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EUROPEAN OBSERVATORY ON HOMELESSNESS

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## **Introduction**

In my interpretation of the guidelines, the 2006 statistics report should include:

- a) a rather detailed description of what kind of data is currently collected in Sweden (and how, by whom, for what use etc.) and its quality – especially on the roofless and houseless categories,
- b) a re-review of the nomenclature of housing/hostels for the homeless ('national subcategories'), which will necessarily to some extent be a repetition of the 2005 update
- c) information on available data for the categories/subcategories in the ETHOS-typology

The text based part covers (a) and (b) while (c) is found as figures in Table 1 in Appendix 1 – which must, however, be read with reference to the rest of the report, where the figures are contextualised. I will begin with a presentation of available statistics (methods and design) on a national basis and in the three big cities, and with comments on their advantages and deficiencies. In the following section information is provided on definitions and categories used in these counts as a background to the following section in which I attempt to make the Swedish categories of homeless accommodation fit in with the ones in the ETHOS typology. The numbers and titles of the subsections in this part of the update refer directly to the latter categories.

## **Collected Data on Homelessness and Houselessness**

In this section I will mainly deal with surveys aiming at assessing the number of homeless individuals in the country or in a municipality. However, there are also other studies, gathered for other purposes that may indicate the development of homelessness and/or have a design that might inspire homelessness counts in the future. Definitions will be quoted and discussed in the next section.

### **The NBHW Survey of Homeless People in 2005**

In recent decades, the National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW) has conducted nation-wide counting of homeless people at three occasions, 1993, 1999 and 2005. A fourth count is planned to take place in 2007. The definitions have been slightly revised each time, and the number of respondents has grown continuously, while the design and method of the count have been the same. This update will primarily deal with the 2005 count, the results of which were published in 2006 (NBHW 2006a).

### **Design and Respondents**

The survey was distributed to all authorities, institutions and organisations that the staff involved in NBHW could think of as having contact with homeless people. Altogether 3,746 agencies or authorities including 900 NGOs, each comprising several possible responding social workers, received the survey (NBHW2006a, p. 22). However, like in previous counts only organisations and service providers within the fields of health or social services were included, not housing agencies or networks for people looking for housing.

The respondents were asked to copy the enclosed questionnaire/form and fill in and submit one copy for each homeless individual they knew was homeless according to the definition during the week of measure, that is, 25 April – 1 May 2005. The form included 22 questions (with given response alternatives) regarding the individual's family situation, country of birth (own and parents'), history of homelessness; the situation of housing, income and employment during the week of measuring; main drug being abused the past month; measures taken during the past year regarding the individual's housing situation, physical and mental health, substance abuse or other support; possible compulsory measures; and the respondent's view of the causes of the individual's homelessness and his/her additional problems.

When more than one respondent submitted a form for a homeless individual, the forms sent in by the local social authorities were first taken into account; if information was missing it was added from possible other respondents according to the following 'list of priority': institutions and special housing for people with psychiatric disabilities; probation offices (*frivården*), psychiatric clinics, NGOs, prisons, 'addiction clinics, custody prisons (*häkten*), women's refuges etc. (NBHW 2006a, p. 25). Unfortunately, replies to Question 9 on predominant housing situation during the week of measuring were added so that the total number of housing situations exceeds the number of reported homeless clients, why they cannot be used to assess the exact number of recorded individuals in a specific kind of accommodation (see further below).

### **Excluding Double-Counts**

The respondents were asked to note the personal identification number in the top of the form's first page. If they did not want to or were unable to do that, they were asked to give a so called UNO-code, a system that was first introduced in a national count of drug-abusers in the 1970s. Such a code consists of the initials of the person's (first and sur-) name, complemented with four figures representing the year and day of birth, respectively. The result is a code made up of six signs which has proven to seldom be the same for two different people. When the individual forms had been submitted, it was possible to put together those which referred to the same ID-number or UNO-code into one case and also to check if the UNO-codes were consistent with an identification number reported by other respondents. The survey resulted in 12,222 completely identified individuals and 4,882 complete and unique UNO-codes. In addition, 730 more anonymous forms were submitted, which the investigators through checking other information such as gender, municipality, age etc assessed as referring to other unique individuals (NBHW 2006a, p. 25).

### **Period of Measuring**

The NBHW count of homeless people regards people who are homeless during one specific week. To be included among those with insecure accommodation with families and friends (see below) the person must have been in touch with the respondents due to this housing problems during that week.

### Comments

Making use of ID-numbers is only possible for an authority that is superior to the LSAs and within the same field, which secures that it follows code of ethics etc. and that the LSAs reply. Nevertheless, this practice combined with the questions asked annoyed some intended respondents and probably entailed some missing cases. The UNO-code system does not disclose the full identity of an individual but requires that the respondent has almost the same information, and may lead to underreporting of homeless individuals, whose names and ID are unknown to the respondent, which is sometimes the case regarding rough-sleepers. There are on the other hand only a few shelters that are not dependant on LSA paying for the guests, and this, in turn will not be done unless the LSA can identify the individual and register the cost in this person's file. For the same reason, LSAs are the most important source of information on (paid-for) homeless people staying in hostels and shelters (since self-reporting was not the idea).

Having said this, such a design, and not least the fact that respondents must provide information on single individuals is probably necessary in order to exclude double counts when the survey is directed to different respondents (for instance, LSAs, psychiatric clinics, shelter providers) who may report on the same individuals. In addition, it precludes exaggerated estimates. However, when people do not want to disclose their names or year of birth, they may not be included, and in the NBHW 2005 count, some respondents obviously omitted to submit forms on some homeless people they knew.

The system does not preclude underreporting, though. Respondents who did not know of any persons who were homeless during the specific week were asked to return the form stating this, and 1,115 of them did so. But there is no way to find out if the respondents have left out some homeless individuals if they reported others, or if those who did not answer at all actually could have reported a few. Many NGOs did not respond to the survey, while 99 percent of the local social authorities did (NBHW 2006a, p. 24 ff.).<sup>1</sup>

The rule that people accommodated with friends and relatives are included only if they were in touch with the respondent because of this during the week of measure is strange. Even people who regularly receive social assistance rarely meet their social workers more than once a month. Except for the fact that most people in this situation probably are completely unknown to authorities as well as with NGOs, this rule of inclusion is bound to lead to underreporting.

The scope of this survey was also confined by the exclusion of respondents that would like to answer for themselves, for instance members in the network *jagvillhabostad.nu* (Iwanthousing.now) and people on waiting-lists for public housing.

Finally, the amount of questions and their orientation is a problem in several ways, since they might be hard to answer and since they are not focused on the homelessness problem, but more on problems of and measures against substance abuse and ill-health.

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<sup>1</sup> One municipality (Botkyrka) did not respond to the survey as it had taken part in an experimental count only a few months before (199 homeless individuals were recorded in the municipality in its own count<sup>9</sup>).

## The NBHW Statistics on Assistance with Housing and Institutional Care

Since 1998, another department of NBHW gathers individual-based information from all local social authorities on the number of people (and their gender and age group), defined as substance abusers or ‘others’, respectively, who were being assisted with housing or (voluntary or compulsory) institutional care on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November. Two complementary questions regard the total number of ‘registrations’ or admittances (*inskrivningar*) into supported housing or institutions during the year (which may be more than the number of concerned persons) and the total number of days (or rather nights) that the LSAs have provided temporary housing, shelter or institutional care.

Housing assistance, or more correctly, ‘assistance regarding housing’ (*bistånd som avser boende*) is being defined as:

“...assistance according to Social Services Act, Ch. 4, § 1 and comprises the following forms of housing: group housing, category housing, lodging home (*inackorderingshem*), short-term home (*korttidshem*), emergency flat (*jourlägenhet*), shelter (*härberge*), training flat (*träninglägenhet*), trial flat (*försökslägenhet*), transitory flat (*övergångslägenhet*), hotel and tenancy agreements where the social authorities hold the lease (*hyreskontrakt där socialtjänsten är kontraktssinnehavare*); ‘social contract’ or the like. Housing in homes with HVB-license is not included.” (NBHW 2006b, p. 20)

HVB means institution (literally: *hem för vård eller boende*, approximately ‘home for care or housing’). HVBs are according to the Social Services Act prohibited from charging rent or costs for treatment, but they may charge a per-day fee for food and other subsistence costs up to a limit (in 2005 it was 80 SEK/day, that is, cheaper than the rent for a small dwelling). HVB-license is a license to run an institution for care and/or housing. Some lodging homes, shelters or hostels have such a license, others do not.

In this statistics, ‘institutional care’, on the other hand, may include hostels and lodging homes with HVB-license, but primarily it refers to institutions that provide some kind of treatment for drug addiction, psychiatric problems or the like, the clients of which may have dwellings of their own to come back to upon moving out. It is not possible as yet to sort out the proportions of various kinds of institutions in this category.

‘Other’ adults as a category is defined in relation to substance abusers in the following way:

“persons 21 years old or more with social or psychiatric problems not related to abuse of alcohol, narcotics, drugs or solvents, and who receive individually needs-tested measures within individual and family care of the social services. Included in this group are, for instance, persons who receive measures due to gambling disorder, persons who receive measures due to need of support in their roles as parents, or persons who receive measures due to a relative’s substance abuse.” (NBHW 2006b, p. 22).

The fact that the number of ‘others’ by far exceeds the number of substance abusers in this statistics shows that the responding LSAs include much broader categories of homeless people than the examples suggest. Through reference to a specific clause in the Social Services Act people with social or psychiatric problems (but not disabilities) who are accommodated through the municipality are included, but not elderly people, who are provided with special housing according to another section in the Social Services Act, and not people, who are disabled or have

learning difficulties, nor asylum-seekers, as these groups are entitled to special housing according to other legislation. Since the municipal organisation varies, however, the reported number may be understated in those 40 municipalities where services for people with mental disabilities are administered by the department responsible for the elderly (NBHW 2006b, p. 15). Of course, deficient routines and practice for local statistics may also be reflected in the figures reported to the NBHW.

In the annual survey of the LSAs, respondents are asked to fill in the number of people in certain broad age categories, their gender, whether they were substance abusers or 'others' and the total number of days for which assistance with housing has been provided during the year in question. They also report how many people (by gender and substance abusers or 'others') were assisted with housing specifically on 1 November that year.

### Comments

Like in the homelessness count, the high frequency of responses in the survey on measures (of all 290 municipalities only three small ones refrained from answering in 2005) is due to the fact that LSAs are obliged to respond to statistics inquiries by the NBHW. It differs from the homelessness count in that the questionnaire used for the care and measure statistics is very brief and includes no questions that should take time or be difficult to answer. However, it does require that the LSAs keep continuous records on their assistance with housing. The chances that they do, however, are quite good since the statistics regard costs that are registered in special accounts, and that the information is asked for in the same time year after year, which gives the authorities possibilities to adapt their routines and submit local statistics without very much extra work.

That this statistics is being collected (and published on the internet) every year since 1998 makes it possible to assess the development, although one cannot know for certain whether a reduction, as the one between 2004 and 2005,<sup>2</sup> reflects a decreasing number of homeless people, or that a smaller share of the homeless persons are being assisted with housing by the LSAs. It is also interesting as a correlate to the mapping of homeless by the same central authority, since the homelessness counts result in much higher rates of men (75 percent), and of substance abusers (62 percent in the 2005 survey), while, according to the NBHW statistics on measures, 62 percent of those assisted with housing were men and only 43 percent substance abusers. Another difference is that the care and measure statistics only cover people 21 years old or more and neglects reporting on children, while the homeless statistics has no age limit. Obviously, all reported homeless individuals in the homeless survey are more or less grown-up, and possible dependant children are reported anonymously with their parents.

Information on the number of people being assisted with housing on a certain date each year is easier to handle and practical for comparison reasons. Information on the number of days (nights) during the year and the number of admittances serves as a complement, but from the point of view of homelessness it might have been more interesting to know how many *individuals* were being assisted with housing during the year.

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<sup>2</sup> On 1 November 2005, 5,805 substance abusers and 7,759 'others' were assisted with housing. The corresponding number on the same day in 2004 was 6,154 and 7,888 (NBHW 2006b, Tables 4 and 18 and NBHW 2005, Tables 3 and 18).

The limitations with this statistics include the ambiguity regarding how persons staying in hostels and shelters are counted (as staying in institutions or as being assisted with housing, respectively) and the fact that there is no differentiation of various kinds of accommodation. The result will therefore not indicate whether the housing situation of the accommodated homeless persons has changed or whether it is better in some municipalities than in others. As a measure of homelessness another important shortcoming is of course the fact that homeless people staying with friends and relatives or sleeping rough are not included. Homeless people who are temporarily accommodated by NGOs without the local social authorities being charged or otherwise involved will also be missing.

### **Counting the Supply of Homeless Accommodation?**

It has recently been suggested again by the Investigation on Evictions and Homelessness among Families with Children (SOU 2005:88) that the NBHBP and the NBHW be commissioned to regularly survey the municipalities and NGOs on the number of beds, rooms and flats for homeless people and, for instance, the terms of occupancy. This was included in the annual NBHBP housing market survey 2000–2002, but because of too many missing cases or unreliable information, the NBHBP abolished these issues in the survey from 2003 on. This problem is probably only a matter of local contacts and respondents. Obviously, many LSAs – who are not approached by the NBHBP that rather cooperate with local authorities in charge of building issues – keep good records on their supply of accommodation for the homeless, and since it costs them quite a lot, they quickly adapt their resources if they are not being used. For the time being, though, there are no such recent data collected by the public authorities on a national basis.<sup>3</sup>

However, Mats Blid (2006), researcher in social work in Örebro University, made a comprehensive survey of a strategic sample of 147 municipalities (about half of all), which reported altogether 385 different activities related to housing and support in housing for homeless people (see below on the terminology used by the NBHW and the three big cities). Most common was ‘housing support’, which was provided in 84 percent of the municipalities, next social contracts, that were used in 57 percent, while ‘emergency/low-threshold accommodation’ was found in 20 percent and shelter in 12 percent of the municipalities.

## **Local Varieties**

### **Stockholm**

In Stockholm, the district social authorities as well as the special city unit for the homeless and NGO service providers are regularly surveyed on the number of homeless clients and their current housing situation. The questionnaire, which is filled in by social workers for each client that they know of as homeless, is a very simple one. The client is identified through a UNO-code (see above), supplemented with information on gender. The NGOs reply ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘don’t know’ to the question on whether or not the individual during any period of time in the past six months has been in touch with the social services (LSAs) in Stockholm. The only additional question concerns

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<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of the 2001 data in the housing market survey, see Sahlin 2006.

the individual's housing situation the night between 29 and 30 March, where there are 8 alternatives given (besides 'Don't know/Unknown'). The housing alternatives to be marked are:

Training flat (*Träningslägenhet*)  
 Supported and/or care accommodation: institution, alternatively Hotel Home without a lease (*Stöd och/eller omvårdnadsboenden: institution alt. hotellhemsboende utan förstahandskontrakt*)  
 Treatment institution, foster care or institution for compulsory treatment of substance abuse (*Behandlingshem, familjevård eller LVM-hem*)  
 Institution; custody, prison, hospital or other external establishment (*Institutionsvistelse; häkte, fängelse sjukhus eller annan extern inrättning*)  
 Temporary accommodation without a lease with relatives, friends/acquaintances or short-term sub-leasing (*Tillfälligt kontraktslöst boende hos släkt, kompisar/bekanta eller kortare andrahandskontrakt*) (maximum 3 months)  
 Camp site, hotel, youth hostel etc. (*Camping, hotell, vandrarhem etc.*)  
 Shelter (*Härbäрге*)  
 Slept outdoors; 'rough-sleeper' (*Sov ute; "uteliggare"*)

### Göteborg

Since a couple of years Göteborg city has a computer-based system to which social workers continuously report on clients with 'faulty housing' (*som bor fel*), that is, who currently have a kind of housing that according to the social worker for social and/or medical reasons is not optimal, and who 'need assistance by the social services to solve the housing issue.' To this group are added households that stay in accommodation where there is no formal deal with the city authorities ('*ej upphandlade boenden*') and 'in hotel', regardless of the reason for the assistance (since these are considered to be faulty by default, so to speak).

Data on the relevant individuals are matched with updated information on vacant places/rooms in the shelters, supported accommodation etc. The system makes it possible for the authorities to follow up the development in terms of demand and supply of shelters, supported accommodation and special contracts, but the public information is confined to uncommented graphs presented on the city's website. From these graphs, however, it is possible to infer what kind of information is being gathered on the homeless individuals, such as whether or not they have recorded debts, their main source of income, mental health state and possible substance abuse problems. Among 'current' or 'resulting' housing situations there are the following alternatives:

Care institutions  
 Altbo (that is, the city's supply of shelters, supported accommodation, training flats etc.)  
 Regular housing market (*Ordinarie bostadsmarknad*)  
 Correctly purchased accommodation (*Upphandlat*)  
 Lodging (*Inneboende*)  
 Ordinary hotel  
 Not correctly purchased accommodation (*Ej upphandlat*)  
 Sleeping rough more than indoors  
 Proceeding investigation (*Under utredning*)

These alternatives do not say very much of the actual housing situation but are informative regarding the legal and economical status of the situation from the point of view of the city authorities. The statistics are not of very much use for assessing the number of homeless people, since for instance staying in a shelter may for the moment be judged to be the best solution by the social worker.

## Malmö

In Malmö, information on the housing situation for homeless clients is gathered through the social workers in the district social authorities on 1 October each year. The homeless clients are identified when the counting goes on in the district, but then put together and submitted only as numbers in an excel-file to the city council office, which adds the information from the districts into files that cover all the city. On each individual data are gathered on where s/he is staying, family/household situation, gender, source of income, problems and causes of homelessness. The housing situation alternatives are:

- institution
- shelter (*dygnsboende*)
- hotel
- penal institution (*kriminalvård*)
- drifter/vagrant (*ambulerande*)
- rough-sleeper (*uteliggare*)

Nowadays, Malmö distinguishes between *hemlösa* (the definition used is the one applied by NBHW in the 1999 count), and *bostadslösa*, who stay with friends or insecure subleasing and “have expressed to the LSAs that this is a problem” or have flats with special contracts with the LSA as landlord. The latter are counted at the same time.

## Comments

Regular statistics are probably most adequate when based on information that the respondent organisation needs for other reasons and knows of already and anyway. Therefore, the Stockholm and Malmö systems seem to work quite well and the results are of interest for the respondents as well as for the politicians and for those who plan for housing and services. There is also a good point to stick to the same kind of questions and information asked for in the course of the years, since this facilitates for the respondents to keep records and for others to assess the development.

While the Göteborg system may be very effective from the point of view of keeping control over costs and save time for social workers, it provides insufficient information for comparison with other cities or years, as it does not include homeless people that are considered to be adequately placed for the time being. For the same reason it does not tell the number of homeless people.

## Definitions and Categorisations

### NBHW 2005 Homeless Count

#### Categorisation of ‘Situations’

Instead of a specific definition, the NBHW in 2005, inspired by the ETHOS definition (but not following it completely), described four “situations defining the persons who are considered to be homeless in this investigation” (NBHW 2006a), and the respondent was asked to state which of these situations the persons found themselves in. (Round numbers of homeless individuals reported in the survey to be in the four situations are provided within brackets below; for an additional 1,100 additional homeless people no ‘situation’ was marked, though):

**Situation 1 (3,600)**

The person is reduced to emergency accommodation, shelter or is sleeping rough (*Personen är hänvisad till akutboende, härbärke, jourboende eller är uteliggare*).

**Situation 2 (2,000)**

A person is interned /admitted in either prison/treatment unit or supported accommodation within social services/county council/private care provider/institution/state institution for forced custody<sup>4</sup> and **is planned to be discharged within three months** after the period of measuring but has no housing arranged upon discharge/moving out. (*En person är intagen/inskriven på antingen kriminalvårdsanstalt/behandlingsenhet eller stödboende inom socialtjänst/landsting/privat vårdgivare/HVB-hem/SiS-institution och planeras skrivas ut inom tre månader efter mätperioden men har inte någon bostad ordnad inför utskrivningen/utflyttningen.*)

**Situation 3 (6,400)**

A person is interned /admitted in either prison/treatment unit or supported accommodation within social services/county council/private care provider/ institution/state institution for forced custody and **is not planned to be discharged within three months** after the period of measuring but has no housing arranged upon possible future discharge/moving out. (*En person är intagen/inskriven på antingen kriminalvårdsanstalt/behandlingsenhet eller stödboende inom socialtjänst/landsting/privat vårdgivare/HVB-hem/SiS-institution och planeras inte att skrivas ut inom tre månader efter mätperioden men har inte någon bostad ordnad vid eventuell framtida utskrivning/utflyttning.*)

**Situation 4 (4,700)**

A person stays temporarily and without a lease with friends/acquaintances, family/relatives or has a temporary (less than three months after the period of measure) lodging agreement or sublease and has because of this situation **applied for assistance/been in touch with** the responding authority/organisation **during the period of measure**. (*En person bor tillfälligt och kontraktslöst hos kompisar/bekanta, familj/släktingar eller har ett tillfälligt [kortare än tre månader efter mätperiode] inneboende- eller andrahandskontrakt och har på grund av denna situation sökt hjälp/varit i kontakt med den uppgiftslämnande myndigheten/organisationen under mätperioden.*) (NBHW 2006a, App. 1 [questionnaire]. Emphases in the original).

While Situation 1 is an adequate translation of ‘roofless’ in the ETHOS-typology, Situations 2 and 3 pretty much cover the ‘houseless’, although asylum-seekers are not included in the Swedish definition. Persons in Situation 4 are included in ‘people living in insecure accommodation’, but note that only those who have been in touch with the respondent during that specific week should be reported. Other people with insecure housing – illegal occupants and people living under threat of eviction or violence – are excluded in the Swedish count, as are people with inadequate housing.

**Second Definition of Housing Situations**

Question No 9 in the form to be filled in for each homeless individual in the NBHW homeless count pertains to the predominant housing situation during the week of measuring. Unfortunately, the respondents were informed that “Several alternatives can be stated, but mark predominant housing situation” (NBHW 2006a, App. 1, p. 2) and this resulted in more reported housing situations than individuals. If the respondent had not defined the situation according to the general definition, it was sometimes possible to do it through the response to Question No 9 (personal communication). The following alternatives were provided (number of marks within brackets)

1. Sleeping rough (940)
2. Emergency housing / Low-threshold housing (shelter, emergency- short-term housing) (*Akutboende/Lågröskelboende [härbärke, jour-, korttidsboende]*) (2,060)
3. Hotel/Camping/Youth hostels (740)
4. Women’s refuge (*Kvinnojour*) (150)

<sup>4</sup> In Sweden, institutions for forced custody of substance abusers are all run by a specific central authority (SiS).

5. Bachelors' hotel/Hotel home (*Ungkarlshotell/ Hotellhem*) (200)
6. Collective housing/Group housing/Category housing/Lodging home (2,030)
7. Training flat/Trial flat/Social contract (2,100)
8. Staying in institution (e.g., treatment unit, HVB-home) (4,000)
9. Prison/custody prison (940)
10. Temporary housing with family/relatives (including staying in children's place) without a lease (2,230)
11. Temporary staying with friends/acquaintances without a lease (2,430)
12. Temporary subleasing or lodging agreement (shorter than three months) (510)
13. Other (what: ) (1,030)
- 0 Don't know
- 00 The authority/organisation does not ask for this information

While the total number of reported homeless individuals was 17,800, the total number of replies on housing situation was 19,360, and it is not possible as yet to distinguish which of these answers refer to the same individuals. Hence, one cannot deduce from these figures the actual number of reported homeless individuals who were found predominantly in any of these housing situations in the week of measuring.

### **National Subcategories According to the ETHOS Typology**

As has been underlined in previous statistics updates, each municipality is free to choose its own concepts for housing for the homeless, and while the same term may have different implications in different places, other forms of housing can be more or less the same in many municipalities but be termed differently.

The NBHW is not very specific in its terminology and tends to use concepts prevailing in Stockholm without defining them, why there is no certain way to know whether respondents mark the kind of housing that locally has a similar name or one that has a similar function as the one actually used in their home towns. One the other hand, there were not very many response alternatives to choose between. Likewise, the operational categories and generic definitions in the ETHOS typology are not distinguished by logic but rather by practical use and general connotations (and perhaps a portion of British influence).

Like in other European countries, the general public and politicians in Sweden often claim that only the roofless, as defined in ETHOS, should be called 'homeless' (*hemlösa*). The roofless corresponds quite well with 'Situation 1' in the NBHW-count of 2005, which is specified to include people who stay in *akutboende*, *härbärke*, *jourboende* or are *uteliggare*.

#### **1.1 Rough Sleeping (No Access to 24-hour Accommodation) / No Abode<sup>5</sup>**

According to the national count by NBHW, 940 individuals were reported to predominantly sleep rough during the last week in April 2005.

The common term for rough-sleeper in Swedish is *uteliggare*, and there is probably some consensus on what it means, even though people can hardly sleep outdoors in cold winter nights. Most rough-sleepers in Sweden try to get indoors and some go between friends, hostels and

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<sup>5</sup> Note: also those who are confined to overnight shelter (2.1) have 'no access to 24-hour accommodation'!

sleeping in cellars or station buildings etc. Since some years, the definition “sleeping outdoors more than indoors”<sup>6</sup> is used in Göteborg to distinguish these from homeless people who circulate between friends and shelters and only occasionally sleep rough (and who are called *ambulerande* in Malmö).

In Stockholm, 70 individuals were reported to sleep rough on 29 March 2006 (Stockholm City 2006). Rough-sleepers in Göteborg used to be counted on a continuous basis by the mobile outreach team, which accumulated reports on individual rough-sleepers it had contact with during the year. The number was almost 200 in 2004 (Göteborg City 2005). However, since the mobile team became subsumed into the *Altbo*-organisation, which controls most accommodation for homeless people (up to the step of trial contracts), this counting has ceased. Nevertheless, about 105 rough-sleepers were reported in Göteborg on 31 May 2006. On 1 October 2005, 46 persons were reported by the local social authorities in Malmö to sleep rough (*uteliggare*), while 228 were registered as ambulant (*ambulerande*) (Malmö Statistics on Homelessness 2005). Needless to say, these figures are uncertain and refer to different points and periods of time in the different cities.

## 2.1 People Staying in a Night Shelter/Overnight Shelter

The traditional Swedish term is *härbarge* or *natthärbarge*, but it seems as though most municipalities prefer *akutboende* nowadays. In the NBHW questionnaire several terms are lumped together in question No 9 (*Akutboende/Lågröskelboende [härbarge, jour-, korttidsboende]*). In the 2005 count 2,060 persons were reported to be staying in such accommodation. However, the inclusion of low-threshold housing in this category might have been bewildering for some respondents, since in Stockholm this term applies not only to temporary shelters but also to certain units of supported accommodation, intended for longer stays, where people are not evicted if they drink or take drugs.

### Stockholm

*Akutboende* (approx. ‘emergency shelter’), according to the local social authorities in Stockholm, can be both ‘temporary night shelter with a simple evening meal and breakfast’ or ‘day-and-night-places’, where the individual can keep the place during the day and also have other meals (Stockholm City 2005, p. 6). Common for these places, though, are that they cannot be booked days in advance and can only be booked for a short period of time. Either the individual can look up the shelter and ask for an emergency place, or such a place might be booked by a social worker immediately before. In Stockholm this is part of a so-called ‘roof-over-one’s-head-guarantee’ (*tak-över-huvudet-garanti*), which states that nobody should be deprived of overnight accommodation, provided that the individual applies for it before midnight, is not noisy or prone to violence, and does not imply a danger of fire or has been excluded for these reasons (Stockholm City 2005, p. 6). In fact, the right to emergency accommodation is already secured according to the Social Service Act.

*Korttidsboende* (short-term accommodation) in Stockholm applies to the same kind of accommodation but always with access day-and-night. Like *akutboende*, it may imply that several people share a room and that some meals are provided (or not). The difference is that *korttidsboende* should involve some kind of planning for future accommodation and must be

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<sup>6</sup> However, there is no determined time during which somebody was “more” outdoors than indoors.

booked in advance and associated with a decision on individual assistance (Stockholm City 2005, p. 6). The same shelter may have places of both kinds (*akutboende* and *korttidsboende*).

Despite the fact that the terms *akutboende* and *korttidsboende* seem to be the formal ones in Stockholm, *härbärke* is used in the city's own questionnaire used for counting homeless people. The night between 29 and 30 March 2006, 363 persons were reported to sleep in *härbärke* in Stockholm (Stockholm City 2006a).

### Göteborg

In Göteborg, the corresponding terms are *jour- och korttidsboende* (approx. emergency and short-term accommodation), which is defined as the first step in a housing staircase. In this city, however, "you have access to a room of your own and share shower/WC and mostly some kind of common locality with other accommodated people" (Altbo website). A simple breakfast is served. This kind of accommodation is intended for temporary emergency use for people with substance abuse problems while social workers look for more permanent housing, and the resident should not have to move out until there is an alternative available. Drugs and alcohol are not allowed.

In 2005, the city converted a big building with an awkward location, nowadays called *Tillfället* (approx. 'The Occasion') into a place with quite comprehensive services for homeless people, including medical service, offices for the mobile outreach team, a day centre for homeless women including a women's shelter with ten places, a special unit for sobering up and altogether 104 places for temporary accommodation of homeless people.

### Malmö

In Malmö the word used is *dygnsboende/härbärke* (approx. day-and-night-accommodation /-shelter). On 1 October 2005, 173 persons slept in such accommodation (Malmö Statistics on Homelessness 2005). In Malmö several low-standards hotels are also frequently used by the LSA for temporary accommodation for the homeless. The day of counting in October 2005, 45 homeless people were staying in such hotel rooms assigned by the LSAs.

### **3.1 Homeless Hostels**

It is up to the municipalities if they prefer to change the terms for certain individuals or if standard rules and facilities are equally applied to everybody in a certain housing unit. *Skyddat boende*, *stödboende*, and *inackorderingshem* may all belong to this category – or to supported accommodation (7.2). Many units of this kind are not categorised as either one or the other locally but identified with specific local names and having adopted a unique mix of rules, services and practice.

The foundation *Hotellhem* in Stockholm disposes of hundreds of single rooms or one-room flats in a number of houses that are let on various terms to various target groups. Only 200 of their inhabitants were reported as homeless in the NBHW count.

### 3.2 Temporary Accommodation

Possibly *korttidsboende* (short-term accommodation) belongs to this category. NBHW groups it together with emergency accommodation and night-shelter as the lowest category (Situation 1). The intended period of stay may vary also within a municipality that uses this concept, and with the individual in units thus categorised.

#### 4.1 Women's Shelter Accommodation / Refuges / Sheltered Accommodation for Girls

This concept as it stands in the spread-sheet (Women's shelter accommodation) seems a little tautological. In fact there are, at least in the three big cities, special shelters for women (*kvinnohärbärgen*) run by the city and some are run by traditional NGOs like the City Mission.

In addition, there are in many municipalities women's refuges (*kvinnojurerer*) run by NGOs that specifically target women who are victimised or threatened by domestic violence in their homes. ROKS is one of two national organisations that organises refuges for women and girls (*kvinnojurerer*). Individuals have direct access and social authorities might not be involved at all. Among 83 member associations in ROKS, 63 replied to the regular survey on offered support/accommodation in 2005. These refuges had housed 1,700 women and children in altogether 51,990 nights, which gives an average 30,5 nights/individual and year ([www.roks.se/Jourer/statistik.htm](http://www.roks.se/Jourer/statistik.htm)). The competing national organisation SKR housed 1,003 persons, half of whom were children, during 2005 in on average 30 days ([www.kvinnojour.com](http://www.kvinnojour.com)). Taken together, this would mean an average of 142 + 82 individuals/night staying in women's refuges. As they were surveyed in the NBHW count 2005 (where they were defined into Situation 1, that is, roofless), however, only 93 individuals were reported to be homeless during the week of measuring (as compared with only 41 in 1999) (NBHW 2006a, p. 85). The probable explanation is that unlike in the refuges' own statistics, the children were omitted in this count.

A new kind of institution has emerged in Sweden in the wake of a couple of ill-famous honour killings of young girls who have defied patriarchal families. In November 2004 there were about 70 places for girls in *skyddat boende* (sheltered accommodation), which in this context may be in foster care, small institutions or emergency flats (NBHW 2005b). I have no later information, but only half of the state subsidy for this kind of housing was used up by that time.

#### 5.1 Temporary Accommodation / Reception Centres (Asylum)

The Migration Board arranges temporary accommodation for asylum-seekers through its reception system. This is called ABO, *anläggningsboende* (approx. 'reception establishment accommodation'), while accommodation with relatives and friends is called EBO,  *eget boende* (housing on one's own). During 2005, up to November, the number of asylum-seekers declined gradually to 33,000; of these 15,000 stayed in ABO. Due to the temporary asylum legislation valid from October 2005 to April 2006 (see Policy Update 2006 from Sweden), the number of asylum-seekers grew again by the end of the year to 39,000, whereof 15,700 in ABO (Migration Board 2006, p. 16). Despite the fact that contributions to rents are no longer available for asylum seekers, the proportion that arrange accommodation on their own is growing.

On its website, the Migration Board provides information in English on what housing in a reception centre means:

”The reception centres consist of ordinary flats in which asylum seekers cater for themselves. Single asylum seekers have to share a room. A family may be provided with a room of their own but in that case are expected to share the flat with others. /.../

Those with money of their own have to pay for their upkeep. Anyone without funds can receive benefit in the form of a daily allowance.” (www.migrationsverket.se)

Generic definition No 5.2, ‘Migrant workers accommodation’, is not applicable in Sweden.

## **6. People Due to be Released from (Penal or Medical) Institutions**

Despite the fact that the NBHW questionnaire was sent to a range of somatic and psychiatric clinics, the category staying in medical institutions is not differentiated in the analysis of the responses. However, people due to be released from prisons or custody jails within three months and have no dwelling to return to are counted separately. Altogether, 940 people was staying in penal institutions according to the 2005 survey result. I have no access to more detailed figures, but 30 percent of 2000 homeless people in Situation 2 or 600 individuals were to be released from penal institutions within three months with no access to housing upon release, while 3 percent of about 6,400 persons or 192 in Situation 4 were planned to stay longer in prison (NBHW 2006a, p. 50–53). However, in a footnote in the report the NBHW (2006 a, p. 50) states that “Persons with long prison sentences are not counted as homeless in this investigation”, why it is not clear who these 192 people are.

### **7.1 Residential Care for Homeless People**

As I have said before and possibly elsewhere in this report, it is difficult to distinguish this generic definition No 7, ‘people receiving support (due to homelessness)’, from No 3, ‘people in accommodation for the homeless’. It may also be that *stödboende* (see below) should be put in this category instead of ‘supported accommodation’. I am sorry, I can’t figure out the difference. Table 4.10 in Edgar & Meert (2005, p. 47) indicates that there is no legal title at all in ‘residential care’. Unfortunately, there is no information in the NBHW survey on tenure and legal titles, so probably some of the 2,230 replies referring to bachelors’ hotels, collective housing, group housing etc. and/or maybe some of those now defined as staying in ‘institutions’ should be placed here.

### **7.2 Supported Accommodation**

The literal translation of this term is *stödboende*, which is also commonly used in Swedish. In most cases this applies to communal living although residents have their own rooms and sometimes also bathroom and/or cooking facilities. Normally, there is some staff in the building or paying daily visits to the building. In the NBHW count 2005, *stödboende* is lumped together with treatment institutions and prisons etc. in Situation 2, while in the response alternatives in Question 9 the word does not appear at all. The corresponding alternative is rather ‘Collective housing/group housing/category housing/lodging home’ (but see above, it might be that parts of them rather belong to the definition 7.1). 14 percent of the 2000 homeless in Situation 2 (=280) (to be released within three months) and 25 percent of the 6,400 in Situation 3 (=1,600) (not planned to be discharged within three months) were reported to have this kind of accommodation, but considering the known number of such places it must be an understatement. The rest is probably

hidden within the general concept 'institutions' (excl. prisons and hospitals), which makes up the biggest category in both these 'situations'.

The NBHW (2006a, p. 52) claims that 39 percent of the homeless in Situation 2 (=moving out within 3 months) (780 individuals) and 45 percent of those in Situation 3 (=intended for longer stays) (2,880 individuals) or altogether 3,660 people were staying in institutions (other than prisons and hospitals). The fact that the response alternative 'institution' was marked altogether 4,000 times in the submitted forms may be partly explained by the fact that people could have moved in or out of an institution during the week of measuring. Probably, many of the concerned institutions, which do not include prisons or custody prisons, were oriented towards substance abusers, but not solely. According to the statistics of measures (NBHW 2006b), altogether 2,952 people were staying in institutions for substance abusers on 1 November 2005, but all of them were obviously not homeless.

A traditional kind of supported accommodation is *inackorderingshem*, which I have translated into lodging home and which means a total institution providing (mostly single) rooms, meals and staff on the premises for support and/or services. This kind of accommodation still exists but is today rather called *stödboende* or *skyddat boende* (sheltered accommodation) and less services and meals are provided than before. Group home or group housing (*gruppboende*) is sometimes used for homeless people but maybe more often applied to special housing for the elderly or for people with learning disabilities.

*Kategori-boende* (category housing) is a traditional concept that is still being used for units where several homeless people, often with the same kind of additional problem (most commonly drug or alcohol abuse) and the same gender or age group, are put together in one house or staircase, even though their flats may be self-contained. Bachelors' hotel (*ungkarlshotell*) was the traditional concept that is revived in the NBHW count, together with 'hotel home'. The latter is actually the name of a specific foundation in Stockholm and not used anywhere else, to my knowledge. In Göteborg the term *kvarboende* ('remainers' accommodation) is used for category housing for substance abusers intended to be permanent. Even though the tenants have no regular lease, they are normally included in neither local nor national homelessness counts.

However, *kategorihus* has also a more general, abstract meaning and may refer to all kinds of houses for a certain category of people (pensioners, students etc.). Obviously, this kind of housing is not quite fit for the ETHOS typology. In many cases it may be temporary accommodation, but often it is meant for longer, maybe even permanent stay. On the other hand, there is often not very much support provided.

In Stockholm, the term *omvårdnadsboende* applies to accommodation for homeless people with somewhat greater and more lasting needs than in *stödboende*. For instance, the residents may need care due to health problems or high age.

### **7.3 Transitional Accommodation with Support**

Many municipalities in Sweden work with a staircase as a formal or heuristic model of differentiation, which implies that all kinds of accommodation for the homeless people are

intended to be transitory. Because it has great effect on the access to privacy and social space, it is important to distinguish between self-contained flats and communal living.

Here I confine the description to flats that the local social authority rents and then sublease on special terms to homeless clients. These can be of two main kinds. Training flats (*träningsslägenheter*) are often let with furniture and the idea is that the subtenant should move on to another flat after a period of time. The other kind has several names but may be called transitional flat (*övergångsslägenheter*) in a double sense, since they are sublet (without furniture) with the intention that the client should remain in the flat as a regular tenants after a trial period, often set as 12 or 18 months, but in practice mostly longer. Other terms for the same arrangement is trial flats (*försökslägenheter*) or social contracts (*sociala kontrakt*). The distinction between the two forms of housing is essential in that the landlord has no commitment to keep the client in a training flat as his regular tenant.

The NBHW 2005 count lumped together training flats (*träningsslägenheter*), trial flats (*försökslägenheter*) and social contracts (*sociala kontrakt*) into the same response alternative, but only 2,100 people were registered in the survey to stay in such an accommodation. This is obviously a great understatement of the real number, probably because the responding municipalities defined out their residents from the 'homeless'. In 2000–2002, the National Board of Housing, Building, and Planning included questions on this kind of housing in its annual housing market survey, and the total number of trial flats in 2001 was 7,000 and of training flats 1,860 (Sahlin 2006). Since then, the number of trial flats (or corresponding) has increased at least in Göteborg and Malmö and in a number of other municipalities.

### Stockholm

*Försökslägenheter* (trial flats) in Stockholm are allocated according to Social Services Act, Ch. 4, 2 §, which means that decisions on allocations cannot be appealed (Stockholm City 2005), and implies that they are excluded from the NBHW statistics on measures. The residents are not included in the city's regular statistics on homelessness, either (Stockholm City 2005).

On 30 March 2006, 505 persons stayed in training flats, which is recorded as the highest step among the forms of housing for homeless people in Stockholm (Stockholm City 2006, p. 5).

### Göteborg

In Göteborg, the term is *kommunala kontrakt* (municipal contracts) and the local authority in charge of real estate issues holds the leases. These are not included in the city's continuous count of people with 'faulty accommodation'. The number was assessed to about 2000 in 2004 (Löfstrand 2005, p. 343). In addition there was a number of *sociala kontrakt*, where the district LSAs held the lease.

Since a few years there is a special kind of housing in Göteborg called *referensboende* (reference housing). Normally, the local authority in charge of real estate issues demands that people who are offered municipal contracts have previously stayed in reference accommodation. The idea that people who are not considered to be in need of more than minimal support and control, but are not accepted for municipal contracts, should prove their ability and qualifications as tenants in subleased housing. This is intended to provide them with 'housing references' to make them more attractive on the regular housing market. The number of reference flats is growing but their

subtenants are probably not reported to the NBHW as homeless people. Furthermore, there is a wide spectrum of criteria, rules, target groups and degrees of support and control for the 'reference accommodation' in the Göteborg secondary housing market. Some flats are integrated in ordinary rental buildings, others are gathered in a special house or staircase. Some are not actually self-contained but rooms with shared bathrooms and kitchens. The leases for some of the flats can be transferred to the subtenant after one or several years of good behaviour, but most of them cannot.

Yet another Göteborg variety of subleased, self-contained flats is the *EBUS-flats*, used primarily for homeless families with children. EBUS stands for *eget boende utan stöd* (self-contained housing without support). No support is provided.

Training flats in Göteborg are of several kinds, some only consist of a single room without shower, WC or cooking facilities, while others are self-contained flats. There were 233 training flats in Göteborg by the end of 2004; in addition, the NGOs offered similar arrangements.

#### Malmö

*Övergångslägenhet* is a literal translation of transitional flat and a term that is used in some places, for instance in Malmö (at least some years ago). Like in Stockholm, these are no longer (since 2004) included in the homelessness counts, since the subtenants are considered not to be *hemlösa*, but only *bostadslösa* when they can stay in self-containing flats (Malmö City 2004, p. 17). In 2004, there were about 650 such transitional flats in the city.

#### **7.4 Accommodation with Support (Self-Contained Dwelling)**

(I would suggest that 'self-contained' is included in the generic definition, since accommodation with support semantically equals 'supported accommodation', which is often in collective forms.)

According to the Social Service Act, people are entitled to support if they need it, and it is hard to single out what is specifically 'support in housing' as compared with support with child rearing, tackling substance abuse problems etc. For instance, these kinds of support may be provided as a way to counteract eviction. Nevertheless, many municipalities cease to provide support when they are no longer obliged to in their role as tenants (and landlords for their clients).

Trial flats etc. mentioned in the previous subsection (7.3) could possibly be transferred to this category, although they are never let with a regular lease and there is often no support involved.

Västerås, one of the bigger cities in Sweden has designed a special system of housing support (*boendestöd*) for tenants with regular leases, if these concern dwellings that were previously sublet as training flats to the same household. In this city, the subtenant may take over the lease for training flats (what would in other places be called trial or transitional flats), but when they do, social workers provide organised floating support, *boendestöd*, during the first year. Such an agreement may be a precondition for transferring the lease, but if the tenants later on refuses to receive such support, they are not evicted just because of this fact (Runquist 2001, forthcoming).

## Comments

As described in previous statistics updates, it is very hard to distinguish between ‘homeless accommodation’ (3), including ‘homeless hostels’ and ‘temporary accommodation’, and ‘receiving support (due to homelessness)’ (7), including ‘supported accommodation’ and ‘residential care for homeless people’ for the following reasons:

There is practically no shelter, hostel or accommodation for homeless people that is not thought of as temporary and transitory. As long as there is any staff on the premises, the persons working there aspire to give some support or encouragement for the individual to move on to a better kind of housing. Even in night-shelters, there is mostly some ambition to help the residents get in touch with social workers in the LSAs, or the persons staying there are offered some contacts in day-time with social workers in NGOs.

A report on the housing staircase in Stockholm provides three reasons why this distinction between accommodation and support (although here termed as ‘treatment’) has been blurred. First, many district social authorities combine temporary accommodation with out-patient activities, support or treatment. Secondly, the idea that the homeless person should ‘qualify’ for accommodation through sobriety is being partially abolished in the city, and low-threshold alternatives that provide training or treatment are emerging. Thirdly, also in the lower rungs of the staircase the staff is being educated to be able to provide support, treatment and even therapy (Stockholm City 2005, p. 15).

In order to group and assess the differences between the reported housing measures in his survey of accommodation for homeless people, Blid (2006) used nine dimensions/qualities.<sup>7</sup> Especially training flats and lodging homes were often misclassified. In the further analysis, the nine dimensions were clustered in two ‘functions’, one pertaining to the degree of normality in housing and the other to the degree of care. He then found that while there were clear differences between the degree of normality, where transitional contracts were most normal and night shelter least, the degree of care was lowest in both ends of this continuum and highest in the middle, where different kinds of supported accommodation are found.

In addition, support in Swedish homelessness discourse sometimes actually means control. In general, social workers pay more sparse visits to clients who find themselves in the upper part of the ‘staircase’, since they are supposed to behave better and to be in need of less monitoring. This gives rise to a paradox in applying the third and seventh generic definitions of the houseless. In the Swedish conception of a staircase of transition, people might move from 7 to 3, that is, from supported accommodation to temporary accommodation without support, such as an EBUS-flat in Göteborg according to the definition above. In Table 4.3 in Edgar & Meert (2005, p. 23), temporary accommodation is supposed to be used ‘while support needs or housing needs are assessed’, but it could also be relevant and is indeed used when there is no further need of support, while awaiting a chance to enter the regular housing market.

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<sup>7</sup> The dimensions were: home-like accommodation, integration (in neighbourhoods), autonomy, duration, rehabilitation, restrictedness, staff availability, psycho-social and medical competence (with the staff).

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## APPENDIX 1 : ETHOS TYPOLOGY

Table 1. The ETHOS typology applied to Swedish data on homelessness

Conceptual Category		Operational Category		Generic Definition	National Data <sup>8</sup>
ROOF-LESS	1	People Living Rough	1.1	Rough Sleeping (no access to 24-hour accommodation) / No abode	940
	2	People staying in a night shelter	2.1	Overnight shelter	2,060 including short-term day-and-night shelter
HOUSE-LESS	3	People in accommodation for the homeless	3.1	Homeless hostel	940 in hotels and camps 3.2: see 7.3-4
			3.2	Temporary Accommodation	
	4	People in Women's shelter	4.1	Women's shelter accommodation	90 in women's refuges
	5	People in accommodation for immigrants	5.1	Temporary accommodation / reception centres (asylum)	15,700 (Nov. 05) according to the Migration Board 5.2: not relevant
			5.2	Migrant workers accommodation	
6	People due to be released from institutions	6.1	Penal institutions <i>Sw: Inst. for substance abusers</i>	940 780	
		6.2	Medical institutions	not known	
7	People receiving support (due to homelessness)	7.1	Residential care for homeless people	7.1-2: 5.100  7.3-4: 2,100 (underestimated)	
		7.2	Supported accommodation		
		7.3	Transitional accommodation with support		
		7.4	Accommodation with support		
IN-SECURE	8	People living in insecure accommodation	8.1	Temporarily with family/friends	4,230 <sup>9</sup> 517
			8.2	No legal (sub)tenancy	
			8.3	Illegal occupation of building	
8.4			Illegal occupation of land		
9	People living under threat of eviction	9.1	Legal orders enforced (rented)	3,938 <sup>10</sup> (whole of 2005)	
		9.2	Re-possession orders (owned)		
10	People living under threat of violence	10.1	Police recorded incidents of domestic violence		
INADE-QUATE	11	People living in temporary / non-standard structures	11.1	Mobile home / caravan	
			11.2	Non-standard building	
			11.3	Temporary structure	
12	People living in unfit housing	12.1	Unfit for habitation (under national legislation; occupied)		
13	People living in extreme overcrowding	13.1	Highest national norm of overcrowding		

<sup>8</sup> Data from the NBHW nation-wide survey the last week in April 2005, unless another source is given.

<sup>9</sup> The number refers to people who were in touch with respondents the specific week of April 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics by the Enforcement Agency (*kronofogden*).

