

Aging and Trauma in Older Yenish (Swiss Travelers): An Explorative Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Purpose: This qualitative study explores how cultural factors influence the perception of aging, older people, and traumatic experiences in the Yenish community in Switzerland. The Yenish are an ethnic minority with a traveling lifestyle who were targeted by a Swiss governmental youth care foundation scheme called "Kinder der Landstrasse" (Children of the Countryroad) from 1926 to 1973, which forcibly removed children from their families to eliminate their traveling lifestyle.

Methods: We conducted semi-structured interviews with ten older ($M=62.9$) and six younger ($M=34.33$) Yenish to explore old age and trauma in the Yenish community. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed according to thematic analysis.

Results: The study's findings indicate that older Yenish individuals are viewed very positively in the Yenish community, with respect, honor, and admiration for their survival and valuable life experience. Only the physical aspects of aging were viewed negatively. Furthermore, the findings suggest that not only did the older generation of Yenish, who were directly impacted by Kinder der Landstrasse, experience trauma, but also that the younger generation inherited the trauma through narratives and an overly cautious and fearful upbringing.

Conclusions: There is evidence that the Yenish community suffered a historical trauma which should be acknowledged and addressed in the mental health field and in Swiss society.

Keywords:

Switzerland, Yenish, Travelers, minority, older adults, trauma, intergenerational trauma, historical trauma, cultural-clinical psychology, qualitative research

Aging and Trauma in Older Yenish (Swiss Travelers): An Explorative Qualitative Study

The aging process is a complex and multifaceted experience that is shaped by a variety of factors including cultural factors and life events such as traumatic events (Pandey, 2018). Furthermore, the way aging, old age, and older people are perceived depends on the age image that individuals have. Individual age images are the internal representations of one's own aging process and of older people in general (Berner et al., 2012). Individual age images are closely related to cultural age images, which are formed by ideas and assumptions about age being shared by a group of people in a cultural environment (Rossow, 2012). For example, Löckenhoff et al. (2009) examined the age images of students in 26 cultures in six continents. They found that cross-culturally, students associated old age with an increase in wisdom and a decrease of everyday-life coping. Cultures with a higher percentage of older adults had less positive opinions on old age. Intergenerational contact also proved to play a key role in how older adults were perceived, as contact was correlated positively to positive age images. People adopt the stereotypes of age that are dominant in a society already in childhood (Wurm & Huxhold, 2012). By aging, the stereotypes are progressively replaced by personal perceptions about age (Maercker, 2015; Wurm & Huxhold, 2012). Previous studies have also shown associations between age images and health behavior and well-being (Bowen et al., 2014; Cheng et al., 2009; Huy & Thiel, 2009; Levy et al., 2002).

A survey in the German-speaking part of Switzerland with 9000 participants showed that the age image of German-speaking Swiss adults is positive (Berner Generationenhaus, 2019). Participants associated old age with being more relaxed, content, and free of stressful duties. They also agreed that older adults can lead an active and enjoyable life through leisure activities. However, old age was also connotated with some worries and fears. Younger participants feared loneliness and losses of loved ones in old age. Older participants,

conversely, feared the loss of autonomy. Both younger and older participants worried about developing dementia, although this worry was even stronger in younger participants.

So far, there is no research on how the Yenish, a traditionally traveling minority population in Europe, perceive aging and older adults in their community. In Switzerland, they have been a nationally recognized minority since 2016. Around 35.000 to 40.000 Yenish are estimated to live in Switzerland, with most leading a sedentary lifestyle and only around 3000 Yenish still traveling (Radgenossenschaft der Landstrasse, 2018). Contrary to Romani and Sinte people who immigrated from India into Europe in the 10th century, the Yenish have always lived in Switzerland. They can therefore be considered an Indigenous People of Germanic origin (Akkaya, 2015).

The Yenish in Switzerland were systematically prosecuted from 1926 to 1973. With the support of the Swiss government, the Swiss youth care *Pro Juventute* launched the scheme “Kinder der Landstrasse” (KdL; Children of the Countryroad) which had the purpose to eliminate the traveling lifestyle by re-educating Yenish children into becoming sedentary, as well as “valuable and hard-working” members of society (Galle, 2016). To achieve this goal, over 600 Yenish children were forcibly removed from their families and placed into children or foster homes, psychiatric clinics, or work institutions (Demuth, 2022; Galle, 2016). Many Yenish families were destroyed in the process and the Yenish community as a whole was massively impacted by the scheme.

Despite the Yenish community’s traumatic past, there is a lack of research in the context of their mental health, including how the Yenish perceive traumatic experiences. In a previous study (Rossi et al., in press), we explored metaphors of trauma contexts in older Yenish, which gave an insight into the devastating impact KdL had on Yenish people, both as individuals and as a community. The findings showed that older Yenish who had been directly and indirectly affected by the scheme often saw themselves, their community, and

their culture as “damaged” and “broken”, sometimes to the point that the damage was irreparable.

Another group of people that are somewhat comparable to the Yenish due to having experienced a similar past, are Switzerland’s former *Verdingkinder*, also known as “contract children” or “indentured child laborers”. Indeed, some Yenish are former *Verdingkinder* themselves. Several studies have been conducted on *Verdingkinder* (e.g., Krammer et al., 2015; Küffer et al., 2016; Maercker et al., 2015), exploring aspects of traumatic experiences and PTSD, resilience, and intergenerational transmission. However, it is important to note that while *Verdingkinder* were removed from their families mostly due to socioeconomic and moral reasons, the Yenish were removed specifically due to being Yenish, which might have additionally affected their cultural identity.

In general, how traumatic events are experienced and reacted to can differ between nations or cultural groups (Maercker et al., 2019). Furthermore, studies have shown that older people may have a different concept of traumatic events and trauma sequelae than younger people. For example, there is some evidence that older adults may regard traumatic life events as “normal” experiences that happen to everyone in life, and that repressing or accepting one’s suffering and moving on is therefore the most reasonable course of action (Hiskey & McPherson, 2013; Rossi et al., 2023; Switzer et al., 2006).

The present study aims to explore how the Yenish community perceives old age and traumatic experiences, as well as how culture, old age, and trauma sequelae are related to each other. Our research questions were the following: How do older Yenish perceive aging? How are older Yenish perceived in the Yenish community? What traumatic experiences do older Yenish report and how are they perceived? How are culture, age, and trauma sequelae related?

We also explored the same research questions in younger Yenish, both in regard to younger Yenish themselves and in regard to older Yenish. We explored their age image and contrasted their perception of aging and traumatic experiences with the perception of aging and trauma experiences of older Yenish.

Methods

Participants

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Zurich (Approval no. 21.2.19 and 22.2.13). We conducted an ethnopsychological study to interview older and younger Yenish about their perception of aging, older adults, and traumatic experiences in the Yenish community. Inclusion criteria for participation were being Yenish and fluent in German. The age restriction for the younger participants was from 18 to 40 years, whereas for the older participants it was from 55 years upwards. Upon completing the interview, participants received a voucher for one of Switzerland's largest retail companies.

Recruitment took place from August 2021 to July 2022 and proved to be challenging, as Yenish people were not easy to track down and often were not interested in participating in the study. We were aided by Traveler foundations, who established the first contact to potential participants and gave advice on how to reach more. Participants also aided recruitment by facilitating contact to more Yenish (snowball sampling). Furthermore, we contacted potential participants via telephone, email, websites and social media, and visited Traveler events where we also conducted interviews on the field.

A total of 16 Yenish people participated in the study: Ten in the older and six in the younger group. The older sample consisted mostly of men who were in their 60s and living a sedentary lifestyle. The younger sample was smaller but balanced out in terms of diversity.

Most were in their 30s. Two younger participants were a married couple and were interviewed together.

Some participants who were currently living a sedentary lifestyle had traveling experience from the past. More details about participants' sociodemographic data can be seen in Table 1. Written informed consent was obtained from all subjects before participation.

Table 1

Sociodemographic Data of Study Participants

Variable	Older Yenish	Younger Yenish
	N	N
Total participants	10	6
Gender		
Female	3	3
Male	7	3
Age (in years)		
Range	55-69	27-39
Mean	62.9	34.33
Relationship status		
Single	1	0
Committed relationship	1	0
Married	3	5
Divorced	4	1
Widowed	1	0
Own Children (>1)	8	6
Education		

No education	2	0
Low education	3	3
Average education	3	2
High education	2	1
Current living situation		
Sedentary	7	3
Part-time traveling	1	0
Full-time traveling	2	3

Materials and Procedure

This paper is part of a larger study on cultural or metaphorical expressions of traumatic experiences which also included age-related inquiries (Rossi et al., in press). We developed a semi-structured interview to collect data from participants. The original German and translated to English interview guides are available as supplementary material. The interviews took place wherever participants preferred and were audio recorded. We asked participants questions about the role of old age in the Yenish community, about perceived differences between older and younger individuals and between Yenish and non-Yenish people in Switzerland regarding what is important in life and how traumatic events are handled. The duration of the interviews of the older sample were one and a half hours on average, ranging from 40 minutes to two hours. The interviews of the younger sample were shorter, lasting one hour on average and ranging from 25 minutes to two hours.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using the computer software for qualitative analysis MaxQDA (VERBI Software, 2021). We identified relevant and recurring themes regarding age, culture, and traumatic experiences according to the thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006).

The interviews and the data analysis were conducted by one person for the older sample and one person for the younger. After creating the themes, a second and third person analyzed transcript parts of both samples respectively. The analyses results were compared to ensure intercoder reliability. In general, the consensus among the coders was high. Discrepancies were discussed.

Since the participants in this study did not provide written consent to share their data publicly, the supporting data cannot be made available due to its sensitive nature. However, in order to maintain transparency, the researchers have completed the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Studies checklist for interviews and focus groups (COREQ; Tong et al., 2007), which can be accessed as supplementary material.

Results

As a whole, we collected a rich amount of data. Due to the focus of this study on older Yenish as an entire group and not as individuals, we will report the themes that were mentioned by at least three participants. Specific topics that were covered little and answered more ambivalently will include individual statements.

First, the results from the interviews with the older participants will be explored in depth. Afterwards, the results from the interviews with the younger participants will be contrasted with the ones from the older ones and used to confirm and complement the findings.

Aging in General and Aging in the Yenish Community

When talking about age, the older participants mentioned some aspects that seemed to be related to aging in general, and some which seemed to apply specifically to aging in the

Yenish community. We will start by presenting the findings that seemed to be related to aging in a more general sense.

Aging in General

When asked what differences participants perceived between younger and older people (including themselves when they were younger in comparison to now that they are older), they mentioned that they felt that younger people are more impetuous, irascible, less ready to compromise, and that they take a more active approach to matters. Similarly, they mentioned that younger people often feel invincible and take matters less seriously.

Participant 7 said: “In your younger years you always thought, I am – to put it simply – immortal, nothing can happen to me, I am the greatest, I am a little hero”, whereas, in old age comes the first small setback, right. And then you realize, whoops, you're not a tower of strength either.”

In comparison, many participants alluded that old age comes with more experience and wisdom which are accumulated through life. Several participants also mentioned having a more relaxed and laid-back attitude. This attitude was sometimes associated to being retired and having an old-age and survivors' insurance, hence having to worry less about existential matters. Sometimes it also stemmed from already having lived one's life and therefore having less things to lose, achieving a form of freedom. Some participants mentioned the physical limitations that come with being older such as being slower or less strong. Overall, however, this aspect of aging seemed to play a less important role for them.

Many participants also mentioned how it is not only aging itself that causes differences between younger and older people, but also the way the world around us changes and evolves. Participant 10 explained it like this: “We older people grew up in a different time, that is, we were born in a different time, and uhm... Well, for us something else is

normal than for young people like you [the interviewer], for example.” Some participants expressed a pessimistic outlook on the current state and development of the world. Concerns regarding the current ecologic, economic, and political crises were expressed. These developments made some participants feel sorry for the pressure younger people are under, as well as worry for their children’s and grandchildren’s future.

Aging in the Yenish Community

Some things described by participants were more specific to the Yenish community. Some older participants mentioned that some younger Yenish are more ambivalent in regard to their culture and history. According to these participants, younger Yenish are losing interest in Yenish traditions such as sitting around the bonfire together. Some participants emphasized how modernization and digitalization is affecting the Yenish community as well, with younger Yenish starting to use cellphones already as children. Additionally, they mentioned that younger Yenish are not interested in dwelling on KdL, preferring to focus on the present instead. Participant 5 repeated what his children tell him: “Look dad, that’s the past, we have the problems of today. [...] Look, that thing with Siegfried [the man in charge of KdL], that happened 50 years ago, there's nothing you can do about it anymore.” He explained this disinterest in the following way: “It's like the Hitler time, it's the same. It's over and done with, isn't it? And that's the difference. We stick, we, the 60-, 65-year-olds are the last.”

Indeed, KdL was mentioned by many participants to describe what differentiated older Yenish from the younger ones. Participants described how the scheme had affected many older Yenish directly and indirectly in the past, and still affected older Yenish to this day, with many carrying the trauma of what happened in their childhood into old age. Some participants described how some of the most affected ones try to suppress the trauma,

refusing to think and talk about it. Accordingly, a certain fear and mistrust towards society was said to be still present in older Yenish.

Participants spoke very positively of the role older Yenish have in the Yenish community and the way they are treated by younger Yenish. Participants reported the great importance of family, unity, and respect towards older people. Family – also in a broader sense, including people beyond the nuclear family such as relatives and friends – and community were considered the most important things in life for almost all participants, with children being particularly cherished. In this context, some participants believed that there are more lonely older non-Yenish than Yenish because older Yenish are strongly included in the community and, in the case of traveling Yenish, brought along on their travels for as long as their health allows it. They made comparisons with older non-Yenish adults in Switzerland, who often end up alone in a retirement home after a certain age. Indeed, several participants emphasized how afraid older Yenish are of ending up in a retirement home and how distressing the experience had been for the ones who did. Participant 4 said: “It is really quite difficult – and then they go quite quickly – yes, they die away. Because they simply become lonely, they just kind of can't stand it anymore.” Worth mentioning is also, that some participants pointed out that many older Yenish have a very low old-age and survivors' insurance and no pension funds (which in Switzerland is tied to employers) due to many Yenish not being officially employed and instead working as freelancers.

According to participants, older Yenish are respected, their experience and opinions taken seriously and valued. They have a key role in upholding and transmitting traditions, such as teaching traditional Yenish trade and handicraft, as well as the Yenish language which is known only by a minority of Yenish people nowadays. Additionally, older Yenish have a key role in keeping the community united, also by mediating conflicts. Generally,

older Yenish try to support their younger counterparts and to be active and useful community members for as long as they can.

Trauma and Aging, Trauma and Culture

We asked the older participants questions about extremely difficult events in the Yenish community and extremely difficult events in life in general. Participants reported several traumatic and other stress-related events on an individual as well as on a collective level.

Trauma in the Older Yenish Community

The most frequently reported stressors by far, addressed by all participants, were KdL, as well as the (unrelated) experiencing of discrimination of various kinds. Some participants had been directly affected by KdL or had close relatives who had been. The most traumatic aspect of the scheme was the forced removal of children from their families, which led to many families being destroyed. Indeed, when asked what they felt was the worst thing that can happen to people, half of the participants answered that the loss of a close person, particularly the loss of children, was the worst. Participants reported how removed Yenish children often lost their identity, freedom, and experienced abuse and neglect, and how Yenish children sometimes were also *Verdingkinder*. Discrimination of the Yenish, as mentioned by some participants, happened already before KdL, for example, when Romani, Sinte, and Yenish people were persecuted during World War II.

Participants reported having been confronted with prejudices, generalizations, verbal, and even physical attacks on several occasions throughout life. Several participants reported frequent controls and conflicts with authorities (e.g., police). Many participants, particularly those who had led or still do lead a traveling lifestyle, reported structural discrimination,

especially in the form of a severe lack of halting sites where they are allowed to temporarily halt with their caravans during their travels, and permanently settle down during the winters. This lack of suitable halting sites was perceived as a great hindrance and a threat to Yenish culture, and said to lead to not being able to travel, to conduct traditional Yenish trade, and to live close to family, relatives, and friends. It was also said to lead to competitiveness and tension among the Yenish themselves, and Yenish and other Travelers such as Romani people. According to participants, KdL and the discrimination experiences have led many Yenish people to hide their origins.

When talking about these extremely difficult experiences, it became apparent that the older participants were very unsatisfied with the way Switzerland handled and still handles the Yenish community, especially in regard to what happened in the context of KdL. Some participants emphasized how Switzerland, authorities as well as common people, allowed KdL with all its related atrocities to happen without anyone questioning it. On a similar note, some participants expressed distress over how Yenish as a people and KdL as a historical event in Switzerland are not acknowledged by or even familiar to most Swiss people. Many participants perceived that Switzerland did not do enough to integrate Yenish into society and that, for example, refugees and foreign Travelers, despite experiencing hardship as well, still benefitted from the international pressure on Switzerland. According to these participants, Yenish, being Swiss themselves, are often neglected, with requests from the community being processed extremely slowly or ignored outright by authorities not wanting to take responsibility of the matter. Participant 6 summarized it like this: "It's logical, us, they have us under control. And on the outside, Switzerland always wants to show a good image."

Individual and Collective Trauma

Participants were asked if they felt there was a difference between very difficult experiences that happen to only one person (individual trauma) and very difficult experiences that happen to an entire group of people (collective trauma). The question proved to be difficult to understand and answer for most participants. Nonetheless, some participants provided answers that were similar to each other.

Several participants felt that a collective trauma affects a far bigger group of people, becomes public knowledge, and may lead to more acknowledgment, solidarity, and support. Victims may feel less alone knowing other individuals have experienced the same as them. They also have the possibility to talk about it with other people. “It’s traumatic, but there’s a chance to deal with it together. Whether or not you grasp [this opportunity], whether or not you can handle it, is a different question,” said Participant 2, for example. One participant talked about how collective trauma was such a big problem that it required just an equally big solution that cannot be handled by one individual alone. It becomes something that an entire group such as the Yenish as a people have in common, and therefore it becomes part of their cultural identity. Another participant said it destroys an entire generation.

Opinions on individual trauma were slightly more ambivalent. Two participants felt that individual trauma was something that affected mostly an individual and needed to be elaborated by said individual on their own. The trauma is known only in a smaller group of people and the traumatized individual may feel alone with their trauma. Two other participants, conversely, felt that even individual trauma does not ever affect the individual alone. Participant 3 said the following: “You’re never alone in the sense that when fate, a stroke of fate, has a specific meaning, you can never cope with it on your own. Because you are always dependent on people. In some form or another.” The other participant said that news about individual trauma, such as an accident, is spread very quickly in the Yenish

community and that the entire community is affected and suffers from it. He added that the cohesion in the Yenish community is greater than in the general Swiss population and that the entire community is somewhat of a family.

Trauma, Aging, and Culture

We tried to identify if participants perceived a difference between the way older and younger people in general, as well as older Yenish and older non-Yenish people handle traumatic experiences. These questions were asked to explore age and cultural differences, however, they seemed to be difficult to understand and answer for most participants. Nonetheless, some participants gave extensive and insightful replies.

In regard to how age influences the way hardship is handled, Participant 3 answered as follows:

[...] as a young person you are more active and more resistant, less willing to compromise than older people. And when we talk about the bigger stories now, like KdL or something like that, the older ones are perhaps also – in that sense – not reconciled with the perpetrators, but more reconciled with themselves and with the story.

He added that both older people who have come to terms with their past in a positive sense, and people who have not and have instead become bitter and resigned, share the characteristic that they have a greater composure than when they were younger.

Participant 2 felt that age did not play a significant role in how a trauma is handled and that other factors are more important. In her opinion, education plays a major role, as educated people have more access to helpful resources. Furthermore, she said that personality is also important and that people who can deal with their trauma openly, are more likely to receive the support they need. Lastly, she mentioned that the social context also plays a key

role. Having an open-minded family or relatable public figures make it easier to come forward with one's trauma and receive support.

Participant 2 felt the same way about the influence of one's culture on the way traumatic events are experienced, meaning, that culture has no influence and other factors such as education have a greater impact. However, she made a specific distinction: The difference between older Yenish who have led a sedentary lifestyle and Yenish who have led a traveling lifestyle. She pointed out that Yenish who grew up sedentary have a better education than Yenish who did not and may therefore have better access to resources to handle traumatic experiences. Two other participants agreed that one's culture does not influence the way a traumatic event is experienced and that one's personality is more important.

Younger Yenish: Age image, Confirmations, Contradictions, and Additions

We asked the younger participants how they perceived aging and older people in the Yenish community. Overall, the younger participants confirmed the findings of the interviews with the older participants and gave additional insight into some questions that had remained unanswered.

Younger Yenish and the Age image

When are people "old"? Overall, the younger participants could not agree on a specific numeric age to describe old age. Instead, most related old age to a subjective perception of "feeling old". This feeling of being old was characterized by physical changes such as becoming frailer, weaker, slower, and at times ill. As a consequence, older people were perceived as having more trouble completing everyday-life tasks, especially when leading a traveling lifestyle which was seen as being particularly strenuous for an older

person. One participant mentioned that older Yenish even died sooner due to the straining traveling lifestyle. Older people were perceived as appreciating rest and breaks, traveling less, and possibly becoming sedentary to avoid becoming a burden to their younger relatives.

Younger participants confirmed that older Yenish were more bound to traditions than younger Yenish, both in physical appearance and attitude. Older Yenish were perceived as being very proud about their Yenish origins and striving to uphold Yenish cultural values and traditions. Older Yenish were said to encourage the younger ones to preserve their cultural heritage by keeping alive their history, language, and ongoing projects. They were also said to emphasize the importance of family celebrations and maintaining the Yenish traveling lifestyle, including practicing traditional Yenish trade and playing Yenish music.

Older Yenish were regarded very positively by the younger participants. They confirmed that older Yenish are very integrated in the Yenish community and taken along on travels for as long as their health allows it. Support needed by older Yenish due to their decreasing strength was said to be given gladly and dutifully by younger Yenish, regardless of relation. Older Yenish, conversely, were said to support the younger ones by helping them financially. The younger participants respected and honored older Yenish, regarded them as survivors and great role models with a lot of life experience. Participant 16 said: “If we’re here, it’s because they [the older Yenish] made it possible... and accordingly, we always try to take the older ones as an example and to emulate them.”

Younger Yenish and Kinder der Landstrasse

When asked about the extremely difficult experiences the Yenish community had gone through, the younger participants reported the same experiences as the older participants, focusing on KdL and discrimination as well. We asked them how they perceived older Yenish in regard to being directly affected by the scheme. The younger participants felt

that older Yenish had become more cautious and fearful due to their experiences at the time of the scheme, fearing that the events of KdL could repeat themselves. Older Yenish were said to frequently warn younger Yenish to be careful. Furthermore, older Yenish were said to stay more inside of the community and be less open towards outsiders.

According to the younger participants, KdL was still a sensitive topic and not all older Yenish wanted to talk about. One participant described how his mother, who had been directly affected by the scheme, still suffered greatly from the experience, had difficulty thinking about it, and still cried, when she talked about it. However, the younger participants agreed that, overall, most older Yenish had a strong need to talk about the scheme and their experiences. In the view of younger participants, older Yenish were better in dealing with traumatic events due to their life experience and having dealt with hardship before. Older Yenish were regarded as having a strong will to survive. Indeed, two younger participants considered their grandparents great survivalists and expressed thankfulness by acknowledging that the younger generation would not be there, if it were not for the struggles of the older one.

Some older participants wondered how their children felt about KdL, with most of them not talking to their children about it. The younger participants gave some insight into this topic. Despite younger participants not being affected by the scheme directly, they expressed being impacted by the narratives of the older generation and suffering with them, nonetheless. All younger participants had the impression that KdL had affected the way their parents had raised them, and therefore, the way they themselves now perceive and handle some things. The story of the scheme and its consequences had been ingrained in them from an early age, and they had been repeatedly warned to be careful and not leave with anyone. As a consequence, they now raised their children in the same overly careful and fearful way. One participant said that his children are only allowed to talk to strangers when he is present

or he has given his consent. Another participant mentioned how her children are not allowed to open the door when she is not there. Participant 15 summarized it as follows:

They [the older Yenish] pass it [the trauma] on to us and then we will pass it on to the younger ones. I think it will always stay a little bit with us, because you can never completely forget something like that – and we never should. Because you never know what's going to happen in life and you should always be aware that it can – let's hope not – but something could happen again.

This quote expresses the still present fear of a repetition of KdL even in the younger generation. Indeed, all younger participants mentioned this fear, although some felt that the fear was irrational and that a repetition would not happen. Nonetheless, this fear led to being afraid of authorities, especially towards the administration for vulnerable children and adults in Switzerland. Some participants also expressed anger towards the authorities for what they had done to the Yenish community.

Several younger participants had a wish to distance themselves from what happened in the past, which is why they often do not want to talk about KdL. One participant said that younger Yenish avoid the topic to be able to forget about it. Some others believed that KdL should never be forgotten, but that it was time to look towards the future and not the past.

A key resource for coping with hardship mentioned by younger participants was the great cohesion in the Yenish community: Younger Yenish stick together and support each other. A younger participant felt that this cohesion was even stronger in the younger generation than it had been in the youth of the older generation.

Younger Yenish and Yenish Culture

Both younger and older participants agreed that older Yenish are more traditional and strive to transmit and uphold cultural values and norms. Some older participants claimed that younger Yenish are more ambivalent in regard to their origins and seem to be losing interest in carrying on Yenish traditions. The interviews with the younger participants, however, showed that at least from their perspective, younger Yenish are still very proud of being Yenish and care a lot about preserving and practicing Yenish culture. Nevertheless, the younger participants did make a distinction between younger Yenish who lead a sedentary lifestyle and younger Yenish who lead a traveling lifestyle, claiming that the latter tended to be more traditional than the former.

Even among traveling younger participants a need to adapt to modern times was expressed. They said that due to traditional handiwork not being appreciated the same way as in the past, younger Yenish need to be able to practice several different handicraft professions at the same time to flexibly adapt to modern conditions. They also emphasized the need to become more open and adaptive towards the rest of Swiss society in general, with non-Yenish people being their main clientele when trading, and therefore, younger Yenish being financially dependent on them.

The younger participants regarded younger Yenish as already being more open to new things and open to non-Yenish people than older Yenish. They described how younger Yenish are more integrated in Swiss society, with many having a network and friends also outside of the Yenish community. According to the younger participants, it is easier for younger Yenish than older Yenish to adapt to the rest of society because they were born into it and grew up in it.

Discussion

We explored how aging and traumatic experiences are perceived in the Yenish community in an ethnopsychological study. We conducted semi-structured interviews with ten older participants and six younger participants to have different perspectives on the research topic. We were able to collect a rich amount of data which gave us insight into various aspects of the perception of old age in the Yenish community and the impact traumatic events, particularly KdL, had on both older and younger generations. Recent publications on the Yenish community (e.g., Galle, 2020; Müller et al., 2020; Patrizi, 2021; Wandeler et al., 2015) have been limited and have not yet examined mental health specifically. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to a new area of research.

Overall, it becomes apparent that older Yenish are regarded very positively in the Yenish community. Older Yenish are an integral part of the community, as they uphold and teach Yenish cultural values and traditions to the younger generations. They are respected and seen as survivors and role models with valuable life experience. Furthermore, older participants felt like they were more serene than they had been in younger years. Mentioned negative aspects of old age merely related to the natural decline of physical fitness and health that come with old age.

In regard to traumatic events, KdL and various discriminatory experiences were reported by all participants, young and old. Particularly KdL seems to have had a massive impact on the Yenish community. Older Yenish appear to be greatly affected by the scheme to this day and have become more cautious, fearful, and mistrustful towards non-Yenish people as a result. The interviews with the younger participants showed that this attitude was transmitted to the younger generation through an overly cautious upbringing and that even the younger generation is raising their own children in the same way. Fear of authorities and fear of a repetition of KdL are still present in the entire community, although younger

participants expressed a wish and willingness to focus on the future and become more open towards people outside of the Yenish community again. This wish seems to lead to younger people preferring to not dwell on the past, whereas most older Yenish regard KdL as an event that marked their (cultural) identity and wish to talk about it. Family and community were mentioned by both younger and older Yenish as being the most important thing in life.

Interpretation and Implications

The age image of the Yenish community shows some similarities with previous research on societal age images, for example, when compared to the findings on cultural differences in age images between students of 26 cultures in six continents by Löckenhoff et al. (2009). The perception that was found across cultures of older adults being wiser but having more difficulty with managing everyday life tasks, was also reported by the younger participants in our study. Both the older and younger participants perceived that older adults had more life experience and that old age brought along a physical decline such as being weaker and slower, although the older participants seemed to dwell less on this aspect of old age. According to Löckenhoff et al. (2009), the more contact younger and older people have, the more positive the age image of younger people seems to be. Considering how united the Yenish community is, how older Yenish are included in the community for as long as their health make allows it, and how younger Yenish see it as their duty to support their older counterparts, it can be assumed that the contact between younger and older generations in the Yenish community is very frequent and intense, and that this contact has a positive influence on the age image of younger Yenish. This corresponds to Allport's contact hypothesis on the emergence of group evaluations (Allport, 1954).

When comparing the results of our study with the survey results of the age image in the German-speaking part of Switzerland (Bernier Generationenhaus, 2019), further

similarities, but also some divergences appear. The age image is positive both in Yenish people and in the general Swiss population, with older adults being associated with being more relaxed and freed of worries and duties that they had in younger age. An interesting difference in regard to these two populations is the aspect of older adults leading an active and enjoyable life through leisure activities. Although the Yenish too emphasized the importance of being active, this activity was not connotated to enjoying oneself through leisure activities. Instead, older Yenish valued being active and supporting members of their family and community for as long as possible. The worries about loneliness, losses of loved ones, loss of autonomy, and developing dementia in old age that had been expressed in the general Swiss population were not mentioned by the Yenish. However, fear of loneliness and fear of loss of autonomy could be interpreted as being extremely pronounced in Yenish people as well – not in association with old age per se, but in association with being placed into a retirement home and therefore separated by the Yenish community and forced into a lifestyle that seems to be very encaging for Yenish people.

Retirement homes were seen as causing premature mortality due to the distress they cause to older Yenish, although the traveling lifestyle was also regarded as being strenuous and a reason why older Yenish die sooner than other Swiss people. Shorter life expectancy is well-documented in health studies with Romani and Sinte people (Kolarcik et al. 2009; Hajioff & McKee, 2000; Parry et al., 2007; Sepkowitz, 2006; Van Cleemput, et al., 2007; Zeman et al., 2003). Many factors such as poorer health care, unhealthy lifestyles, alcohol and tobacco consumption, and poorer physical health were found to negatively impact life expectancy in Romani and Sinte people. Hence, it is very probable that some of these factors negatively impact the Yenish as well, for example, they might have poorer health care due to being more mistrustful towards outsiders and institutions, including health care services.

Many parallels arise, when comparing our findings to the findings by Warburton and Chambers (2007) about the role of older Indigenous Australians. In their review, they describe how older Indigenous Australians, just as older Yenish, are highly respected, seen as survivors and as role models by the younger generations. Additionally, older Indigenous Australians play an important role in upholding and transmitting cultural knowledge to younger ones. It is of course problematic to relate ethnic groups across long distances, but at least the minority versus majority position for both remains alike.

Ultimately, it remains uncertain whether the perception of age among the Yenish community is primarily influenced by cohort effects resulting from the KdL experience, or whether it reflects a broader intergenerational perspective. It is possible that future generations may hold different age images.

In regard to the perception of traumatic events, it becomes apparent that the older Yenish generation has experienced a collective trauma (Hirschberger, 2018; Cypress, 2021), with aspects of intergenerational transmission (Kahn & Denov, 2022). Younger participants described being greatly affected by the narratives of their older relatives and acquaintances. Furthermore, they had been raised in a very cautious and fearful manner, which had resulted in them raising their own children in a very cautious and fearful manner, as well. Former research has already identified parenting style as an important factor in intergenerational trauma (Kellermann, 2001; Küffer et al., 2016). Küffer et al. (2016), who conducted a study about intergenerational trauma in the children of former Verdingkinder found that former Verdingkinder parents tended to have a punitive parenting style and a reduced emotionality. This was not mentioned by participants in our study. Thus, it might be cautiously concluded that although former Verdingkinder and Yenish share a similar past, there seems to be a major difference in the way they raised their children and transmitted their trauma to the next

generation. Future research could address this difference, and try to identify possible explanations, if it is confirmed.

Another interesting deviation from previous research is the need by older Yenish to talk about KdL, whereas younger Yenish themselves try to distance themselves from the past and focus on the future. These findings contradict those of Kellermann (2001), who examined intergenerational trauma in children of Holocaust survivors. The trauma experienced by the Holocaust was “ever-present”, but never addressed verbally by the parents in the family.

Overall, the collective trauma and intergenerational trauma in the Yenish community point towards a historical trauma as conceptualized by Brave Heart (1999) and more recently by Mutuyimana and Maercker (2022). The fears described as still present in both older and younger Yenish, the anger towards authorities in younger Yenish, and the dissatisfaction in regard to how Switzerland handled and still handles the Yenish community in older Yenish could be interpreted as a historical trauma reaction. The strong cohesion within the Yenish community could also be interpreted as consequence of historical trauma, as not all sequelae need to be negative and historical trauma can lead to a stronger bond in the affected community (Brave Heart, 1998).

There are many hints that the Yenish community is more collectivistic than individualistic in comparison to the general Swiss population (Hofstede, 2011). Family and community were expressed as being extremely important to the Yenish and the community was described as being very cohesive and supportive of each other. This seems to apply particularly to Yenish who lead a traveling lifestyle, whereas sedentary Yenish seem to have adopted more characteristics and norms of the general Swiss population. The cohesion and solidarity in the Yenish community seems to be a coping resource to deal with the traumatic experiences of the past as well as the discrimination still present today.

Furthermore, it appears that the historical trauma caused by KdL has become an important aspect of the cultural identity of older Yenish. Many older participants mentioned the scheme already when asked what differentiated older Yenish from younger ones, and the need of older Yenish to remember and talk about what happened further emphasizes the importance of this experience for the individual identity of the directly affected ones and cultural identity of older Yenish in general. Considering how proud older Yenish are of their origins and their role as tradition upholders and transmitters in the Yenish community, it appears that despite, or maybe exactly *because* of the attempts of KdL to destroy Yenish culture, older Yenish have developed a very strong and positive identification with their culture (Ebert & Pastoors, 2018), including the historical trauma as a part of their cultural identity. This strong and positive identification could be a protective factor and a resource to cope with trauma in the older Yenish (Shepherd et al., 2018). It is possible, that the very positive age image in the Yenish community has a similar effect, with older Yenish subjectively feeling valued and supported by the younger ones and also objectively receiving a lot of support.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. Due to the recruitment of participants proving to be very challenging, our samples turned out rather small. Particularly the younger sample was slightly unsatisfactory in size, consisting of only six participants. However, considering we used both the younger and older sample to see different perspectives on the same topics, the overall sample of 16 participants can be considered an adequate sample size for data saturation (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Another limitation regarding the sample, was the composition of the older one, consisting 70% of men. In general, it is likely that the sample is not representative, and that mostly particularly open and resilient individuals agreed to

participate in the study. Yenish people who prefer to keep their identity hidden, who are more mistrustful towards outsiders and institutions, and who are less resilient might have had different views on the explored topics.

In the interviews with the older sample, many participants seemed to not understand and therefore to not “correctly” answer the questions trying to identify relations between traumatic experiences, older age, and their culture. This led to the collected data not being enough to explore these associations in depth. The interviewer tried to explain the questions, formulate them differently, and even give examples, but in hindsight, the questions should have been replaced completely by simpler and easier to understand inquiries. Another explanation could be, that the questions were at the end of the interview and that older participants were too tired to focus by that point. In this case, the questions should have been asked earlier in the interview.

Lastly, the analyses were mainly conducted by one person. Interrater reliability was checked, although only half of the transcripts were analyzed by another person. Furthermore, the themes had already been developed by the first person by then. It is possible that another person would have created slightly different themes which might have led to slightly different interpretations.

Due to all the aforementioned reasons a generalization of the findings of this study is not possible. However, considering the lack of research in the mental health field involving Yenish people, this study still gives valuable insight into the Yenish community and their perceptions of aging and traumatic experiences. Future research could delve further into the themes discovered through our exploration. Our study showed that the Yenish community was massively impacted by KdL and that even younger generations are still affected by what happened in the past. There is evidence of historical and intergenerational trauma in the Yenish community that should be addressed. A culturally adapted and age-appropriate

intervention could be developed to help Yenish people dealing with traumatic experiences, distress, and fears related to KdL and discrimination in general.

Another finding of our study that could be explored further, is the strong aversion older Yenish have towards retirement homes. Considering the great distress and increased mortality reported in association with the institutionalization of older Yenish in retirement homes, this is another issue that should be addressed. An ethnopsychological study could give more insight into how retirement homes could be made more accessible and welcoming to older Yenish. Alternatively, new and different options could be explored, and at a later stage, developed and examined. Overall, this study indicates that there is a great need for the Yenish community and their traumatic past to be acknowledged and addressed in Swiss society as a whole.

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Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Studies (COREQ): 32-Item Checklist**Manuscript:****Aging and Trauma in Older Yenish (Swiss Travelers): An Explorative Qualitative Study**

Developed from:

Tong, Allison, Peter Sainsbury, and Jonathan Craig 2007 Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care* 19(6): 349–357.

No. Item	Guide questions/description	Reported on Chapter/Page #
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity		
<i>Personal Characteristics</i>		
1. Interviewer/facilitator	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?	Sandra Rossi (older participants) Vera Lerzer (younger participants) Tabea Horber (in the acknowledgments) conducted one interview with a younger participant
2. Credentials	What were the researcher's credentials? E.g. PhD, MD	Sandra Rossi, M.Sc. Eva Heim, Prof. Dr. Vera Lerzer, B.Sc. Andreas Maercker, Prof. Dr. Dr.
3. Occupation	What was their occupation at the time of the study?	SR, EH and AM are academic staff. VL was a master student. EH and AM work part time in clinical outpatient services.
4. Gender	Was the researcher male or female?	All researchers who conducted the interviews were female.
5. Experience and training	What experience or training did the researcher have?	SR attended workshops on qualitative research and using MAXQDA at the University of Zurich in 2021 and 2022. VL attended workshops in 2022 and was supervised by SR.
<i>Relationship with participants</i>		
6. Relationship established	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?	No

7. Participant knowledge of the interviewer	What did the participants know about the researcher? e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research	- Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form - Participant knew that the interviews were conducted as part of a project that was included in the interviewers' doctoral and master theses.
8. Interviewer characteristics	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? e.g. Bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic	Participants were informed that the two interviewers were psychology PhD and master students.

Domain 2: study design		
<i>Theoretical framework</i>		
9. Methodological orientation and Theory	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis	- Described in Methods/page 6-9 - Methods include: Cultural Clinical Psychology, Ethnopsychology, Thematic Analysis
<i>Participant selection</i>		
10. Sampling	How were participants selected? e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball	Consecutive and snowball sampling. Described in Methods/page 6
11. Method of approach	How were participants approached? e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email	Face-to-face, telephone, email, websites, social media. Described in Methods/page 6
12. Sample size	How many participants were in the study?	Described in Methods/ page 6-7
13. Non-participation	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?	Since foundations and participants contributed to the recruitment process, we were unable to obtain quantitative data on persons who refused to participate.
<i>Setting</i>		
14. Setting of data collection	Where was the data collected? e.g. home, clinic, workplace	4 participants were interviewed in their homes. 2 participants were interviewed in their offices. 1 participant was interviewed at our research institute. 2 participants were interviewed in a café. 7

		participants were interviewed at a traveler event in front of their caravans. Described in Methods/page 8
15. Presence of non-participants	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?	No
16. Description of sample	What are the important characteristics of the sample? e.g. demographic data, date	Described in Method/page 6-8
<i>Data collection</i>		
17. Interview guide	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?	- Semi-structured interviews were conducted, including prompts for the interviewers based on the semi-structured interview guide/page 8 - No, the semi-structured interview was not pilot tested.
18. Repeat interviews	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?	No
19. Audio/visual recording	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?	Yes, described in Methods/page 8
20. Field notes	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?	Yes, they were made during and after the interviews. Not included in the manuscript.
21. Duration	What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?	Described in Methods/page 8
22. Data saturation	Was data saturation discussed?	Yes, in Discussion/page 27
23. Transcripts returned	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?	No

Domain 3: analysis and findings		
<i>Data analysis</i>		
24. Number of data coders	How many data coders coded the data?	4 coders. SR coded the data of the older sample. VL coded the data of the younger sample. Joëlle Clemen (in the acknowledgments) coded 4 transcripts of the older sample. Tabea Horber (in the acknowledgments) coded 3 transcripts of the younger sample. Described in Methods/page 9 and Discussion/page 28

25. Description of the coding tree	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?	Yes, in the results section.
26. Derivation of themes	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?	Both, described in Methods/page 8
27. Software	What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?	MAXQDA, described in Methods/page 8
28. Participant checking	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?	No
<i>Reporting</i>		
29. Quotations presented	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes/findings? Was each quotation identified? e.g. participant number	- Yes, in Results/pages 9-21 - The number of the corresponding participant (P1-P16) was added to the quote. Because of the small sample size and close connections within the Yenish community, age and gender were not indicated, in order to protect the participants' identity
30. Data and findings consistent	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?	Yes
31. Clarity of major themes	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?	Yes
32. Clarity of minor themes	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes?	Yes

Semi-Structured Interview Guide***Original German Version:*****Einzelinterview**

[Einverständniserklärung]

[Erfassung demografischer Daten]

Einleitung ins Interview

Vielen Dank für Ihre Bereitschaft, dieses Interview mit mir durchzuführen. Ich schätze das sehr, denn ich weiss, dass es nicht immer leicht ist, über solche Dinge zu sprechen, besonders mit einer Fremden wie mir. Ihre Aussagen sind für unsere Studie von grossem Wert.

Ich treffe Sie als Vertreter*in der Jenischen allgemein, aber besonders als Vertreter*in der älteren Generation der Jenischen. Im Rahmen unseres Projekts wollen wir mit jüngeren und älteren Jenischen reden, weil uns interessiert, ob es zwischen den zwei Generationen unterschiedlichen Meinungen gibt. Die Älteren sind für uns eine ganz besondere Gruppe, die zu Recht manche Dinge anders sehen und einschätzen als die Jüngeren. Viele von den Älteren haben in der Vergangenheit mehrere schlimme Ereignisse erlebt oder miterlebt, was für unser Thema dann wichtig sein wird. Wir hoffen, durch Ihr Wissen und Ihre Erfahrung einen Einblick in ihre Gemeinschaft zu erhalten, die ihre ganz eigene, sehr schwere Vergangenheit, ihre gegenwärtigen Probleme und ihre Ansichten diesbezüglich hat.

Ich werde Ihnen während unseres Gesprächs ungefähr 10 Fragen stellen und wir werden uns dafür insgesamt ca. 1½ Stunden Zeit nehmen.

Haben Sie bis jetzt Fragen an mich?

Allgemein gilt: Sie dürfen während des Interviews jederzeit Fragen stellen und wir können auch jederzeit eine kleine Pause machen, wenn Sie das wünschen.

Wenn es für Sie in Ordnung ist, würde ich nun das Aufnahmegerät einschalten und gleich mit der ersten Frage anfangen.

[Aufnahmegerät einschalten]

Einleitende Fragen zur Alterswahrnehmung

1. Was denken Sie, ist bei Jenischen besonders an älteren Menschen im Vergleich zu jüngeren Menschen?

2.
 - a) Was sind für ältere Jenische wichtige Dinge im Leben?
 - b) Denken Sie, dass es einen Unterschied zwischen älteren Jenischen und dem Rest der älteren Schweizerbevölkerung gibt, bezüglich was im Leben als wichtig betrachtet wird?
 - c) Was für einen Unterschied ist es?

Unstrukturierter Beginn zum Thema schwerste Lebensereignisse in der Gemeinschaft

3. Zu Beginn möchte ich Sie bitten, mir in Ihren eigenen Worten zu beschreiben, welche schrecklichen Ereignisse Menschen in Ihrer Gemeinschaft erlebt haben und wie sie damit umgegangen sind.

Wie bereits [*im Brief/in der E-Mail/am Telefon*] erwähnt, müssen das nicht Dinge sein, die sie konkret selbst erlebt haben, sondern die in ihrer Umgebung vorgekommen sind.

Es gibt keine richtigen oder falschen Antworten. Erzählen Sie mir einfach, was Ihnen gerade durch den Kopf geht.

Ich bin besonders an den Begriffen oder Ausdrücken interessiert, die Menschen in Ihrer Gemeinschaft verwenden, um diese zu beschreiben. Diese können entweder auf Deutsch oder einer anderen Sprache sein, die Sie kennen.

Welche schrecklichen Ereignisse haben Menschen in Ihrer Gemeinschaft erlebt und wie sind sie damit umgegangen?

... Wie haben Sie sich gefühlt?

... Was ist danach passiert?

Die folgenden Fragen dürfen nur gestellt werden, wenn die Antworten vorher nicht gegeben wurden (4-5)

Beispiele für schwerste Lebensereignisse (modified after Dow et al. 2008)

4. Es gibt verschiedene Arten von schrecklichen Erfahrungen, denen eine **Gemeinschaft** ausgesetzt sein kann. (Vergangenheit/Gegenwart/einmalig/anhaltend)

- a) Welche einmaligen schlechten Erfahrungen hat Ihre Gemeinschaft gemacht, die durch andere Menschen verursacht wurden (z. B. hohe Raten von Raub, Überfällen, Vergewaltigungen)?
- b) Welche Art von einmaligen schlechten Erfahrungen hat Ihre Gemeinschaft gemacht, die zufällig verursacht wurden (z.B. einen schweren Verkehrsunfall, einen schweren Brand, ein schweres Erbeben)?
- c) Welche langanhaltenden schlechten Erfahrungen hat Ihre Gemeinschaft gemacht, die durch andere Menschen verursacht wurden (z.B. langanhaltende körperliche/geistige/sexuelle Gewalt, schwere Diskriminierung, Flucht, politische Inhaftierung)?
- d) Welche Art von langanhaltenden schlechten Erfahrungen hat Ihre Gemeinschaft gemacht, die zufällig verursacht wurden (z.B. Hungersnot, eine schwere Überschwemmung)?

5. Welche Art von Veränderungen hat Ihre Gemeinschaft aufgrund von [*erwähnten Ereignissen*] durchgemacht?

... Wie haben Sie sich gefühlt?

Die folgenden Fragen sollten nur gestellt werden, wenn nicht genügend Material vorher genannt wurde und sich die Gelegenheit bietet bzw. sie nicht als störend empfunden werden könnten (6-9)

Metapherninventar (modified after Kaviani and Hamedi, 2011)

Metaphor Production Task

6. Wenn Sie sich [*erwähnte Ereignisse*] vorstellen, welche Bilder oder Gedanken gehen Ihnen durch den Kopf?

7. Mit welchen Gefühlen würden Sie es vergleichen, wenn Sie sich zutiefst hilflos fühlen?

Stem-Sentence Task

Bitte vervollständigen Sie die folgenden Punkte in einem vollständigen Satz.

8. Schlimme Ereignisse zu erleben ist wie...

9. Kurz nach dem schlimmen Ereignis fühlte ich mich wie...

**Fragen, um Beschreibungen von allgemeinen schwersten Lebensereignissen zu erfragen
(modified after Kohrt & Hruschka, 2010)**

10. Was sind die schlimmsten Ereignisse, die im Leben von Menschen passieren können (ganz allgemein gesprochen)?

11. a) Gibt es einen Unterschied zwischen schlimmen Dingen, die eine ganze Gruppe von Menschen betreffen können, und etwas, das einer einzelnen Person passiert?
b) Was für einen Unterschied ist es?
c) Welche Begriffe oder Ausdrücke verwenden Sie, um diesen Unterschied zu beschreiben?

Abschliessende Fragen zur Alterswahrnehmung

12. a) Von allem, was Sie mir bis jetzt von diesen schlimmen Ereignissen erzählt haben, was denken Sie, was bei älteren Menschen anders ist als bei jüngeren Menschen? (z.B. beim Umgang mit diesen Ereignissen, in der Verarbeitung, bzgl. darauffolgenden Veränderungen, wie sie darüber sprechen, ...)
b) Von allem, was Sie mir bis jetzt von diesen schlimmen Ereignissen erzählt haben, was denken Sie, was bei Jenischen anders ist als beim Rest der Schweizerbevölkerung? (z.B. beim Umgang mit diesen Ereignissen, in der Verarbeitung, bzgl. darauffolgenden Veränderungen, wie sie darüber sprechen, ...)

Abschliessender Kommentar

Das sind alle Fragen, die ich an Sie habe. Ich danke Ihnen vielmal, dass Sie sich die Zeit für dieses Interview genommen haben.

Gibt es noch etwas, das Sie gerne hinzufügen würden?

Haben Sie noch Fragen an mich?

Ich schalte das Aufnahmegerät jetzt aus.

[Aufnahmegerät ausschalten]

[Übergabe von Geschenk & Couvert mit allfälligen Unterlagen]

Translated English Version:**Individual Interview**

[Consent form]

[Collection of demographic data]

Introduction to the interview

Thank you for agreeing to conduct this interview with me. I really appreciate that because I know it's not always easy to talk about such things, especially with a stranger like me. Your statements are of great value for our study.

I meet you as a representative of the Yenish in general, but especially as a representative of the older generation of Yenish. As part of our project, we want to talk to younger and older Yenish because we are interested in whether there are different opinions between the two generations. The older ones are a very special group for us, who rightly see and assess some things differently than the younger ones. Many of the older ones have experienced or witnessed several bad events in the past, which will then be relevant to our topic. We hope, through your knowledge and experience, to gain insight into your community, which has its own very difficult past, its current problems and its views on it.

I will ask you about 10 questions during our conversation and we will take a total of about 1½ hours for this.

Do you have any questions for me so far?

In general, you can ask questions at any time during the interview and we can take a short break at any time if you wish.

Now, if that's okay with you, I'd turn on the recorder and go straight to the first question.

[Turn on recording device]

Introductory questions on age perception

1. What do you think is special about older Yenish people compared to younger Yenish people?

2.
 - a) What are important things in life for older Yenish?
 - b) Do you think that there is a difference between older Yenish and the rest of the older Swiss population regarding what is considered important in life?
 - c) What difference is it?

Unstructured start on the most difficult life events in the community

3. To start, I would like you to describe in your own words what terrible events people in your community have experienced and how you have dealt with them.

As already mentioned [*in the letter/in the e-mail/on the phone*], these do not have to be things that you have actually experienced yourself, but that happened in your environment.

There are no right or wrong answers. Just tell me what's on your mind right now.

I'm particularly interested in the terms or phrases people in your community use to describe them. These can either be in German or another language that you know.

What terrible events have people in your community experienced and how did they deal with them?

... How did you feel?

... What happened after that?

The following questions may only be asked if the answers have not been given beforehand (4-5)

Examples of the most difficult life events (modified after Dow et al. 2008)

4. There are different types of horrific experiences that a **community** can face. (past/present/once/ongoing)

- a) What unique bad experiences has your community had that were caused by other people (e.g., high rates of robbery, mugging, rape)?
- b) What type of one-time bad experiences has your community had that were accidentally caused (e.g., a major traffic accident, a major fire, a major earthquake)?
- c) What long-lasting bad experiences has your community had caused by other people (e.g., long-term physical/mental/sexual violence, severe discrimination, flight, political imprisonment)?

- d) What kind of long-lasting bad experiences has your community had that were accidentally caused (e.g., famine, severe flooding)?

5. What kind of changes did your community go through as a result of [*mentioned events*] ?
... How did you feel?

The following questions should only be asked if insufficient material has been provided beforehand and the opportunity presents itself or if they could not be perceived as disruptive (6-9)

Metaphor inventory (modified after Kaviani and Hamedi, 2011)

Metaphor production task

6. When you imagine [*mentioned events*], what images or thoughts go through your mind?

7. To what would you compare feeling deeply helpless?

Stem-Sentence Task

Please complete the following items in one complete sentence.

8. Experiencing bad events is like...

9. Shortly after the bad event, I felt like...

Questions to ask for descriptions of common most difficult life events (modified after Kohrt & Hruschka, 2010)

10. What are the worst events that can happen in people's lives (in general terms)?

11. a) Is there a difference between bad things that can affect a group of people and something that happens to a single person?
b) What difference is it?
c) What terms or expressions do you use to describe this difference?

Final questions about age perception

12. a) From everything you have told me about these terrible events so far, what do you think is different about older people than younger people? (e.g., in dealing with these events, in processing, regarding subsequent changes, how they talk about them, ...)
- b) From everything you have told me about these terrible events so far, what do you think is different about the Yenish than the rest of the Swiss population? (e.g., in dealing with these events, in processing, regarding subsequent changes, how they talk about them, ...)

Final comment

Those are all the questions I have for you. Thank you very much for taking the time for this interview.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Do you have any questions for me?

I'll turn off the recorder now.

[Turn off recording device]

[Handover of gift & envelope with any documents]

References

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