Migrant labour exploitation

Examples from the Swedish restaurant and berry sectors

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About the study

**ADSTRINGO** – transnational project focusing on trafficking for forced labour and labour exploitation in 9 countries in the Baltic Sea region.

**Focus:**
- Migrant labour exploitation in the restaurant and berry sectors

**Data:**
- Interviews
- Fieldwork in Sweden & Thailand
- Medial material & court judgements
Approach

Continuum of labour exploitation

- Decent work
- Milder form of labour exploitation
- Forced labour
Restaurant sector
Restaurant sector

• **High recruitment fees** charged by recruitment agencies, middlemen or employers
  Between 20 000 and 250 000 SEK
  Repayment of fees through lower wages
  => *indebtedness*
  Examples: McDonalds, immigration lawyer

• **Deceptive recruitment:**
  Migrants do not get the job they were recruited for.
  => risk losing residence permit
Restaurant sector

- **Subtle mechanisms of coercion**
  - confiscation of passport
  - constant surveillance (living in employer’s accommodation)
  - threats

- **Low wages**
  - Lower salary than stated in the offer of employment

- **Excessive working hours**
  - Very long or short
Berry industry

Berry company

Regulated workers

Unregulated workers

Berry buyers

Merchants
Berry industry

Regulated pickers from outside the EU

- Thailand-based recruitment agencies charge high fees
- Non-payment: the case of Lomsjö bär in 2010
- 2011: stricter requirements to hire non-EU pickers
  Minimum wage according to collective agreement
  (about 18,500 SEK)

But…

- Double contracts
- Surveillance with helicopter
- Long working hours
Berry industry

Unregulated (‘free’) pickers from the EU

- Only conviction for human trafficking for forced labour
  Bulgarian couple brought pickers in 2009 & 2010
- Summer of 2012
Challenges

- Migrants’ ‘acceptance’ of exploitative situations
- Fear to complain: dependence on employer, indebtedness
- Unequal distribution of risks
- ...

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Thank you very much for your attention!

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