities, and local merchants.

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Notes

- 1 The names are not standardized and appear in Russian, Karelian, Swedish, and Finnish forms, depending on the function and the language of each source. For clarity and consistency, we use the Finnish names, which the family members themselves used when appearing as authors in the periodicals published by White Sea Karelian organizations.

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