

# Abstracts from workshop on Migrant street workers in Scandinavia

## **Jon Horgen Friberg: Poverty, networks, resistance: Towards an economic sociology of marginal migration, begging and 'street work' among Romanian Roma in Scandinavia**

Since 2007, the Scandinavian countries have experienced an influx of 'marginal migrants' from Romania, who operate outside formal labour and housing markets and make a living through begging and other types of informal 'street work'. Within this group, Roma are strongly overrepresented. Roma migrants also differ from their non-Roma counterparts by more often relying on begging as a source of income, while non-Roma usually follows other survival strategies. Rooted in an economic sociology approach, this paper seeks to explore this 'ethnic' dimension of marginal migration and in particular street begging as an economic livelihood strategy. I argue that three distinct factors must be taken into account to understand current patterns of Roma marginal migration and begging: 1) the increasing levels of poverty and structural marginalization of rural Roma communities in Romania; 2) the particular structure of social capital within Roma households and communities enabling mobility despite lack of formal and economic resources; and 3) Roma 'oppositional identities', which provides psychological protection against the stigma and humiliation of street begging. The argument is supported by qualitative and quantitative evidence from a large scale study of Romanian street workers in the Scandinavian capital cities.

## **Miika Tervonen: Coping with everyday bordering: Eastern European Roma migrants in Helsinki**

The presentation is based on an ongoing research with MA Anca Enache. We examine the case of the Eastern European Roma migrants in Helsinki, and the complex interlinkages between EU internal migration regime, local immigration policy and migrant coping strategies. Since 2007, freedom of movement within EU has enabled the migration of small groups of Roma street workers into Helsinki. We argue that various level authorities have responded to the loss of direct control over these legitimate yet unwanted migrants by innovating tacit everyday bordering techniques. The presence of Roma migrants in Helsinki is thus not formally challenged, yet they are effectively without access to social rights and feasible pathways to integration. Policy towards them is ethnicized (conceptualizing 'the Roma' as a category requiring special measures) and 'NGOized' (displacing responsibility for welfare provision to third sector and private actors). Meanwhile, the ambivalent intersecting policies of the City of Helsinki, Finland and EU have produced a set of constraints, risks and possibilities which the migrants have become adept at coping with, using transnational family networks, flexible combinations of informal economic activities, and social networks in Helsinki.

## **Guri Tyldum: Hostile discourses and migrants experiences of harassment**

Although the Scandinavian countries are relatively similar on numerous policy areas, they appear quite opposite when it comes to migration policy; Sweden on is on one hand famous for its relatively liberal stance towards refugees, while Denmark on the other, has implemented stricter immigration policies, and Norway seem to be placed somewhere in the middle (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2011). These differences are reflected in discourses on begging and immigrant street workers as well (Borevi forthcoming). It seems however to be unclear, if this is mainly a difference on the level of discourse and policy, or if this is it reflected in the experiences migrants have coming to these countries, and how they are met by the majority populations. In this paper I look closer at reported incidences of harassment and exclusion of homeless Romanians in the three Scandinavian countries, and ask if there is a correspondence between excluding and hostile discourses and the aggregate levels of harassment reported by homeless migrants from Romania. The analysis is based on a survey conducted among homeless Romanians in the three Scandinavian capitals during the summer and fall of 2014(Djuve, Friberg, & Tyldum, 2015).

Brochmann, G., & Hagelund, A. (2011). Migrants in the Scandinavian Welfare State *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* (Vol. 1, pp. 13).

Djuve, A. B., Friberg, J. H., & Tyldum, G. (2015). When poverty meets affluence. Migrants from Romania on the streets of the Scandinavian capitals. Copenhagen: The Rockwool Foundation.

## **Anne Britt Djuve and Jon Horgen Friberg: Regulating migration within the EU. Impacts of measures to discourage Romania's poor from migrating to Scandinavia.**

The Scandinavian public and their policy-makers have on the large been less than enthusiastic about the phenomenon of poor migrants from Romania begging in the streets, and sleeping in parks, cars and woods. The three cities apply different strategies for catering for immediate needs of the migrants – or making life on the street difficult, and Denmark has so far applied the most restrictive policy by putting a ban on begging. So far, little is known about the effects of policy measures, and of the actions of private initiatives, public services, NGOs, the police and others. Does policy affect patterns of migration at all, or are financial needs and opportunities all that matters? The composition of migrants to the three cities differ significantly when it comes to demographic characteristics and ethnic composition, length of stay and intentions for continued migration to Scandinavia, as well as in educational backgrounds and coping strategies. In this paper I discuss the relation between policy measures and patterns of migration, taking into account other factors that might affect these patterns, such as income opportunities and experiences of harassment. The analysis builds on a survey consisting of 1269 interviews with street workers in the three Scandinavian capitals. The survey is conducted with RDS-methodology. In addition to the quantitative material we have rich qualitative data from fieldworks in Romania and Scandinavia.

## Sara Walker: Begging and the free movement of poverty

Increasingly, anti-begging legislation is being used across Europe to control the mobility of poor EU migrants, particularly the Roma (Fekete, 2014). Richer member states of the European Economic Area (EEA) have directly linked begging with EU migrant populations and have explicitly called for or tried to implement anti-begging legislation specifically targeted at migrant populations. While the free movement of labour is encouraged under the EU framework, there is currently little regulation in place to address the free movement of poverty (Djuve et al., 2015). Across the EU, mobile EU citizens who are not engaged in the labour market and who are a 'burden' on the host state, may lose their right of residence and become subject to removal after the initial three months residence period granted under free movement rules. Those who are visible beggars, like vagrants in the past, may be 'moved on' and are rendered 'deportable subjects' (De Genova, 2002).

Drawing upon findings from a pilot project *Begging, Work and Citizenship* funded by Oxford University's John Fell fund, this presentation will examine the limitations of citizenship and the contradictions of free movement through the lens of the beggar. It will consider begging as an informal economic activity and examine its intersections with migration through a particular focus on Roma people. The mobility of the Roma, seen as purposefully travelling to beg and abusing, rather than exercising, their Treaty rights, is held to be suspect. The response is thus framed within social disorder narratives. Such discourses have deep historical roots relating to unwanted populations and the control of unruly mobilities (Anderson, 2013). Negative political and media discourse around the free movement of the Roma serve to produce migrant criminality and alienage. Examining the governance of begging and of the mobility of beggars provides a useful analytical lens to shed light on notions of exclusion and the limitations of citizenship, both national and European.

### References

- Anderson, B. (2013) *Us and them? The Dangerous Politics of Immigration Control*. Oxford University Press
- De Genova, N. (2002) 'Migrant 'illegality' and deportability in everyday life' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31
- Djuve, A. B., Friberg, J. H., Tyldum, G. and Zhang, H. (2015) *When poverty meets affluence*, Oslo: FAFO report. Available from: <http://www.faf.no/index.php/nb/zoo-publikasjoner/faf-rapporter/item/when-poverty-meets-affluence>
- Fekete, L. (2014) 'Europe against the Roma', *Race & Class* Vol. 55(3)