

To Construct a Stranger

A Qualitative Content Analysis of How Vulnerable EU-Citizens are Portrayed in Swedish Media

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On 30 April 2004 the EU directive 2004/38/EC entered into force and defined EU-citizens' right to free movement within the European Union. This directive gives EU-citizens the right to move freely between member states in up to three months. In order to reside for a longer period, the EU-citizens must comply to a certain set of rules and qualifications. They must either be employed, registered as students or possess enough economic capital so that neither themselves nor their family risk being a burden on the social assistance system of the host member state.¹

The directive sets up a legal framework where individuals not qualifying are theoretically experiencing their movement somewhat restricted. Furthermore, the people not qualifying within the directive's requirements are at risk of being depicted as unwanted EU-citizens in political discourses. In this article I examine this phenomenon with a specific focus on the group *vulnerable EU-citizens* in Sweden and how they are portrayed in Swedish media.

In Sweden there are approximately 4700 people classified as vulnerable EU-citizens. It is estimated that the great majority have their origin in

¹ Directive 2004/38/EC of the European parliament and of the Council (2004:158), art. 6-7.

Romania and Bulgaria and are of Romani descent.² They leave their home countries where they experience racial discrimination and severe poverty and come to Sweden in the hope of an income. In Sweden this group lack serious alternatives of accommodation and are living in acute homelessness. In search of an income many of them end up on the street begging for money.³ For Sweden this has become a complex phenomenon that has truly challenged the perception of the welfare state and its reach, thus creating an unceasing political debate.⁴

In this article I examine how vulnerable EU-citizens are portrayed in Swedish media. It is executed through a qualitative content analysis, analysing 24 editorials published in the country's four major newspapers *Aftonbladet*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Dagens Nyheter* and *Expressen*. The theoretical framework

² SOU 2016:6, Nationell samordnare för utsatta EU-medborgare, *Framtid Sökes – Slutredovisning från den nationelle samordnaren för utsatta EU-medborgare*, 2016, pp. 20, 23; Djuve, Anne Britt et al, "When Poverty Meets Affluence – Migrants from Romania on the streets of the Scandinavian capitals", *Rockwool Foundation*, Köpenhamn, 2015, p. 14.

³ SOU 2016:6, pp. 7, 22-23.

⁴ Holmin, Maria, "Hätsk debatt om tiggeri i Agenda", *SVT Nyheter*, 2014-01-12, <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/hatsk-debatt-om-tiggeri-i-agenda> (Retrieved: 2018-05-25); Nyman, Emelie, "Soraya Post: Jag är besviken på regeringen", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2015-10-04, <https://www.svd.se/soraya-post-jag-ar-besviken-pa-regeringen> (Retrieved: 2018-05-25); Bărăgoi, Mariușa et al., "Tiggeriet ofta organiserat – men inte maffia", *Expressen*, 2017-12-03, <https://www.expressen.se/debatt/tiggeriet-ofta-organiserat-men-inte-av-maffia/> (Retrieved: 2018-05-25); Ekeröth, Kent, "Förbjud tiggeri i hela landet", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2011-04-22, <https://www.svd.se/forbjud-tiggeri-i-hela-landet> (Retrieved: 2018-05-25); Swedin, Daniel, "M:s tiggeriförbud slår mot romerna", *Aftonbladet*, 2012-12-27, <https://www.aftonbladet.se/ledare/article15986100.ab> (Retrieved: 2018-05-25); Höj-Larsen, Christina, "Tiggeri ska mötas med mer gemensam välfärd", *Aftonbladet*, 2015-04-03, <https://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/article20564652.ab> (Retrieved: 2018-05-25).

is set up within a separate but intertwined division between *The stranger* and *Social problems*. This framework is based on the intent of this research which is to examine how vulnerable EU-citizens are portrayed and how they are constructed as strangers through the formulation of social problems and solutions in the editorials.

Because the majority of vulnerable EU-citizens are of Roma descent it is important to use additional empirical sources on Roma history and anti-gypsism in order to understand the context in which this contemporary discussion takes place. Supported by the theoretical framework, this article will demonstrate how the political discourse in Swedish media regarding vulnerable EU-citizens is filled with Roma stereotypes and othering. This group is generally throughout the editorials described as an unwanted and deviant problem in society, which turns them into unwanted *strangers* residing in Sweden.

The Stranger and Social problems

The theoretical framework is divided into two parts. The first part is built upon Georg Simmel's work *The Stranger* and the idea of the stranger as an individual who arrives and stays rather than being a bypassing or totally distinct character.⁵ This does not mean that the stranger is to be considered an integral part of a group's inner core. The stranger is instead presumed to possess a certain mobility, *a potential traveller*, and therefore not considered to be bound to the group's most fundamental social norms in the same way its majority members are.⁶

⁵ Simmel, Georg, "The Stranger" in [ed.] Wolff, Kurt H. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, The free press, Glencoe Illinois, 1950, p. 402.

⁶ Simmel, Georg, "The Stranger", pp. 402-03; Ryding, Anna, "90 år med Simmels främling – en studie av begreppets förgreningar i den moderna sociologin", *Socialvetenskaplig tidskrift*, Vol. 6 No. 1, 1999, pp. 28-29; McLemore, Dale S., "Simmel's Stranger: A Critique of the Concept", *The Pacific Sociological Review*, Vol. 13 No. 2, 1970, pp. 86-87; Marrotta, Vince P., "The Cosmopolitan Stranger" in [ed.] Van Hooft, Stefan and Vandekerckhove,

According to Vince P. Marotta not all strangers are conceived by the majority in the same manner. The stranger exists socially in a continuum of *strangeness*, that is the relationship between the subjective remoteness and the actual physical presence of the stranger.⁷ That is why according to Jeffrey C. Alexander, we must view the stranger as a social type who is subjected to, and whose *strangeness* is constructed through, cultural, social and racial othering.⁸ The stranger is given particular characteristics through stereotypes and depicted as a representative of a group rather than an individual. The more deviant the characteristics, the less of an individual the stranger is thought to be and the greater the risk of being described as a problem or threat to the social order.⁹ Using Zygmunt Bauman's two conceptual extremes of strangeness *the tourist* (a wanted mobile cosmopolitan) and *the vagabond* (unwanted and forced into mobility), it allows the analysis to further understand who is considered a wanted and unwanted stranger in the editorials.¹⁰

The second part of the theoretical framework is based on a relativistic perspective on social problems and the concept of social problems as a product of collective behaviour. Not all phenomena objectively defined as problems

Wim *Questioning Cosmopolitanism*, Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg, London, 2010, e-bok, p. 108.

⁷ Marotta, Vince P., "The Cosmopolitan Stranger", p. 108.

⁸ Alexander, Jeffrey C., "Rethinking Strangeness: From Structures in Space to Discourses in Civil Society", *Thesis Eleven*, No. 79, 2004, pp. 91-93.

⁹ Ryding, Anna, "90 år med Simmels främling – en studie av begreppets förgreningar i den moderna sociologin", pp. 29-30, 33; McLemore, Dale S., "Simmel's Stranger: A Critique of the Concept", p. 90; Simmel, Georg, "The Stranger", p. 404; Ålund, Aleksandra, Ålund, Alexandra, Alinia, Minoo, "I skuggan av kulturella stereotyper: Perspektiv på forskning om genus, jämställdhet och etniska relationer i Sverige", *Sociologisk forskning*, Vol. 48 No. 2, 2011, pp. 51, 93-94; Marotta, Vince P., "The Cosmopolitan Stranger", p. 108-109.

¹⁰ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, Polity, London, 1998, pp. 82-83, 85-86, 89, 92-93, 96.

are to be defined as social problems in society. It is first when powerful and influential social institutions, such as mass media, legitimise a problem through a strong discursive competition that a problem becomes a social problem.¹¹ In a constant competition for space, actors are pressured to use certain strategies for a particular phenomenon to be recognised as a social problem. This is done through *drama*, an emotional, lively and dramatic rhetoric combined with alarming and authoritative language in the purpose of addressing the acuteness of a problem.¹² The sensation of *novelty* is also important. By portraying the problem as unprecedented or aberrant, the perception of urgency is fortified. The more deviant and challenging it is to fundamental social values, the greater the attention.¹³

The *strangeness* of a group affiliated with a particular social problem often determines whether the group is regarded as victim or cause. *Drama* and *novelty* can spill over into *moral panic*, thus depicting individuals and groups as villains, posing a threat to society's most fundamental values and interests. This leads to the justification of restrictive solutions towards the group which at the same time reproduces negative perceptions.¹⁴

¹¹ Swärd, Hans, *Hemlöshet*, Studentlitteratur, Lund, 2008, 124-125; Blumer, Herbert, "Social Problems as Collective Behaviour", *Social Problems*, Vol. 18 No. 3, 1971, pp. 298-303; Hilgartner, Stephen, Bosk, Charles L., "The Rise and Fall of Social Problems: A Public Arenas Model", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94 No. 1, 1988, pp. 53-54.

¹² Rochefort, David A., Cobb, Roger W. "Problem Definition, Agenda Access, and Policy Change", *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 21 No. 1, 1993, pp. 61, 66; Hilgartner, Stephen, Bosk, Charles L., "The Rise and Fall of Social Problems: A Public Arenas Model", pp. 61-62, 64.

¹³ Hilgartner, Stephen, Bosk, Charles L. "The Rise and Fall of Social Problems: A Public Arenas Model", pp. 64-65; Álvarez, Rodolfo, "The Social Problem as an Enterprise: Values as a Defining Factor", *Social Problems*, Vol. 48 No. 1, 2001, pp. 4-5.

¹⁴ Eversman, Michael H., Bird, Jason D. P., "Moral Panic and Social Justice: A Guide for Analyzing Social Problems", *Social Work*, Vol. 62 No. 1, 2017, pp. 29-30; Rochefort, David A., "Problem Definition, Agenda Access, and Policy Change", pp. 64, 66, 68.

The begging

The general theme in the editorials analysed is *the begging*, used not only as a concept that includes the act of asking people for financial aid, but rather in the form of a phenomenon. Begging is said to comprise a collection of other concepts such as criminality, littering, vulnerability and social disorder. There is a perceived connotation of begging as something directly connected with vulnerable EU-citizens and that reproduces stereotypes of Roma as destined beggars and not able-bodied individuals. The editorials depict a situation where Roma come to Sweden, bringing not only economic vulnerability but foremost they bring *the begging* across the border.

There are crucial historical stereotypes of anti-gypsism that connects Roma to begging, or vagrancy as it was defined in past Swedish legislation.¹⁵ This has created a racial understanding about the Roma as a people who lack the willpower to take ordinary work and integrate with the rest of society.¹⁶ This is most clearly manifested in Jonatan Lönnqvist's editorial where he writes that the Roma community has a specific cultural preference when it comes to begging and therefore differs from other vulnerable groups in Europe. He writes

The Roma culture has been characterised by a distancing from the majority society, a nomadic lifestyle and a way of living for the day where poverty (and therefore begging) is not an odd thing.¹⁷

¹⁵ DS 2014:8, Den mörka och okända historien – vitbok om övergrepp och kränkningar av romer under 1900-talet, 2014, p. 146.

¹⁶ DS 2014:8, pp. 250-252, 259; Westin, Niklas et al., Antiziganism i statlig tjänst – Socialstyrelsens behandling av romer och resande under 1900-talet, Socialstyrelsen, Stockholm, 2014, p. 223.

¹⁷ Lönnqvist, Jonatan, "Tiggarna har ett eget ansvar", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2016-04-15, <https://www.svd.se/tiggarna-har-ett-eget-ansvar> (Retrieved: 2018-01-09).

With this, the author attempts to explain why vulnerable EU-citizens travel to Sweden. He uses othering when depicting Roma as itinerant vagrants not accepting the majority society's social values thus making them culturally divergent.

Sanitary problems

Going deeper into the understanding of begging as a phenomenon, we come across further reproductions of stereotypes and othering. The situation is described by Lena Mellin within a *dramatic* scenery producing an image of danger and urgency:

There are about 300 of [vulnerable EU-citizens'] settlements today and besides the fact that they are a sanitary meltdown it is also a wound to the body of society. No one should have to live this way.¹⁸

Most of the editorials are in line with her description. Some even refer to vulnerable EU-citizens' settlements as hazardous shantytowns, implying that the situation is foreign and that this kind of poverty is already dealt with and no longer occurs in Sweden.¹⁹ The editorials in *Expressen* and *SvD* choose to

¹⁸ Mellin, Lena, "Regeringen bekämpar tiggarna – inte tiggeriet", *Aftonbladet*, 2015-06-24, <https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/kolumnister/lenamellin/article21019750.ab> (Retrieved: 2018-01-10).

¹⁹ Dagens Nyheter, "Rätt att riva lägret", *Dagens Nyheter*, 2015-11-01 <https://www.dn.se/ledare/huvudledare/ratt-att-riva-lagret/> (Retrieved: 2018-01-09); Lindberg, Anders, "Även tiggare har små barn", *Aftonbladet*, 2016-02-01, <https://www.aftonbladet.se/ledare/ledarkronika/anderslindberg/article22184715.ab> (Retrieved: 2018-01-10); *Dagens Nyheter*, "Rätt att riva kåkstäderna", 2017-02-26 <https://www.dn.se/ledare/huvudledare/ratt-att-riva-kakstaderna/> (Retrieved: 2018-01-09); Mellin, Lena, "Regeringen bekämpar tiggarna – inte tiggeriet", 2015-06-24; Helmersson, Erik, "Rätt ingripa mot svenska kåkstäder",

go even further. They make vulnerable EU-citizens appear uncivilised, disrespectful and irrational. The results of them residing in Sweden threatens Swedish citizens' health and the social order. Naomi Abramowicz writes about "[...] Swedish cities' deterioration into slum."²⁰ and how Swedes are forced to meet "Poop in parks and schoolyards."²¹ or "[...] piles of poop on streets and squares [...]" as Eric Erfors phrases it.²² A frequent example given in the editorials is that of the Swedish Finnish School in Stockholm, where the staff is described to be forced to clean up trash and defecation every morning. This is described as a dangerous and expensive problem where streets are being disinfected to prevent the spread of diseases.

Vulnerable EU-citizens are said to behave in the most disrespectful manner that denies Swedish citizens their public space when they are being exposed to defecation, littering and infections. A sharp distinction between *us* and *them* is being made here, where the vulnerable EU-citizens are accused of disrespecting Swedish social values. This is seen as a threat to Swedish citizens who are the ones to bear the consequences.

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute has reported that there exists a serious deficiency regarding sanitary rights for this group. Level of access to running water is generally high in Sweden, but this is not the case for vulnerable EU-citizens living in acute homelessness, not having access to shelters. For vulnerable EU-citizens, access to enough water to be able to drink, cook food and take care of their hygiene is nearly non-existent. The editorials choose to

Dagens Nyheter, 2016-05-26, <https://www.dn.se/ledare/signerat/erik-helmerson-ratt-ingripa-mot-svenska-kakstader/> (Retrieved: 2018-01-09).

²⁰ Abramowicz, Naomi, "Därför har jag ändrat mig i tiggerifrågan", *Expressen*, 2017-10-05, <https://www.expressen.se/ledare/naomi-abramowicz/-darfor-har-jag-andrat-mig-i-tiggerifragan-/> (Retrieved: 2018-01-09).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Erfors, Eric, "Avföring mitt i stan – politikerna blundar", *Expressen*, 2015-06-15 <https://www.expressen.se/ledare/eric-erfors/avforing-mitt-i-stan--politikerna-blundar/> (Retrieved: 2018-01-10).

deny this group the status of being rightsholders, when they do not take into account water as a human right.²³

Placing this in a historical perspective, we understand how the editorials are a part of the construction of *strangeness* through Roma stereotypes. Swedish authorities have a long history of systematically denying Roma the right to water and shelter. During the twentieth century, when municipalities tried to prevent Roma from settling, they were also denying Roma electricity and water, making it nearly impossible to cook food, access drinking water and take care of their hygiene. Roma were then described as a sanitary social problem by the authorities which in turn legitimised forced evictions.²⁴

Describing vulnerable EU-citizens' situation without a historical- and human rights approach whilst simultaneously reproducing stereotypes of Roma as unhygienic and uncivilised, distances the group from the majority society. The editorials' repeated depiction of vulnerable EU-citizens' way of living as dirty and a health hazard, through a narrative that elicits disgust and repulsiveness, constructs an othering risking dehumanisation and a strong strangeness as a result. This places the group far outside of what is considered to constitute society's most fundamental values, rules and regulations.²⁵

²³ Davis, Martha F., Ryan, Natasha, "Inconvenient Human Rights: Water and Sanitation in Sweden's Informal Roma Settlements", *Health and Human Rights Journal*, Vol. 19 No. 2, 2017, p. 64; Davis, Martha F., Ryan, Natasha, "Inconvenient Human Rights: Access to Water and Sanitation in Sweden's Informal Roma Settlements", *Raoul Wallenberg Institute*, 2016, pp. 7-8.

²⁴ Davis, Martha F. "Inconvenient Human Rights: Water and Sanitation in Sweden's Informal Roma Settlements", pp. 66-67; Davis, Martha F., Ryan, Natasha, "Inconvenient Human Rights: Access to Water and Sanitation in Sweden's Informal Roma Settlements", RWI, pp. 11, 16-18.

²⁵ Grosfoguel, Ramon, "What is racism?", *Journal of World-systems Research*, Vol. 22 No. 1, 2016, p 10; Atiba Goff, Phillip, et al., "Not Yet Human: Implicit Knowledge, Historical Dehumanization, and Contemporary Consequences", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 94 No. 2, 2008, p. 293; Dalsklev, Madeleine, Rönningdalen Kunst, Jonas, "The effect of disgust-

Erfors presents the most evident example of this when answering his own question “Irresponsible dog owners? No, this is human faeces.”.²⁶ The group’s behaviour is here compared to dogs and comparing Roma to animals is not unique for this case. This is a classic narrative with the purpose of denying Roma their humanity.²⁷

Criminality

The settlements are not only described as a sanitary problem but also criminal offence. To some degree this is true, as many settlements are unlawfully set up.²⁸ In *DN* this is described as an occupation of private landowners’ property and landowners’ rights are thereby violated.²⁹ Besides illegal settlements there are other criminal elements associated with the group:

[...] criminality that follows the footprints of begging in Sweden, such as illegal settlements, environmental crimes and trafficking.³⁰

Human trafficking is in different ways associated with vulnerable EU-citizens in the texts. Most of the editorials write through a narrative of victimhood

eliciting media portrayals on outgroup dehumanization and support of deportation in a Norwegian sample”, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 47, 2015, pp. 29-30.

²⁶ Erfors, Eric, ”Avföring mitt i stan – politikerna blunda”, 2015-06-15.

²⁷ Rowe, Lottie, Goodman, Simon, ”A stinky filthy race of people inbred with criminality’. A discourse analysis of prejudicial talk about Gypsies in discussion”, *Romani Studies*, Vol. 24 No. 1, 2014, p. 27; Dalsklev, Madelaine, “The effect of disgust-eliciting media portrayals on outgroupdehumanization and support of deportation in a Norwegian sample”, pp. 29-30.

²⁸ SOU 2016:6, p. 23.

²⁹ Dagens Nyheter, ”Rätt att riva kåkstäderna”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 2017-02-26.

³⁰ Expressen, ”Rätt signaler om tiggeriet”, *Expressen*, 2016-08-20, <https://www.expressen.se/ledare/ratt-signaler-om-tiggeriet/> (Retrieved: 2018-01-10).

where criminal networks exploit vulnerable EU-citizens precarious situation. Only Lindberg and Schreiber explicitly write that the majority is not connected with or exploited by such networks.³¹ Others such as Gudmundson³² and Arpi make direct correlation between the begging and organised crime, “[...] criminal networks dominate the begging environment.”³³

The narrative here is dominated by vulnerable EU-citizens as either victims or perpetrators of criminal activity. The main implications are that they are associated with an environment of trafficking, illegal settlements and littering. This is problematic because throughout history Roma have been highly associated with crime, and even perceived as naturally prone to criminal behaviour.³⁴ The narrative places criminal characteristics onto the group, reproducing these Roma stereotypes. It creates a threatening image and fear for the presence of the group and thereby reinforces the group’s strangeness.

³¹Lindberg, Anders, ”Skydda tiggare från brottslingar”, *Aftonbladet*, 2015-12-02, <https://www.aftonbladet.se/article21873656.ab> (Retrieved: 2018-01-09); Schreiber, Evelyn, ”Bekämpa människohandel och tiggeri – inte fattiga människor”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 2017-09-07, <https://www.dn.se/ledare/signerat/evelyn-schreiber-bekampa-manniskohandel-och-tiggeri-inte-fattiga-manniskor/?forceScript=1&variantType=large> (Retrieved: 2018-01-09).

³² Gudmundson, Per, ”Tiggeri front för stölder, knark och prostitution”, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2017-04-20, <https://www.svd.se/tiggeri-front-for-stolder-knark-och-prostitution> (Retrieved: 2018-01-09)

³³ Arpi, Ivar, ”Låt inte tiggeriet normaliseras”, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2017-09-05 <https://www.svd.se/lat-inte-tiggeriet-normaliseras> (Retrieved: 2018-01-09).

³⁴ Schneewius, Adina, ”If they really wanted to they would: The press discourse of integration of the European Roma, 1990-2006”, *The International Communication Gazette*, Vol. 74 No. 7, 2012, p. 675.

The principle of equal treatment

The national coordinator's report SOU 2016:6 refers to a so called *principle of equal treatment*, which is also referred to in the editorials of *DN*, *Expressen* and *SvD*.³⁵ According to the writers there exists a situation where vulnerable EU-citizens are living in a parallel society where they are excepted from the rule of law and do not have to answer for their own criminal behaviour. This is seen as a threat to law and order and society as a whole:

Unlawful settlements that can't be demolished obstruct property rights. They have corroded on the judicial conscience. That people can claim private land and clutter it up also risk hurting the trust in the right of public access.³⁶

The editorials present an image of a legal system about to collapse, where the authorities can no longer uphold legal order. Vulnerable EU-citizens are compressed into a collective of criminals being exempted from legal responsibility due to their poverty, "[...] poverty is no excuse to use the kids' playground as a toilet."³⁷ This is again evidence of the reproduction of stereotyping Roma as a group living outside of the civilised society and its laws, norms and values.³⁸

Hate crime and discrimination

It is important to not only analyse what the editorials have chosen to write about but also what they have chosen not to. Between 2012 and 2016, 1132

³⁵ SOU 2016:6, pp. 62-68.

³⁶ Dagens Nyheter, "Rätt att riva kåkstäderna", *Dagens Nyheter*, 2017-02-26.

³⁷ Gudmundson, Per, "Lekplatsen stank av tiggarnas avföring", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2016-04-10, <https://www.svd.se/lekplatsen-stank-av-tiggarnas-avforing> (Retrieved: 2018-01-10).

³⁸ Thornton, Gabriela Marin, "The Outsiders: Power Differentials Between Roma and Non-Roma in Europe", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 15 No. 1, 2014, p. 115.

hate crimes against Roma were reported, with almost none leading to prosecution.³⁹ Many vulnerable EU-citizens have witnessed that they often are exposed to discriminatory offences but do not dare to report it due to lack of trust towards state authorities.⁴⁰ When violence against vulnerable EU-citizens in Sweden are brought up in the editorials it is not described as a result of discrimination or anti-gypsism but rather a result due to either criminal networks or the group's own behaviour and how that provokes violence.⁴¹ Except for one article in *DN*, none of the authors choose to even mention anti-gypsism and the discrimination that occurs in Sweden.⁴² Discrimination is mainly discussed in relation to the home countries. It is primarily in Romania that Roma are said to live in “[...] apartheid like forms [...]”⁴³ and it is “[...] a country that for a long time has treated their Roma minority as both second- and third-class citizens.”⁴⁴

Discrimination is described as a phenomenon *over there* and *they* are coming *here* with the results of that discrimination. This narrative creates a strangeness for the group as well as the exposure they experience while residing in Sweden. Violence due to anti-gypsism and discrimination are foreign elements associated with other countries and the environment of begging

³⁹ Brottsförebyggande rådet, ”hatbrottsstatistik”, BRÅ, 2017-12-13, <https://www.bra.se/brott-och-statistik/statistiska-undersokningar/hatbrottsstatistik.html>, (Retrieved: 2018-05-16); Kommissionen mot antiziganism, *Agera mot antiziganistiska hatbrott*, Kommissionen mot antiziganism, 2016, p. 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7, Lacatus, Tiberiu, Studie om hatbrott och andra allvarliga kränkningar riktade mot utsatta romska EU-medborgare, Kommissionen mot antiziganism, 2015, pp. 7-10.

⁴¹ Dagens Nyheter, ”Samma regler för alla”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 2015-06-24 <https://www.dn.se/ledare/huvudledare/samma-regler-for-alla/> (Retrieved: 2018-01-09); Erfors, Eric, ”Avföring mitt i stan – politikerna blundar”, 2015-06-15.

⁴² *Dagens Nyheter*, ”Rätt att riva lägret”, 2015-11-01.

⁴³ Lindberg, Anders, ”Även tiggare har små barn”, 2016-02-01.

⁴⁴ *Dagens Nyheter*, ”Samma regler för alla”, 2015-06-24.

itself. According to the editorials the violence happening in Sweden is not a result of anti-gypsism, racism or discrimination, but has other causes such as provocative behaviour.

Problem solving

In this section, the correlation between remote strangeness with restrictive solutions and the lack of social solutions will be discussed. Based on the theory, strangers are classified on a scale of vagabonds and tourists. The analysis has so far shown that through Roma stereotypes and othering, vulnerable EU-citizens carry a strangeness much like Bauman's vagabond. Among the right leaning editorials there is a strong *moral panic* where the authors depict the group as perpetrators and a threat to society. As shown below, this is further exposed through a call for restrictive solutions or an almost non-existing will for social solutions.

A ban on begging is the question where the sharpest divide exists between the different editorials. Such a ban is aimed towards vulnerable EU-citizens and seeks to make it difficult for the group to stay in Sweden: "[...] a ban could decrease the incentives for travelling to Sweden."⁴⁵ This would "[...] also solve many of the social problems and the criminality that follows the trails of begging in Sweden."⁴⁶ This makes it clear for us as readers that they are unwanted vagabonds. The editorials in *DN* and *Aftonbladet* are critical towards a ban, but they would rather move the responsibility abroad. *DN* writes

[...] the problem cannot be solved in Malmö or Sweden. The EU-migrants are no stateless refugees, they have home countries that have to take care of their citizens.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Expressen, "Rätt signaler om tiggeriet", *Expressen*, 2016-08-20.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ *Dagens Nyheter*, "Rätt att riva lägret", 2015-11-01.

The editorials in *Aftonbladet* put it more mildly but the main theme remains, the solutions are not here but over there.

Only three out of 24 editorials bring up social solutions. Out of the few propositions presented, there are no clear demands for sustainable shelters or running water as a basic human right for vulnerable EU-citizens. Instead vague mentions are made about portable toilets, short term sheltering and tickets back home.⁴⁸ Others even refute these kinds of solutions either as unprincipled humanism or an institutionalisation of begging: “Efforts intended to help the beggars could lead to an institutionalisation of begging and permanenting the humiliation.”⁴⁹

The idea that poor people risk becoming passive and unemployable if they are given direct economic support in the form of charity has dominated western aid policy for a few decades. One theory states that giving people money without quid pro quo could risk leading to dependence, passivation and permanent poverty. Poor people are considered unable to handle money.⁵⁰ The given, and lack of, solutions in the editorials thereby reduce vulnerable EU-citizens to passive people who rather choose to ask for money than work. This is a further example of how Roma stereotypes are reproduced in the editorials.

⁴⁸ Mellin, Lena, ”Regeringen bekämpar tiggarna – inte tiggeriet”, 2015-06-24; Dagens Nyheter, ”Hjälpa utan att stjälpa”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 2016-02-01, <https://www.dn.se/ledare/huvudledare/hjalpa-utan-att-stjalpa/> (Retrieved: 2018-01-10); Lindberg, Anders, ”Även tiggare har små barn”, 2016-02-01.

⁴⁹ Hagström, Erik, ”Tankeförbud ingen lösning”, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2015-05-07, <https://www.svd.se/tankeforbud-ingen-losning/om/eu-migranter> (Retrieved: 2018-01-10).

⁵⁰ Eriksson Baaz, Maria, The white wo/man’s burden in the age of partnership: a postcolonial reading of identity in development aid, Dept. of Peace and Development Research, Göteborg, 2002, pp. 156-158, 162-164.

Conclusion

This article has shown how vulnerable EU-citizens are portrayed in mass media as more or less an unhygienic, criminal and uncivilised threat to the social order, all of which are ingredients in a continuation of the historical narrative of anti-gypsism. In the editorials, vulnerable EU-citizens' strangeness is constructed through these reproductions of Roma stereotypes and othering. This is done using *drama* and, in some cases, even spilling over into *moral panic* describing an urgent unsustainable situation.

When instead describing vulnerable EU-citizens as victims, it is not Sweden's responsibility to aid but their home countries'. Ignoring this group as eligible rightsholders within a discourse filled with blatant Roma stereotyping, as shown in this material, leads to severe strangeness which relates to the unwillingness for social interventions regarding this group. Instead of calling for realisation of human rights, the editorials either present vague unsustainable or restrictive solutions, often attempting to decrease vulnerable EU-citizens incentives for coming to Sweden. The editorials send a clear message to their readers: these are unwanted vagabonds whose presence and behaviour has dangerous and negative effects on the Swedish society. They do not deserve the state's protection from neither hate crimes nor the winter's blistering cold.

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