

# THB and beggars

experiences from a Swedish case

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# Background to a controversial phenomena

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- Freedom of movement towards end of first decade
- A slow start
- Many itinerant beggars from Romania and later also from Bulgaria
- 4000 in Sweden according to 2014 survey
- Same amount now?
- Most but not all Romas

- Begging in public places not prohibited in Sweden
- Low degree of violence in streets
- Low degree of obvious prejudice
- Relatively high dividends

# Questions raised

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Who were they

How did they get here

How much did they make

Were they organized

Was there chiefs behind

Were they forced or coerced

Or organized crime

# Different results

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Romanian-Swiss study: *Trafficking in persons for begging – Romania study 2013*

- 191 identified victims of THB in 2010-2011 in or from Romania
- 60-70 EUR a day

Norwegian study: *When poverty meets affluence 2015*

- no signs of trafficking at all
- 10-13 EUR a day



# A criminal investigation to provide some answers

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Police aware of handicapped woman sitting all day without rest and without means of getting away or to take pauses

Subsequent surveillance showed someone brought her there

And took her back again

And handled the money ....

--- investigation launched with telephone tapping, surveillance, cameras etc

# Two main perpetrators found

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Two Bulgarian brothers

Each one having a team of beggars

The beggars old, frail, handicapped, one blind, one damaged sight, one unable to walk

Shared a small apartment: one room for each master with wife and kid; one other room for the beggars

Two beggars slept in the car

Each master responsible for the beggars in each team

# .. . appalling conditions

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Every day 9-21

No holidays

One sandwich for lunch

No opportunity for rest for toilets etc

All income to the masters

Mattresses on the floor or in the car





# Evidence of income

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Seized money

Receipts of remittance

Witnesses from change bureaux

Receipts of change of coins to notes

Primitive book-keeping

BISER

БИСЕР

①

ММН.	- 75	03	- 115
20.	- 140	04	- 170
21.	- 150	05	- 63
22.	- 200	06	- 223
23.	- 0	07	- 0
24.	- 0	08	- 210
25.	- 300	09	- 328
26.	- 210	10	- 387
27.	- 0	11	- 365
28.	- 30	12	- 220
29.	- 40	13	- 245
30.	- 218	14	- 223
31.	- 440	15	- 330
01.	- 90	16	- 310
02.	- 180	17	- 323

Goscho

ГОШО

30.	- 290	14	- 120
31.	- 165	15	- 270
01.	- 160	16	- 160
02.	- 200	17	- 260
03.	- 150	18	- 170
04.	- 230	19	- 160
05.	- 150	20	- 200
06.	- 180	21	- 190
07.	- 150	22	- 220
08.	- 120	23	- 130
09.	- 210	24	- 200
10.	- 100	25	- 200
11.	- 120	26	- 220
12.	- 330	27	- 300
13.	- 170	28	- 340

# Approximate income

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Difficult to ascertain

Different according to time of day, beggar, placement

40 euros a day, as compared to 50 euros a day one year ago

As compared to average wages in Bulgaria (382 euros per month)

# Characteristics very much like reported in Romanian study

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- degrees of income
- disabled and elderly victims
- traffickers hold victims' allowances, pensions, grants etc
- recruitment with job offers
- threats and actual violence occur, but relatively low degree
- families also exploiting weaker family members

# The old world

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Gemeinschaft not gesellschaft

Law not society

Tradition not contract

Family not individuals

Submission to father not equality

No questioning of authority

# A traditional old world way . . .

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of taking care of the old and disabled?

Some other cases with the same ingredients: one chief, a band consisting of impaired people:

The duty of the chief to provide housing, warmth and food

The duty of the others to work, obey and hand over all income

# Relationship between

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Master and servant

Nobleman and serf

Knight and villein

Farmer and farm-hand

# To gain confidence of the victims

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Victims not ready to see their conditions as unacceptable

Victims afraid of punishment from their masters

Victims ashamed of their position

Victims afraid of host country society – police, judges, social workers

Victims told to keep away of police, fear of imprisonment or deportation

Victims with small personal assets: no knowledge, no self-esteem, no language, illiteracy, physically and mentally impaired,

# The old world in a modern court

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Difficult to show the nature of the relations

Difficult to make a modern court or audience understand

Difficult to make a court understand why victims' stories varies

Difficult to prove crime as there is no overt violence, no coercion, and no feelings of guilt or having done anything criminal or wrong

# By hard and diligent police work: the outcome

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Three years six months imprisonment for one

Three years for the imprisonment for the other

Shorter terms for assisting

# Thank you for your attention!

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