Understanding social value creation

A process study of Romanian beggars and Swedish volunteers

Authors: Charles Follet & Irina Eva Ianko
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Supervisors: Fedrik Sjöstrand & Jenny Helin
Abstract

There were several attempts to conceptualize the social value creation process. Previous literature does not commonly consider a non-material approach, using mainly quantitative practices which are not in line with the characteristics of social value.

This thesis contributes to the current social value creation studies in two ways. The first centers the subjectivity of social value as a phenomenon embedded in space and time which calls for distinctive ways of understanding its creation. Here the research approaches the hedonic perspective of well-being as a processual phenomenon which makes possible to explore the way social value is created from beneficiaries’ perspective. The second contribution is an empirical study within a voluntary program in order to explore how the beneficiaries’ subjective well-being unfolds over time. In this setting, where impoverished people deal with satisfying their basic needs, a process approach reveals the emotionally loaded context and the complexity of the social value creation. Thereby, the main emphasis of this thesis is to put on a deeper theoretical discussion of the concept of social value creation.

The result of this research is an understanding of social value creation as a subjective construct centered on how the process uncovers unique moments experienced by people.

Keywords

social value creation, process, subjective well-being, immigrant beggars, voluntary program
Summary

The growing magnitude of socioeconomic problems facing today’s society transcends the capacities of public and private sectors to deal with them adequately. The voluntary and community sector involvement in social issues was proved to deliver significant contributions to society. Considered as the ‘backbone’ of the civil society, voluntary programs clearly create social value for society. Nevertheless, the creation of social value is still not completely understood. To that end, the main ambition of this research is to better understand how social value is created by exploring it from the beneficiaries’ perspectives.

For this purpose, the study approaches a subjective well-being perspective on social value creation. Standing on the hedonic perspective of understanding well-being, the research distinguishes affective and cognitive components as the results of material, relation and human motives that influence how individuals assess their well-being. In further developing the theoretical underpinnings and contrary to earlier social value creation studies, this research considers social value as an on-going process dependent on context and time. The processual analysis discusses different relationships between the context, the time, the dynamics and the disruptive points in social value creation processes.

The empirical study, which inspired the theoretical approach of the research, uses an ethnographic study of a Swedish voluntary project concerned with the improper living conditions of Romanian immigrant beggars. The study is based on 120 hours of fieldwork, nine interviews and a large amount of textual data as its main data source. It resulted in a narrative of the living moments of the immigrants on Gotland.

What emerges as central in understanding how social value is created is an effort to understand the evolution and maturation of subjective well-being of individuals. The context and its ingredients shape the way people think, feel and act; the time unfolds how people reflect on past experiences and plan future; the driving forces give movement to the process of social value creation and the turning points deviate its trajectory. Yet, only a constellation of these aspects illustrated in a narrative will offer a dynamic picture of social value creation.

The thesis has both theoretical and empirical contribution. The major theoretical contribution is related to the distinct interpretation of social value creation process as a subjective construct. The empirical contribution concerns the social value created by voluntary programs for beneficiaries. Thereby, the main emphasis of this thesis is to put on a deeper theoretical discussion of the concept of social value creation.
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Introduction

We struggled a lot sleeping in the car. It was bad sleeping in the car, the police used to come all the time asking us to leave. We used to have a caravan, but the police took it away from us. We left it in the parking, and it was gone when we came back. Last winter we slept in a house without a roof, nothing.

It was the middle of frozen January when these words of a beggar called Nadia from Romania described the living conditions of many people that left their homes with the intent to ask for help in other countries in order to survive. Nadia and her husband are now on Gotland, Sweden’s largest island, living in a shelter, depending at the mercy of people and the aid received from the Red Cross. Like Nadia, there are thousands of beggars who migrated to Sweden in the past three years, most of them live in poverty and ask pedestrians for money, or play music (Gylden, 2014).

Nadia’s example illustrates the poor living conditions and the variety of needs these people have: a roof over their head, proper food and access to water, clothing and medical aid being only few of them. The situation of impoverished people highlights the importance of humanitarian assistance and volunteering programs in facilitating vulnerable groups, particularly migrants and minorities, to fulfill their basic needs. Also political leaders encourage organizations, institutions and citizens to take more responsibilities and collaborate to support social change in terms of humanitarian commitment (Schweber, 2009). The European Union declared 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering, while many countries encouraged inhabitants to increase their involvement in voluntary activities and humanitarian aid (Janoski, 2010).

As Smith (2000) predicted, the 21st century is considered the ‘Voluntary Century’, where Homo Voluntas - the volunteer person - plays an important role in civil society by contributing to public good. Volunteering is considered to play a vital role for charities, civil society and local communities, mainly by improving the well-being of both clients and individuals who participate (Handy and Srinivasan, 2004). Therefore, it is not surprising that there have been many efforts to encourage people to participate in volunteering activities. Volunteering activities clearly deliver important services that are not provided by the market, thus creating social value for society.
A process approach of social value creation

Previous research not only demonstrates that voluntary activities improve the recipients’ well-being, but there is also evidence that volunteering itself is an activity that creates social value for the individuals involved in participation (Brown, 1999). However, the social value created by voluntary programs is not easy to capture due to the characteristics of the voluntary sector as non-market services. To date, nonprofit and voluntary sector literature has provided several conceptualizations of volunteering programs value.

Most often the value created by voluntary programs is captured by the use of social impact concept. This means that the social value created is isolated to a cause-and-effect relationship, ‘fixed’ in time, presenting what happened to whom, as a snapshot. Therefore, the context in which social value is created, together with its dynamism, temporality and subjectivity are ignored in the favor of an objective, fixed and stable method. There are multiple reasons that contribute to the gap in literature. Some scholars argue that the qualitative nature of social value makes it difficult to be captured and quantified (Graff, 2005). Furthermore, volunteering actions could have positive as well as negative impact on stakeholders, and could have both short-term and long term effects, which directly affects the validity of previous studies (GoldStart, 2008/2009).

Given the importance of the volunteering programs and their contribution to contemporary society, this research is driven by the question of how social value is created from beneficiaries’ perspective.

*Point of departure and purpose of the study*

The social value literature does not commonly consider a non-material valuation. However, exploring social value by the use of financial concepts limits the understanding of the phenomenon. As Graff (2005) emphasizes, relying only on economic measurement underestimates the actual social value created by voluntary organizations, aspect which is considered harmful in the long run (Fryar et al., 2003).

There were several attempts to conceptualize social value creation (e.g. Handy and Srinivasan, 2004; Hotchkiss, Fottler and Unruh, 2009). However, their methodologies are questionable given the use of quantitative practices which are not in line with the characteristics of social value. Processual studies have been recognized highly influential in understanding the interaction between the context, the events and dynamics of social phenomenon and its development through time. Such
analysis considers the processes in a narrative perspective, “integrating the arrangement of elements, rather than measuring occurrences and variable” (Bidart, Longo and Mendez, 2012: 743).

Second, the characteristics of value, as a subjective and interpretative concept, ask for a full engagement with the context and people for a better understanding of the phenomenon, thus pushing us to explore the narrative of those who benefit from the social value created by voluntary programs. Value is constantly shifting, and how people interpret value is rooted in how they perceive it at different points in time depending on the context (Ereat and Whiting, 2008).

From these two points of departure we continue to explore the social value created by volunteering programs by giving voices to beneficiaries, participating in the context and embedding ourselves in their lives. Instead of offering only a description of what happened to whom, we aim to present an understanding of why it happened and the implications of this.

**Intended contribution**

The present research contributes to social value studies in two ways. First, because the concept of social value creation is not completely understood (Dees, 2001), this paper aims to contribute within the field by presenting a distinct way to interpret the social value creation as a process and opens up for further discussions.

Second, given the need of empirical research within the subject, we engaged in a five-month field study of a volunteer-based project that had the main purpose of helping poor EU-immigrants in Sweden. Within this context, where volunteering programs deal with improving the lives of impoverished people, understanding the changes in lives of those in need helps us to unfold the process through which the project creates social value and present the narratives of these people.

Overall, the ambition of this study is to better understand how social value is created by exploring the beneficiaries’ perspective.

**Thesis outline**

This thesis is organized in six chapters. This chapter continues by introducing the context of our research field. Chapter two revises previous literature about social value, subjective well-being and processual analysis (see Appendix 1); the purpose of this part is to offer the reader the foundations of the research. Thereafter, the third part presents in detail the methodology we used for data collec-
tion and data analysis, while the fourth part presents the narrative from the field work. The last two chapters discuss the inquiry in its entirety, conclude upon the research and its implications and suggest further research.

Setting the context

The migration of Eastern European people to Western Europe, and more recently to Nordic countries, is a phenomenon which increased after 2007 as a result of the enlargement of the European Union (EU) (Barrell, Fitzgerald and Riley, 2010). In Scandinavian countries, the expansion of the EU increased number of people begging on the streets. Currently there are around 4000 beggars in Sweden, 90% Romanian citizens (The Local, Apr 2014), most of them living in poverty and begging for money by asking pedestrians, or playing music to survive (Gylden, 2014).

Debates over the subject of immigrant beggars raised both public and political attention in a very short time. In April 2014, after months of closed-doors meetings with Romanian officials, Swedish government criticized their Romanian counterparts for the lack of interest in the problem and misuse of EU funds for poverty alleviation (TheLocal, Apr 2014). The Sweden Democrats’ (Sverige Demokraterna) slogan campaign for European elections from May 2014 was entitled “It is time to stop organized begging from our streets” (Hansson, 2014); several attacks to Roma people and their camps took place (Sverige Radio, Jul 2014). Furthermore, protests against begging have been initiated with the message “Work your money” (Suedia, Feb, 2015); the proposal to ban begging has been rejected in the parliament (TheLocal, Apr 2015), even if 71 percent of Swedes believe a ban would be a good idea (TheLocal, May 2015).

Picture 1.1: “It is time to stop organized begging from our streets” Stockholm Subway (Picture by Eric Hansson)
Still, the situation of impoverished people from the streets asked for humanitarian assistance and political action. Negotiations between Sweden’s and Romania’s governments took place several times, from spring 2014 until January 2015, when both parties agreed to cooperate and “prepare projects to achieve common goals for employment and social welfare in both countries”, as declared by Rovana Plumb, Romanian Minister of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly (TheLocal, Jan 2015). Several shelters for homeless people were opened during the winter time (TheLocal, Dec 2014) and funds for social services were increased to assist immigrant beggars to return home, raise living conditions, hire romani-speaking workers and encourage many other activities (TheLocal, Jun 2014).

From small communities, such as Gotland, to big cities, such as Stockholm, Sweden’s attention was drawn to the immigrant beggars sleeping in cars and begging for survival. These were images that had not been seen for a century. Many Swedish volunteer organizations got involved within the Romanian beggar phenomenon all over the country. In March 2014, Gotlandic citizens noticed several immigrant beggars on the streets and when the situation gained momentum they formed Gotland Solidaritet - för EU-migranter, an activist network with the main purpose to help and support EU-immigrants. Behind the formation of Gotland Solidaritet stood up several citizens, including Elin and Anna Maria who were the first people who had contact with the impoverished immigrant beggars.

The poor living conditions for immigrant beggars attracted the attention of several organizations and many citizens volunteered within Gotland Solidaritet. Representatives of Gotland Solidaritet, Red Cross, Visby City Mission, Swedish Church, Save the Children, and Region Gotland discussed the situation and agreed to launch the project Migranter Projektet Vinternatt under the supervision of the Red Cross and Swedish Church. The main purpose of the project was to offer various forms of assistance during a period of six months: shelters, food, clothing and healthcare assistance.

On December 7th a shelter, with a capacity of 20 people, was provided by the Church and financed by the Region Gotland. Clothing, healthcare and hygiene products have been ensured by the Red Cross. The project was based on the work of volunteer citizens. We decided to join and follow the development of Migranter Projektet Vinternatt in January 2015 for a period of five months in which we were full participants.
Theoretical underpinning

Major public issues and/or challenges such as environmental concern, economic development and poverty are approached by collaboration between governments, private sectors, non-profit organizations, non-governmental foundations and community groups (Crosby and Bryson, 2010). Political leaders encourage organizations, institutions and citizens to take larger responsibilities and collaborate to support social change in terms of environmental concerns and humanitarian commitment (Schweber, 2009). When the public and private sectors retreat from providing social services for impoverished, the voluntary and community sector involvement in humanitarian assistance increased (Ganapati, 2009).

Defining the voluntary sector represents a challenge for many scholars and practitioners, due to its nature and characteristics (Osborne, 2008). European theorists use an ‘ontological’ definition of the third sector and approach a ‘hybrid view’ in conceptualizing the third sector, comprising entities that are a mixture of different types of social organization, both public and private. However, “different disciplines (economics, social and political sciences) have different foci on third sector” (Jenei and Kuti, 2008: 13), and often associate it with the idea of civil society and voluntarism. These entities have “an explicit aim to benefit the community, initiated by a group of citizens and in which the material interests of capital investors is subject to limits” (Defourny and Nyssens 2006, in Olaf, 2010: 15).

The direct involvement of volunteering within social issues increased the interest of scholars, who approach the problem from a diverse set of perspectives. Volunteerism takes a new significance and many academics and policy makers started to question the social value created by volunteering programs. Voluntary programs not only make a significant economic contribution, but their social value contribution is even greater: volunteering delivers positive change and deals with many problems that face today’s society (Flanagan and Sadowski, 2011).

On the concept of social value

There is no authoritative definition of ‘social value’, but individuals understand social value as the “wider non-financial impacts of programs, organizations and projects, especially on the well-being of individuals and communities and of the environment” (Mulgan, 2010: 1). The concept derives
from social entrepreneurship extensive literature, relating specific outcomes with relieving disad-
vantage. However, as Certo and Miller argue, “social value has little to do with wealth creation but
instead with the fulfillment of basic and long-standing needs such as providing food, water, shelter,
education, and medical services to those members of society who are in need” (2008: 267).

Based on Amartya Sen’s capability theory, Auerswald (2009) puts forth the idea of approaching
social value creation by the means of well-being. This perspective is based on an interpersonal
comparison of well-being, which emphasizes the individual subjectivity in assessing value. The
capability theory highlights the idea of human beings to achieve well-being, not to maximize
wealth. This is also stressed by Mulgan (2010) who points out that assuming “social value is objec-
tive, fixed, and stable” (:38) hampers a reliable valuation of social value creation, thus a “subjective,
malleable, and variable” (:38) approach will create a better understanding of how social value
is created by providing in-depth information about how individuals perceive and evaluate well-
being.

Social value as well-being

Smith’s (1975) argument that “scholars concerned about voluntary action research should con-
csciously seek out cross-disciplinary inputs” (:265) is in line with the new approach of practitioners
and researchers to integrate disciplines like economics, sociology and psychology in understanding
social value creation. Well-being is a subject that preoccupied mainly psychologists and sociolo-
gists and has recently been of high importance for economic studies, which struggle to convert
social and environmental indicators into financial statements.

Well-being is often used to describe the quality of people’s life (Dodge et al., 2012) and terms such
as happiness and life satisfaction have been used interchangeably (Allin, 2007). Ereat and Whiting
argue that “well-being is no less than what a group or groups of people collectively agree makes a
‘good life’” (Ereat and Whiting, 2008: 1). What people define as ‘a good life’ is centered in the
individual own priorities and perspectives (White, 2010). Here the attention is drawn from the ex-
ternal valuations to internal perceptions and experiences of life such as feelings towards health,
economic status etc. Even if the term ‘well-being’ is often used, the concept is difficult to define as
long as the way in which people understand and evaluate their well-being depends on context.
When considering a subjective valuation, it appears that a person can experience both positive and
negative well-being, which can further be evaluated as an overall result (Gillett-Swan and Sargeant, 2014).

Subjective well-being

The predominant view on the concept of well-being is called the hedonic perspective (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Scholars who agree upon the hedonic perspective (subjective well-being) argue that well-being consists of pleasant and unpleasant experiences and depends on all good versus bad elements of life (Kahneman, Diener and Schwarz, 1999).

Diener (2006) gives a detailed definition of subjective well-being (SWB) as “an umbrella term for the different valuations people make regarding their lives, the events happening to them, their bodies and minds, and the circumstances in which they live” (:153), being “primarily concerned with the respondents’ own internal [perceptional] judgment of well-being, rather than what policymakers, academics, or others consider important” (Diener and Suh, 1997: 201).

Subjective well-being assessment

Important aspects of SWB highlighted by researchers are the affective and cognitive components (Diener, 1984; Erdogan et al., 2012). Affect is the term used by psychologists to describe an individual’s feelings. Moods and emotions are labeled as affect and are considered a subjective evaluation of people of the event that occurred in their lives (Diener et al., 1999). As suggested by Diener et al. (1999), affect consists of two distinct hedonic components, positive (pleasant) and negative (unpleasant), that should be treated separately (Bradburn and Caplovitz 1965 in Diener et al., 1999). Researchers within psychology found that the main moods and emotions that constitute pleasant affect are joy, contentment, pride, affection and happiness, while unpleasant affect is reflected by emotions such as guilt and shame, sadness, anxiety and worry and stress (see Table 2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pleasant affect</th>
<th>Unpleasant affect</th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
<th>Domain satisfaction</th>
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<tr>
<td>joy</td>
<td>guilt</td>
<td>desire to change life</td>
<td>work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contentment</td>
<td>sadness</td>
<td>satisfaction with current life</td>
<td>family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pride</td>
<td>anxiety and worry</td>
<td></td>
<td>health</td>
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<tr>
<td>affection</td>
<td>anger</td>
<td></td>
<td>finances</td>
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<td>happiness</td>
<td>shame</td>
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<td>shelter</td>
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Table 2.1: Components of Subjective Well-being (Source: Adapted from Diener et al. 1999)

In addition to affects, scholars were also interested in the cognitive components of SWB. The cognitive component, considered as life satisfaction, consists of an evaluation of both positive and
negative affects and captures a reflective assessment of one individual of ‘life as a whole’ (OECD, 2013). Life satisfaction is usually reflected in desire to change the current status and satisfaction with current life.

How much a person is satisfied with his/her life also depends on the domain and aspects such as health, work, family life and finances have a direct impact on how people perceive their well-being. The cognitive and affective components are not the only aspects that need to be considered while understanding subjective well-being. Kozma, Stone and Stone (2000) argue that in certain contexts, different discrete emotions appear, therefore assessing subjective well-being being dependent on the key factors that affect the subjective valuation of well-being (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Representation of subjective well-being (Source: Galinha and Pais-Ribeiro 2011: 38)

**Key factors that affect subjective well-being**

Many scholars consider well-being as a dynamic process of subjective evaluation of life. Previous studies tried to understand the key factors that influence people’s affective and cognitive experiences and identified material, relational and human (subjective) concerns as main drivers (McGregor, 2007) (see Appendix 2).

The material concern of well-being is reflected in welfare and standards of living such as levels of consumption, livelihoods and wealth. Traditionally, in assessing material well-being the focus has been on tangible assets such as income, capital and labor (objective assessment). The subjective side of material well-being is reflected in people’s self-assessment of their material position. Still, understanding how people perceive their material well-being represents a challenge for many scholars, most of them focusing on what people should have or be able to do, instead of what people think and feel about what they have and do (Gough and McGregor, 2007).
The relational concern comprises the personal and social relations and access to public good, such as social networks, access to social welfare services and security. A subjective aspect of social well-being is reflected in individuals (dis)satisfaction to public services and perception of safety, and quality of life (White, 2010). To note here is the concern with social inclusion and exclusion, if people feel they are a part of a group or not; it also considers if people are subject to violence and conflicts, if they feel threatened or (in)secure.

The human concern of well-being refers to values, perceptions and individual experiences such as capabilities and attitudes towards life. A subjective understanding of human well-being includes understanding the reason of the (dis)satisfaction of individuals towards levels of health, education, competencies, but also their (in)capabilities. Though, how people perceive their capabilities and abilities depends very much on the level of significance and the meaning they attach to this aspect (Sumner and Mallett, 2013).

As McGregor (2007) emphasizes, the three lenses of subjective well-being are interlinked, and none can exist without the other. Well-being emerges as interplay between the three concerns and the subjective assessment of individuals of these. The approach of understanding how individuals assess their well-being and consequently how social value is created relies on the person-centered characteristics of well-being. As White (2010) asserts, well-being cannot be understood as a state or experience influenced by external factors, but as a process, “realized through the ‘work’ that people put into making meaning out of their lives” (White, 2010: 165).

Understanding well-being as a process introduces the need to consider the context and development of the events through time. Individuals perception of own well-being changes through the cycle of time; how people think and feel about the future and their reflections on past experiences affect the current status.

Social value as a social process

Social value creation is a social phenomenon, and “most social phenomena are processes, and like all processes they ‘take time’” (Bidart, Longo and Mendez, 2012: 743). According to Van de Ven (1992), a process can be defined as “a sequence of events that describes how things change over time” (: 169). This definition, according to Pettigrew (1997) describes how entities or issues develop and change through time. Understanding social value creation as a process is an understanding of the change in well-being that occurs in people’s life and evolves over time.
Many scholars agree that the study of social phenomena in which the time dimension is present should be approached by the use of a processual analysis. In understanding social phenomena as processes, Bidart, Longo and Mendez (2012) proposed a four pillars theoretical framework. They argue that deconstructing processes gives meanings to social phenomena by “shedding light on the combination of elements and dynamics on which they are based” (Bidart, Longo and Mendez, 2012: 743).

**Contexts and ingredients**

Every social phenomenon is embedded into a context and produces elements such as situations, events and actions that contribute to the development of the phenomenon. These elements are dependent on the context; as recognized by ethnomethodologists, an action does not have meaning without interpreting the context, and in the same time a context cannot be described without considering the actions (Garfinkel, 1984). The elements that contribute to social value creation are contextual based, and understanding the context in which the action takes place explains the process.

The elements that play an active role in the creation of social value are called ‘ingredients’. A process may include ingredients that seem to be not significant in the beginning but become relevant as the process develops. The ingredients are not isolated; for understanding their effect there is a need to understand the link amongst them, the order in which they appear and the way they combine, all of them resulting in a process. Furthermore, the interaction between ingredients shapes how the context evolves through time (Abbott, 2001); the way people’s lives change over time depends on several elements that contribute to the process of change. Considering the factors that influence the creation of social value and the relation between them gives dynamism to the process which can be understood only from a longitudinal perspective.

**Sequences**

A process contains different “temporal sequences [...] that link together a specific set of ingredients” (Bidart, Longo and Mendez, 2012: 747). Abbott (1990) emphasizes two dimensions of sequences: temporal succession and arrangement logic. The dynamics of the sequences is given by the combination of the ingredients that influence each other, modifying their own meaning and the overall direction of social value creation. The transition between sequences occurs either as a ‘soft’ change, or as a radical change as a result of the intense rearrangement of ingredients. People’s subjective valuation of well-being is influenced by the past experiences and affects the current and
future status. Even if the sequences are irreversible, they retain to some degree a mark of preceding ingredients. In order to understand how social value is created though time, there is a need to understand its movement.

**Driving forces**

The driving forces are a combination of individuals, organizations and ingredients which can accelerate the process and describe its movement. The forces are linked with the movement of the ingredients, therefore characterizing the process as dynamic. Social value cannot be created without the intervention of several driving forces, which give sense to the process. Van de Ven and Poole (1995) identified four types of driving forces: programmatic, where the change is planned and the process is governed; evolutionary, described as variation within a population; dialectical, which occurs when tension between different ingredients and teleological, forces with a strong and explicit goal. Yet, the driving forces of a process may contradict each other thus leading to changes in the course of creating value.

**Turning points**

When an event suddenly disrupts the course of the process, the process changes its orientation and requires rearrangement. These turning points cannot be predicted and constitutes a radical change (Bessin, Bidart and Grossetti, 2010). Even if a turning point might disrupt the coherence of ingredients’ arrangement, they can also give rise to fresh alternatives. The turning points can either accelerate the value creation process, or can distract its normal course. This temporal specificity (Abbott, 2001) helps in identifying the turning points and exploring the ‘depth’ of the change, together with its unpredictability and irreversibility (Grossetti, 2004).

In order to understand the social value creation process in its entirety, the four pillars need to be treated jointly. Identifying the context and the ingredients relevant to the social phenomenon is the first step in understanding the process that creates value. Linking different ingredients reveal sequences, as long as sequences are made of ingredients. However, to create the movement of the process, the driving forces need to be identified, otherwise the sequences remain captured in time. This is what moves the process from a ‘snapshot’ to a ‘film’. Without considering the turning points which change the orientation of the value creation, the understanding of the process is limited to a linear, mechanical enchainment.
Understanding how social value is created by voluntary programs using a subjective well-being perspective is not straightforward. There is a number of aspects that needs to be considered. The contextual base characteristics of social value, its dynamism and temporality, together with the subjectivity of well-being, require a holistic, person-centered understanding of individuals’ lives.

Approaching the process of social value creation by the use of qualitative methods depends very much on how the researchers position themselves. Participatory approaches such as ethnographic studies have been recognized as providing an in-depth description of the phenomenon, which gives researchers an insider perspective on people’s understandings and actions (Camfield, Crivello and Woodhead, 2008). Understanding how people conceptualize well-being and how their lives change over time as a response of particular experiences increases the potential of ethnography as a method used for studying the social value creation process. As Bourdieu describes, “what is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying” (Bourdieu 1977 in Camfield, Crivello and Woodhead, 2008: 11).

Approaching the subject researched through an ethnographic method not only emphasize the contextual and time dependent nature of the social value, but also captures the human experiences, illustrating the dynamics behind it (White and Pettit, 2005). Providing a narrative of the social value created by voluntary organizations for beneficiaries allows for a richer understanding of the phenomenon. In the end, every organization has a social value story to share, and it depends on how the story is presented. People with imagination, passion and creativity articulate the story in the most compelling ways by listening to the people that voluntary programs serve, not simply responding to the agenda of those with most power.
Methodology

The choice of an ethnographic study

Inspired by ethnographic studies grounded in a commitment to first-hand experience and investigation of a particular social phenomenon (Atkinson et al., 2007), the purpose of this research is to learn about how social value is created by exploring beneficiaries’ perspective. Social value is a cumulative, holistic phenomenon, dependent on the context, akin to storytelling, thus asking for a qualitative study. This approach allows us to offer a narrative of how distinct events shape social value creation, providing a richer and deeper understanding of the context, not just presenting what happened to whom, but why it happened and the implications of this. Furthermore, not only the idea of value, but also the concept of social value is characterized by dynamism, dependent on the subjective valuation of well-being of an individual, group or society from one moment in time to another.

The qualitative approach of this study allows for a rich description of the phenomenon, using the context and the people as data and the researchers as ‘instruments’ for data collection. The data is primarily collected through ethnographic conversations, participant observations and texts such as journal notes, Facebook, radio conversations and newspaper articles. This approach of data collection highlights the naturalistic aspect of the research (Patton, 2001). With the use of descriptive data (Creswell, 2007), the research takes the form of ‘words’, offering a better understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon of social value creation (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). Analyzing inductively the information (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992), we build the ‘puzzle’ from the bottom, examining parts of the results and assembling them into a series of themes: shelter, magazines, begging, jobs/market.

Not only social value creation has been recognized as a contextual based and phenomenological concept (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), but also well-being is considered a subjective construct (Maas and Liket, 2011), making an ethnographic study a proper way to approach the subject. Furthermore, the ethnographic approach is recognized by its contribution both in describing and exploring a phenomenon, and in explaining the complexities of real life situation which cannot be captured through other research strategies like experimental or survey research (Yin, 2004).
To address the research question through an ethnography research design, the data was obtained from participant observations, ethnographic interviews and texts from January 2015 until May 2015.

Given the dynamic and subjective characteristics of social value creation, the approach of ethnography stands out from other research designs due to its commitment to embed in people’s experiences, in order to unfold meaning by understanding the situation (Wolcott, 2009), which significantly contribute in presenting the complexities of the phenomenon.

Data sources and data collection

Brewer (2000) defined ethnography as

[s]tudy of people in naturally occurring settings or ‘fields’ by methods of data collection which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also in the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without being imposed on them externally (10).

Participant observation and in-depth interviews remain the main characteristics of an ethnographic approach (Atkinson et al., 2007).

In order to ensure the access to data collection, an agreement of confidentiality was signed between us, Uppsala University and the coordinator of the Migranter Projektet Vinternatt, all parties committing to allow the access to information and consider the confidentiality of participants when collecting data (see Appendix 3).

Participatory observation

While using ethnography as a research approach, we entered the world of the people we wanted to study (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998; Wolcott, 2009) in order to “gain insight into the obligations, constraints, motivations, and emotions that members experience in [...] everyday activities” (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011: 3). We spent 120 hours of field, collecting observational data in order to grasp an understanding of the social phenomenon (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005) playing the role of active participants (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992) as individuals who “openly acknowledges [their] professional motives to site members” (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011: 146). Most of the observation time took place at the shelter, thus we were able to note participants’ behavior within their real-life context. In addition we observed the participants while on the streets, accompanied them to work, hospital and meetings.
During the fieldwork, we wrote field notes (see Appendix 4) in order to help cue our memories about important activities and events that occurred during the day (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995). When it was not possible to write notes at the site, we used the ‘dead notes’ or mental reminders strategy, until we had the possibility to write down the observations or we recorded conversations between us that helped to remember the details of the event. Furthermore, because of the dynamic atmosphere, it was not possible for us to observe and note all the activities, interactions and emotions, thus the after observation recording supports the descriptive material. We used both descriptive and reflective information in the notes and records, therefore emphasizing “on speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices” (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992: 121).

Ethnographic interviews as ethnographic conversations

In qualitative research, interviews are a common method to obtain data. Ethnographic methods range from ethnographic interviews to loosely structured interviews (Dollar and Merrigan, 2002). "An ethnographic interview is like an in-depth conversation that takes place within the context of reciprocal relationships, established over time, based on familiarity and trust” (O'Reilly, 2009: 125). Unstructured, the interviews offered us in-depth knowledge about the subject studied (Fontana and Frey, 2000). For the purpose of this research, nine in-depth interviews with a length between 17 and 65 minutes were audio recorded. Initially the interviews were led individually, but we observed that Romanian people ‘encouraged’ each other to talk while in groups. However, this is not the case of the two volunteers we interviewed (see Appendix 5).

The interviews included specific questions related to the main events and activities that happened during the research period; initially semi-structured, the interviews with immigrant beggars and Migranter Projektet Vinternatt participants immediately shifted into a loosely structured, negotiated text, as “their voices are particularly difficult to hear. They are spoken of more than they speak” (Champaign, 1999: 51) therefore allowing us to understand the phenomenon from an inside perspective. We constructed two interview guides (see Appendix 6) according to the themes we were interested in, which allowed us to conduct the interviews more like a conversation, thus being able to raise sub-questions that were not considered forefront and add relevant information to the topic (Merriam, 2009). The native Romanian speaker led the interviews, while the other researcher played the role of an observer and noticed the changes in the environment.
Time for reflection was given to interviewees in order for them to offer detailed answers. The translation and transcription of the conversations were done by us and checked by two external Romanian - English interpreters, thus removing any language barrier.

For the interviews the shelter has been the ‘departure’ point of this research. The two volunteers and the Romanians who were part of Migranter Projektet Vinternatt during its entire period were chosen. We utilized the convenience sampling technique, which is about selecting individuals who are ‘most readily available’ and willing to participate within the study (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011). Because the interviews required face-to-face interaction, only participant who were present were included in this study.

**Participants’ protection**

We considered the immigrant beggars as a vulnerable group, therefore two precautions ensured confidentiality and privacy of those interviewed, and reduced the risk of deception. First, all participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix 7), written both in English and Romanian language in order to avoid any misunderstandings. The purpose of the informed consent was to notify the participants about the confidentiality of information collected and the anonymity of their participation, their right to withdraw the consent and to discontinue participation in the interview and any other activity at any time and about the researchers’ right to use the obtained information in any way thought best for this study. Furthermore, the documents containing the real names of the participants (e.g., the signed consent forms) were kept secure and separate from other un-anonymized information. Additionally, in order to maintain anonymity, all the participants received pseudonyms.

**Texts**

Additionally to participant observation and ethnographic interviews, we also gained access and approval to use several texts. According to Ingold (2011), “in the phenomenal world, every material is a becoming” (: 435). We treated collected materials as documents which composed textual data. For the purpose of this study, we revised a 96 page journal from the shelter written from December 7th until April 21st (see Appendix 8), with the help of a Swedish-English interpreter; we monitored Facebook group posts, newspapers articles and radio conversations from November 5th 2014 until May 15th 2015. Official internal communication documents such as volunteers’ notes from meetings, together with pictures taken during fieldwork allowed us to identify and name the main themes.
(Lindlof and Taylor, 2011) emerging from data analysis. Furthermore, our personal journal helped to improve our descriptive data (see Appendix 9).

Data analysis

In qualitative inquiry, data analysis is the most difficult and important aspect of the research (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). The qualitative analysis is an intuitive and dynamic process of inductive reasoning and reflections (Merriam, 2009) which has the main purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of the subject studied by refining interpretations continuously (Basit, 2003). Creswell (2007) identified five steps of data analysis that ethnographic researchers follow: data managing, coding and developing themes, describing, interpreting, and representing (see Appendix 10). However, during the analysis process we engaged in analytical circles, moving back and forth many times. The process started with text as parts of conversations and ended with a narrative, a story (Creswell, 2007).

We organized the data into computer files according to the type of data (i.e. interviews, Facebook posts, newspaper article, etc.) and the ‘speaking person’ (i.e. interviewee). However, the raw material did not help us to unfold the social value created as long as the connection between different events, action, contexts were not clear. Therefore an interpretation of the material was needed and led to our decision to systematically analyze the data to understand the existing situation. We have read three times the entire corpus, being able to view the data as a complete whole before examining and understanding few elements.

In order to start the analytical process, we developed a coding scheme (see Appendix 11). Codes “are essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story that, when clustered together according to similarity and regularity – a pattern – they actively facilitate the development of categories and thus analysis of their connections” (Saldana, 2009: 8). For the purpose of this study, we did not consider the words themselves, but their meaning. The process continued in upwardly moving spirals, creating more refined data sets (Ely et al., 1991), allowing us to build themes within data. Establishing codes and themes helped us to describe the context and build the narratives, as long as “[d]escription is the foundation upon which qualitative research is built…Here you become the storyteller, inviting the reader to see what you have seen, then offering your interpretation.” (Wolcott, 1990: 127).
For exploring and describing the data, we used a time-ordered display (see Appendix 12), built according to the themes identified. We described the data by time and sequences, “preserving the historical chronological flow and permitting a good look at what led to what, and when.” (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 110). The field work notes and personal journals we kept during our research were used for reflecting upon the collected data (see Appendix 9).

For analyzing the data, we build a logical chain of evidence (see Appendix 13). The logical chain of evidence helped us to identify the ingredients that contribute to social value creation and the driving forces which accelerate the movement. Furthermore, the relationship and linkages between the elements gave us a deeper understanding of the context. This method of analyzing data translated into a processual approach of studying the social value creation.

**Researchers’ role**

Prior to initiating this study, the Romanian researcher volunteered for Migranter Projektet Vinternatt several times in the beginning of December 2014, right after the shelter opened. The initial intention was not to study the immigrant beggars phenomenon, but just to offer her help as an interpreter. However, “these early experiences not only provided the first of many lessons I learned…They were also the way I gained access to places and people” (Carr, 2011: 21). Being one of the few Romanian-English speakers on Gotland, she had access to information that few people could have, understanding the language and the culture of every individual studied. Soon after the first interactions, it became obvious the uniqueness of the phenomenon: the immigrant beggars came to Gotland because they could receive help; the relationship between volunteers and Romanians was not a ‘giver-receiver’ relationship, but more a friendship; they called the shelter ‘home’; the number of volunteers grew fast, hence the idea of studying the phenomenon.

Throughout the course of the study, the French researcher played the role of observer as he could not understand the Romanian language. However, he communicated in Spanish with few of the immigrants. As an observer, his main task was to notice changes in behavior, the external environment and details of events. Nevertheless, after a month and a half he was able to understand basic conversations in Romanian, increasing his potential to communicate with the subjects studied.

Playing different roles but being fully participants within the context helped us to capture an impressive amount of information. Combining the role of an interpreter with deep understanding of
the culture, together with the role of an observer focused on describing the living moments we formed a complete ‘we’.

Throughout the research period of five months, we positioned ourselves as participants as observers (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). In the beginning we identified ourselves as ‘researchers’, while “it soon became clear that this was a role neither recognized nor easily fathomed by many of our prospective informants…Confusion often ensued…expressions of disbelief, suspicion, incomprehension, or disinterest” (Hopper, 2003: 69). After the first suspicions from subjects studied, we tried to avoid any of these inconvenient situations; we called ourselves as ‘students working on thesis project’. However, we became familiar with the context easily, and the boundaries became blurred because we found ourselves getting involved with respondents’ issues, having dinner with them, accompanying them to the hospital and work and discussing personal issues. This happened in an unconsciously manner.

By listening and developing discussions, they expected us to understand what they were saying (e.g. ‘you know how is the situation back in Romania’), while we approved and show familiarity with the contexts in order to become of what Cunliffe (2008) calls ‘co-producers of the taken-for-granted realities’. However, there were situations when they considered us as outsiders, providing information about poverty, living conditions, and the role as a mother (e.g. ‘you do not know how it is to miss your children, you do not have kids’). We participated “as fully and humanly as possible in another way of life, [to] learn what is required to become a member of that world, to experience events and meanings in ways that approximate members’ experiences” (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995: 2).

Writing ethnography

Writing ethnography represented a challenge for us. Even if we identified ourselves as a complete ‘we’, our purpose was to describe the events as “personalized accounts of fleeting moments of fieldwork in dramatic form” (Van Maanen, 1988: 136) for transposing the reader into the situation. For here our need to use the descriptive scene setting reflected in the storytelling, associated with a novel technique. To stress here is that “events are recounted roughly in the order in which they are said to have occurred and carry with them all the odds and ends that are associated with the remembered events. The idea is to draw an audience into an unfamiliar story world and allow it, as far as possible, to see, hear, and feel as the fieldworker saw, heard, and felt” (Van Maanen, 1988: 103).

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At one level, the short piece of story we present is an ordinary accessible narrative of immigrant beggars on Gotland and their life events over a period of five months. But at another level it is a unique experience transcribed in an artfully constructed story which aims to understand the social value created by Migranter Projektet Vinternatt by presenting how the lives of immigrants unfold in time through their voices, and the moments we lived during the research field.

Addressing validity and reliability issues

The purpose of qualitative studies is to acquire new knowledge through a deeper understanding of the context, phenomena and people. However, reality is holistic, multidimensional and ever-changing (Creswell, 2007), thus qualitative research presents the participants’ own view. The conceptualization of the study, data collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation assesses the validity and reliability of the research. We reached saturation at the point at which no data collected was considered new information. Following Denzin and Lincoln’s (1994) strategies of triangulation, we ensure the validity of information by collecting data from different sources (different people, time-frames, places), different methods (observations, interviews, artifacts), different researchers (2 investigators) and data type (qualitative text, recordings, pictures).

Data were considered reliable when the information became logical, when the ‘puzzle’ was consistent and formed a unified whole. Nevertheless, due to the qualitative characteristic of the research, our study does not meet the criterion of replicability. We assume there are multiple realities and we saw the social value creation phenomenon and its complexities through our own reality (Creswell, 2007).

We built the narrative of the story through the experiences of multiple individuals, thus obtaining credibility for the study and presenting the study by the use of sincerity reflected in our emic versus etic\(^1\) position within the research. Our aim is that the findings and our discussion upon social value creation topic that follow demonstrate a significant contribution not only to academic world, but also to the community involved.

\(^1\)emic: ‘insider’ / etic: ‘outsider’
Romanian beggars on Gotland: what happened to whom?

While walking down the cozy streets of Visby, you may see and feel the sad reality of poverty that has been present on the Swedish island since March, 2014. As you approach many of the shops you hear the sound of coins rattling in a mug. Beneath the metallic echo of the coins you can distinguish voices saying ‘Hej, hej, Tack så mycket’, veiled strongly in foreign accent. Intrigued by this unusual sonorous atmosphere, you take a quick look and see a man or a woman, sitting on a makeshift pillow with a cup in the end of an outstretched arm kindly asking for a coin. Faced with this situation, feelings of sadness or pity may emerge or you can feel angry, disgusted or revolted. Whatever your emotions, several questions arise in your mind: ‘Who are they? Where do they come from? What do they do here?’

They are impoverished people from poor countries that came to Sweden with the hopes of finding a better life.

When begging came to Gotland

I started noticing people around here a couple of years ago, really, a couple of years ago. I am so ashamed to say I did nothing. I was just like everybody else: feeling this is horrible to see, looking away and taking another way around [...] I have been to Romania and had horrible experiences from there and I was just like ‘oh no, it is coming here’. This is such a miserable situation. (Elin, 12 Jan 2015).

This is the confession of Elin, one of the first people who decided to talk to the impoverished beggars from Gotland.

Together with several other citizens, they decided to take action towards the phenomenon and formed Gotland Solidaritet. For them, “to make the life of these people at least acceptable, not to sleep in cars, not to go around with toothache and medical problems and help pregnant women” was the main goal of joining forces to act, as Elin confessed.

We met Elin on January 12th 2015, on a sunny, but cold winter day, at a cafeteria in the city of Visby, the biggest city on Gotland. We had already decided to write about the immigrant beggars phenomenon on Gotland. Back then, we knew that the migration of beggars was several years old. The phenomenon originated in Spain and Italy, continued to England and France, and has now reached Finland and Sweden.
Some researchers and journalists wrote stories about who they are and where do they come from. We wanted to do something else, something different. We wanted to write their stories, but we knew almost nothing about the situation. We had so many questions for Elin: ‘What is Gotland Solidaritet? How was it formed? Who are the beggars? How many are they? Where do they live?’.

Elin is a determined and charismatic woman, with a powerful voice, clear ideas and values. Seated together around one table with a cup of coffee, we explained our intentions and we just asked: how ‘everything’ started?

It was spring… was it March (2014)? I was handing out fliers in Östercentrum, in Visby city center, about Soraya Post² before EU elections and suddenly Geanina came to me and said ‘Hey, can you please help me?’, and that was the beginning of everything. I felt like I could not turn her away because she approached me face to face. Then I started to get in touch with some other women that used to help Geanina and Dacian (Geanina’s husband), who were the only two immigrants on Gotland at that time. […] We started talking amongst ourselves, the Gotlandic people, and noticed that we had a lot of common values.

And then, the horrible thing happened: the police came and drove them (referring to Romanians) off from camp. I had to go there in a hurry and talk to the police. I was so angry because the police treated me like shit so I called the newspaper because I am a politician and I am like: you cannot do this! And then, of course, it was on the front page.

So we helped them, but then a completely different family came to the island, and a conflict (for begging spots) started. It was a lot of screaming, bad talking and, from what I have heard, a lot of racism… and then we thought we need to help everybody. Geanina and Dacian are our friends, we have helped them because we started to be friends with them but hey, these people are in need just as much as Geanina and Dacian, so what do we do now? Ok, we try to help them also. Then people just kept coming… and, of course, it has been like that: people have heard that beggars in Gotland can get some help, so before Christmas there were around 30 people from Romania here.

We listened carefully to what she said; we did not even dare to move. We knew it will become interesting, we could feel it in Elin’s enthusiasm to tell the story. It was so different from all the classic stories in which people see immigrant beggars and turn another way around.

Elin told us that more and more Gotlandic citizens became aware of the situation of disadvantaged immigrants and decided to volunteer and join forces. At the end of November 2014 they launched the Facebook page Gotland Solidaritet - för EU-migranter på Gotland, an activist network which has the main purpose of helping and supporting the EU-migrants on Gotland. The number of volun-

² Soraya Viola Heléna Post is a Swedish politician for the Feminist Initiative party; she works with issues about national minorities, justice and equality, but also Romani people (Wikipedia)
teers rapidly increased and by the beginning of December, 2014 one could count around 150 volun-
teers.

Back in spring [2014] we had contact with the government, City Council, we had contact with Red Cross, the Church and everybody just turned us (referring to Gotland Solidaritet) away all the time, and they always said ‘first of all, it is Romania’s responsibility, it is not ours’, ‘even though we want to do this, we cannot’, which is not true, of course we can. Also, ‘a lot of people will come, if you help someone, there is going be thousands of Romanians in Gotland’.

Then, I came into the city council and at every meeting people were like ‘oh no, she is here again’ and suddenly everybody just started to listen. Probably it was the fact that the winter was coming and it was easier to say ‘look it is getting minus degrees (referring to outside temper-ature), are you going to be responsible for these people freezing to death?’ And so the City Council, the Red Cross, the Save the Children and the Swedish Church have come together and everybody is contributing with some money and with this house (referring to the shelter).

The conversation about the situation of the immigrant beggars from Gotland kept going. We heard many Romanian names: Aurelia, Nadia, Geanina, Dacian, Romeo, Claudiu, Tavi are only few of them. We spent more than an hour and a half with Elin and still we had much to ask. That day after the conversation with Elin we came back home. Both of us were confused and several questions rose in our minds: What are the living conditions of these people? And how much have the situation of the beggars improved since the volunteers started to help them?

Later that day we were ‘officially’ a part of Gotland Solidaritet Facebook group. We did not waste any second and started to explore it: already more than 200 volunteers, everybody talking about the needs of the Romanians – shoes, winter clothes, medicines, shampoo. We found a memo from the meeting between the organizations. The task listing also focused on the needs of distressed EU migrants and management, priority being accommodation, healthcare and how the coordinators should approach the problem. A shelter was opened on December 7th and volunteers were organized in groups of two to welcome people at the shelter every evening at six o’clock and to close it at ten in the morning; they were in charge of taking notes every shift informing the coordinator, Anna Maria, about the needs of the people. A payment of 10 SEK was collected from immigrants with the main purpose of providing cleaning and healthcare products for them.

That afternoon we decided to make the first visit to the shelter. We were more than curious to ex-

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The shelter and ‘luxury beggars’

It was a dark and cold evening when we arrived at Axelsro, the shelter from Visby. We parked in front of the big red house made out of wood. We spent a few minutes in the parking area: five cars with Romanian license plates and two Swedish. We were at the right place. Silhouettes of people moving inside, light at every window, Romanian voices and laughs could be seen and heard from outside. We entered the small white gate fence, walked through the squeaky snow from the front yard, climbed four wood stairs and opened the door of the house: the crackling of the wood in a chimney that kept the place warm and the smell of polenta welcomed us inside. From the corridor we could see the sharply divided sexes: women were cooking in the kitchen, and men were sitting in the living room, playing cards and watching movies while waiting for dinner.

We introduced ourselves to everyone: we are students from Uppsala and we want to write the stories of these people. Everybody inspected us. They had the same questions about us as we had about them, ‘Where do you come from? Why do you want to write about us? What?’ We could feel people a bit nervous having us around.

Getting to know the Romanian people was actually easier than we expected: we shared experiences, we told ‘our’ stories and they allowed us to be a part of the ‘family’. As soon as we became their friends, they shared everything with us: food, sweets, and gossips. If they saw us on the streets, we
could hear form several meters distance: “franceeeezule”, and see their faces lighting up. It was a must to stop and talk to them. Usually, we needed at least 30 minutes to walk through Östercentrum, a small street in the center of Visby, where there are between three and five Romanians sitting on a regular basis. We were officially a part of their group.

* * *

In the weeks that followed, we continued to go to the shelter often. The evenings were all the same: around six thirty everybody drops in; they have been sitting outside Rusta, Ö&B, Torgkassen and Ica in Slite; they are tired and hungry after a day of begging. But everyone takes the time to greet and they begin to pay the ten kronor it costs to sleep over at the shelter. Women start to cook while men wait for food; a lot of polenta, laughs and invitation for dinner; volunteers carefully take notes in the journal.

Romanians slept four in a room, usually in couples, according to their preferences. House cleaning took place every Thursday. There were two different families at the shelter, which shared everything equally: food, clothes, rooms, showers, and kitchen. A list with the needs people had was made by volunteers, who were in charge of ‘sending the list’ to the Red Cross. The cold weather arrived, and the Romanians needed more winter clothes. When volunteers brought them the package from Red Cross, the atmosphere was like a Christmas evening. “Everyone was looking in the bag (with clothes) and they were really happy” (Journal, 06 Jan 2015).

We already felt like home at the shelter, but at the same time the shelter was not our home; it was the home of these impoverished people, who do not have any other place to sleep, who spend the entire day in the front of the shop, at the mercy of the Gotlandic people, with the hope of earning enough money to buy dinner. And then the evening comes. They revive. Now they have a shelter, a place where to warm up, a place where to cook, but most importantly a place where to sleep.

The dinner table overflowed with dishes when we arrived at the shelter. Everybody was happy. It was a ‘good’ begging day. Women prepared the ‘classic’ polenta, a cheap dish that we ate with

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3 “francezule” means French person in Romanian language; one of the researchers is French
4 Several shops from Gotland Island
meat, eggs and milk. A discussion about the shelter started. We asked them how it feels to have a shelter, a place where you can sleep. They quickly responded ‘it is a huge difference’.

![Picture 4.2: A dinner at the shelter (Picture by Dennis Pettersson)](image)

Miruna: Until we moved in, we used to sleep in cars, in tents, wherever we could find some place outside. But since we got this house everything changed; our life changed completely… We did not have to struggle in the cold…

Ilie: To live in the snow…

Miruna: We are really grateful we do not have to live in cars anymore, without the minimum hygiene, without clean clothes and so on… We had no way to cook some food, we had to eat whatever we bought from COOP shop…

Camelia: Our living standards… our living conditions are much better.

Miruna: Yes look, we are living better, we feel better. People look at us differently. We have what to eat. Especially now: we have where to sleep, we have where to shower.

Mariana: Here we can bathe, we have warm water, we have a kitchen, a bathroom. You can arrange, you can wash yourself, while when you are in a tent what do you do? Nothing. You do not have a lamp, you do not have light, you have nothing!

Ilie: You just sit there and stink…

Mariana: You just enter the tent, look for a place to change… you eat in the center, wherever you find some room… then you go back to the tent and go to sleep.

Viorel: You wash around the toilets.

Camelia: At common baths…

Mariana: You take water with the bottle and you pour… You wash yourself whole, completely…

Ilie: A warm house means a lot. It is because, back home, in Romania, most of us do not even have houses.
Miruna: It might be hard to believe but that is it, we do not have houses. Maybe some of us have them started; they are a bit built, but not finished. Others have nothing, they live with their parents…

Everybody agreed that a warm house is much better than sleeping outside in the cold, with the wind blowing and sometimes raining. We continued the discussion about how do they feel since they came to Gotland.

Miruna: We are thinking that, with time, we will find some work here, maybe God wants to, and someone will give us some work somewhere. We are willing to go and work, not only to sit down on the streets (referring to begging), this is not a job, this is…

Ilie: You are at the mercy of other people…

Miruna: Yes… We are living on others’ mercy…

Camelia: I would like to work in a… greenhouse…

Viorel: I would like to work in construction…

Ilie: I would like to work in some stables… To set horseshoes …

Miruna: Something with agriculture… We can do that… We know that…

Ilie: I could be a tractor driver…

The shelter was a good place – everyone who lived there believed that. As Andrea said, “people (referring to other beggars) call us ‘luxury beggars’ because we have a shelter. Beggars from Stockholm live in shed sites in the forest. That is why they say we live good here.”(Andrea, 06 Apr 2015)

For us, a home is the place where we come back after a long working day to spend time with families. For them, a shelter is the place where they can shower, cook and sleep, a place that gives them a feeling of contentment, happiness and joy. At the same time, satisfying their emergent needs increase their desire to change lives, gives them power of thinking about jobs and how they can escape poverty. Still, their situation depends on the shelter.

The improper living conditions are not the only things immigrant beggars suffer in silence. To leave at home an ill mother or little babies crying is the hardest thing they have ever done. What keeps them fighting is the hope: to earn enough money to survive and send some home, and return.

Most of the evenings from the shelter were full of life with lots of laughs, people playing card games and watching movies. However, not everyone seemed to have fun. In a corner, apart from
everybody stood Nadia. She was sad; her eyes were full of tears. She was missing her children. Two boys of four and six years old, living in Merișani\(^5\) with their grandmother.

My kids are crying to bring them here, especially the older one. ‘Mummy, take me with you to Sweden, at least one time, so I can see Sweden’. Where should I bring him? If the police see I sleep with him in the car, they will take him away. Believe me, it is really hard without kids, my kids are very unhappy not having their mother close. They are crying, not having me around is affecting them the most. Today I started crying, as he was crying due to a fight he had with my younger sister, who is 10 years old. We are struggling here, they are struggling there… When I see kids, I start crying. Believe me, missing your children as mother is the hardest thing. When we go back home, they do not want to see nobody else, only me and their father. They hug me and cry. When I left, I left them both crying… (Nadia, 17 Jan 2015)

The discussion continued and Nadia confirmed what the others said about the poor living conditions of immigrant beggars. She used to stay in Stockholm with her husband, until her brother, who knew about the shelter from Gotland, asked her to come here.

At the Central train station, we paid 30 SEK and we could take a bath. We did not have clothes, we had to buy. From second hand shops, from the Red Cross. We were literally homeless. Here is good, I eat a hot meal, I stay warm. It is very warm during the night, believe me. I take a bath every night, like a normal human being, like at home. We struggled a lot sleeping in the car for six years. It was bad, the police used to come all the time asking us to leave. We used to have a caravan, but the police took it away from us. We left it in the parking, and it was gone when we came back. Last winter we slept in a house without a roof, nothing.

Nadia’s confession made us think more about the needs immigrant beggars have. Food, shelter and warm clothes are the things that make them happy here and now, but are not the only things they lack. Back home, there are families who depend on their help, children missing their parents, siblings who need money for medicine, while here they live their lives in cars, take showers at the train station and eat on a bench.

When beggars stand up

Beggars use a simple expression for the action that defines what they do: ‘a sta jos’, to sit down. ‘I have no money or job, therefore I beg’. This is why a person begs.

Homelessness and beggary do not offer immigrants an easy living. Most of the time, they know no one from the host country, do not speak the language, have no money left after the trip and are hungry. With luck, they sleep in a car, but this is already a luxury; otherwise a public bench, the cold floor of the street is an alternative. In winter, they stay outside in the cold protected only by jacket

\(^5\) Merișani is a village from Romania
or a blanket, while during summer they sit in the sun without access to water or a small square of shadow.

Begging is the only source of money; the pay for begging is low – often 200-300 SEK, depending on how ‘good’ is the ‘spot’ and how merciful the people are. Women usually earn more than men, while Mondays and Thursdays are ‘better days’. ‘Working program’ starts around ten o’clock in the morning and ends at five in the evening, every day of the week, from Monday to Sunday. To sit on one square meter place is not easy; the hips ache, the back becomes stiff and the legs sore. One must be prepared to “adjust the body to lessen the pain” (The Local, 10 Apr 2015). If they get hurt, sick, or pregnant, they are on their own. Social systems have little incentives to protect and help immigrant beggars. No matter how painful begging is, for poor people it offers financial security, as it is the only source of money they have.

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The weeks that followed were good weeks for the immigrant beggars of Gotland. They enjoyed every moment at the shelter, received the clothes needed to face the cold weather and earned enough not to starve. We spent two or three evenings every week at the shelter. We got to know all Romanians and met many volunteers that dedicated their time to help. Migranter Projektet Vinternatt, together with Gotland Solidaritet flourished: more volunteers joined the network, 235 in total; from February 1st Anna Maria was officially named the coordinator of the project (HelaGotland, 23 Jan 2015); a Romanian study group was formed, with Geanina as a teacher; Swedish language classes were organized for immigrants from Visby every Wednesday from February 4th; in Hemse, English language courses started on March 8th.

The immigrants had lost their fear of not having a shelter and now they wanted to ‘do’ something to earn more money and escape the conditions of begging. One of them, Marius, came with the idea of selling ‘Sofia Z-4515’6, a magazine that EU migrants are able to sell instead of begging. Sofia is a comic book which presents the conditions of Roma during Holocaust (SVT, 06 Feb 2015). The magazine was released in 2010, by the Norwegian NGO Folk är Folk with the main purpose of finding an alternative of begging for poor immigrants. The beggars could buy the comic book at the

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6 The magazine tells the story of Sofia Taikon, an eight years old child who is taken to the concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau. When the 2nd World War ended, she came to Sweden with the help of the Red Cross; she was only fourteen years old at that time.
price of 25 SEK per unit, and sell it for 50 SEK. The exception is the first number, which is a special issue, and was sold for 100 SEK.

Marius took the initiative to sell the magazine in Gotland from his previous experience from Norway, where he “used to sell 10 to 20 magazines a day” (HelaGotland, 20 Feb 2015). The volunteers quickly ordered several magazines for the 34 Romanians from the island. The first magazines arrived on Gotland on the 20th of February. The initiative was a complete success: all issues were sold in three days only.

The increase of income of Romanians was obvious, and it increased their self-esteem as well. “It feels very good that now we can sell this. It is much better than to sit out in the cold and begging” (HelaGotland, 20 Feb 2015) confirmed Marius the good feelings of selling magazines instead of begging. And he was not the only one; we heard Romanians many times saying “it is good, now we also have some job, we are not only relying on the mercy of others” (Miruna, 06 Apr 2015), while Swedes had a positive reaction, “they buy the magazines without even me (the Romanian) asking. They come and ask for the price and buy directly” (Romeo, 23 Apr 2015).

After one month and a half, the sale of the magazines was still a good alternative of begging.

It is much better when you do something [else] than begging. Everything is better. People see you do something when you sell magazines. They buy the magazine to help us, not necessarily
because they read it or like it, I think. For example, if you sell 2-3 magazines per day, it is already more than begging. (Andrea, 06 Apr 2015)

Even if they sell magazines or not, one thing was for sure: when a new number of Sofia is released, Romanians do not have to beg anymore, they do not have to sit down, they stand up, they are merchants, they see the world at the same ‘level’ like everybody. Still, the magazines are sold quickly, and after few days the Romanians have to sit down again.

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The physical pain is not the only issue a beggar has to deal with. Shame, sadness and racism are feelings and experiences they endure. Thinking about the ones that struggle back home and counting the coins from the cup to see if there is enough money for food are not the only problems beggars confront. Pedestrians would either almost walk on them, because they did not see them, or avoid them. Parents pull their children from beggars, even if the kids are the only ones that look in the eyes of a beggar. Citizens treat beggars like objects, and if they ‘meet’ their gaze, they detour. Some of them take a picture and leave, like nothing happened.

But there are also people who assault them physically, verbally, or both. Regardless of the way people treat them, beggars will never say the truth of how much humiliation they have to suffer.

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We spent months with the Romanians from Gotland, and asked them several times how people look at them, if someone treats them bad. Most of the time they confessed that “none of them (referring to Swedes) is mean, they help you, with 1-2 crowns, as much as they have.” (Nadia, 17 Jan 2015); “they treat me nice, may God bless them. Because of them, I have what to eat every day. But you know how it is: there are people and people, good and bad, like in Romania.” (Aurelia, 16 Jan 2015), says Aurelia whose voice breaks down in a sob.

Perhaps the hardest thing was to prompt the Romanians to talk about the moments when they were victims of harassment. Their tolerance for humiliation was astonishing. We heard them saying pedestrians treated them bad only few times.

I was sitting at ‘my place’, and then a woman came. She wanted to take a picture of me; I tried to hide, pulling the hood over my head. She started to speak laud to me, asking why I hide… (Manuel, 06 Apr 2015).
Another time the problem escalated. A man used to come to the shelter on several occasions during the night and threatened the residents. “He (referring to the man) has told them to pack off otherwise it will be bad” (HelaGotland, 24 Apr 2015), says Anna Maria, the coordinator of the shelter. People were scared and afraid; “We think it is scary and creepy. We do not know what to do”, says Tavi one of the Romanians for the same newspaper.

Most of the time, Romanians did not want to talk about these incidents. Several other incidents were noticed by volunteers and other citizens. “An elderly man was coming into the store and I was on my way out, when I saw him stepping on and yelling at a beggar who sat outside the store.” (Facebook, 09 May 2014); “I was with Corina (one of the Romanians) to the hospital tonight. Her wrist has become worse after being attacked by a drunk man two weeks ago while sitting at the shop” (Facebook, 07 Mar 2015).

Even if they prefer to talk about the assaults or not, one thing that immigrant beggars believe is sure: they think they are not in ‘their country’ and consider having no rights. They prefer to accept the humiliation and the shame in exchange for few coins that provide them food at the end of the day.

The unwritten rule of begging

The stories of immigrant beggars share certain features. Competition for begging spots is high; and higher when the number of shops is limited. The ‘new comers’, who arrive in a city without knowing anyone either have to find a ‘free’ place to beg, or wait until another one is released. The ones that already occupied begging spots take good care of them. If they have to go home, they ask someone else to come and sit in their place for a while. There is one rule every immigrant beggar knows: “We, beggars, have an unwritten rule, it does not matter if you beg in Sweden, Finland or Austria, you do not take someone else’s spot because is like taking the bread from someone’s mouth” (Camelia, 28 Apr 2015).

It was mid-March when tension on Gotland could be felt by everybody, both Romanians and volunteers. The mornings began “calm, but tension mood due to the conflict about the spots in Visby” (Journal, 18 Mar 2015) could be felt; it was a good atmosphere during the evenings, “but suddenly everything turned around and the ‘brawl’ about the spots from the city started again… Fuck!” (Journal, 21 Mar 2015). The volunteers called the police several times in those days because of the

7 to deprive someone of livelihood
fights and verbal threats. People from the shelter were very upset: there were “five young guys who fight and threaten” (Journal, 21 Mar 2015) for begging spots; they were not a part of the group from Gotland, not a part of the old group. They were new comers that ‘broke the rule’.

The tension persisted over several days. The new guys came with their families, counting a total of 14 people. Their stories were the same as the immigrant beggars’ stories we had heard already: they left Romania because they have nothing at home, they have no money or job, therefore they must beg to survive. The situation led to a conflict: the ‘old’ Romanians did not want to give or share the begging spots despite the new comers’ verbal threat. For the ‘old’ immigrant beggars, that meant no access to the spots outside shops, no money for food and payment of the shelter.

For volunteers, “the problem might be bigger than they could understand” (Journal, 23 Mar 3015). During these days, everybody was talking about the threats: Romanians were scared and volunteers were lost in the front of situation. Even if the circumstances seemed to be uncontrollable, they asked everybody for a meeting at the Red Cross.

We arrived five minutes after six on the evening of March 18th. We entered the meeting room: the new comers set on the left and the Romanians we already knew on the right. Nobody was smiling. Cold and strong looks were exchanged from one side to the other, while the tension could be felt by looking into their eyes. It was obvious that they disliked each other.

Anna Maria, through her role as coordinator of Migranter Projektet Vinternatt, led the meeting. She started the discussion by introducing the volunteers, and asked the Romanians to do the same. They presented and mentioned the relationships between them; they were all related to each other, relatives, friends, or neighbors back in Romania; the groups came from two different parts of Romania, the ones from the shelter were from villages around Pitești (Merișani and Troislav), while the new comers from Târgu Jiu.

The conversation continued with information about Swedish legislation regarding threatening, verbal and physical violence and the sanctions in case people do not comply with the rules. Two police officers were also invited to confirm the legislation; everyone was listening carefully and nobody dared to interrupt. After 20 minutes, the police left and we started to talk about the reason why we were all there: the fight for begging spots.
Even if the meeting began smoothly, when the two Romanian groups started to speak everything twisted. Every group had strong arguments.

We sat here during winter struggling with cold weather and snow, only to keep our spots, only to make sure no one will come and take them. And now they came like this and threaten us? This is not fair!

Claimed one of the Romanians from the shelter. His argument was directly attacked by the other group.

You begged enough, you earned enough money for food. Now is our turn, we have no money, no food, no shelter, nothing, back home we have children starving. Here we sleep in cars!

The debate continued; the tension was enforced by loud voices, racism and threatening; ‘rudari’ and ‘ursari’\(^8\) were words that could be heard every minute. The anger and the anxiety were felt by everybody. The situation overcame us, overcame the volunteers, who tried to keep the tension under control. However, we all noticed that the begging spots were not the real reason of the conflict; they were fighting for money for food, they were fighting for survival, something that no one, except them, could understand. The tension mood continued for several other days, until the ‘new comers’ understood there is no place for them on Gotland and left.

More alternatives to begging

The month of April was productive for everybody. Gotland returned to life after a long winter: people preparing for Easter, farmers working hard for the new crop and nature revived. It was also the time for Skaparfestivalen, a festival where people can sell hand-made products, and street markets. Anna Maria, the coordinator, felt that the beginning of April is the perfect time for farming. She sent “150-200 letters and e-mails to farmers and businesses across the island to inform people about the right of Romanians to work” (Facebook, Anna Maria, 15 Apr 2015), and her efforts paid back.

It was in the early morning of April 4\(^{th}\) when we showed Cornel the way to Stora Torget, the place where the street market took place. Several volunteers rented two tables at the market, one for him and one for Mihaela. It was the third time when he sold his hand-made products in Visby. We arrived at the market and greeted everyone. The weather was not so good; the clouds were announcing a rainy and cold day. He chose a table and started to carefully arrange everything on it: more

\(^8\) Rudari and ursari are different categories of rroma, being differentiated mainly by the social position within rroma society; the former is considered as being poor, while the latter group recognized as rich; the immigrant beggars from the shelter were a part of rudari, while the new comers ursari.
than 25 spoons, different shapes and sizes, eight pots made out of wood and seven ceramics ones. Several traditional Romanian tools, together with few flutes were arranged in a basket. At the next table, Mihaela and Corina were still crocheting hats and Easter baskets, while proudly exposing their work: hats for babies and small baskets for Easter table. It seemed to be a promising day.

We: How was the market from Coop? (we asked Cornel referring to the street market that took place a week before)
Cornel: Very good. We sat inside, it was warm, we had free coffee and sandwiches and a lot of people came and shopped.
We: Was it profitable?
Cornel: More than profitable. We sold in one week-end goods of 2400 SEK. Everybody came to our table. And we paid only 100 SEK to rent it. People took pictures with us and were really happy to buy spoons and butter knives. We sold many spoons and butter knives.

It was only 7:30 in the morning and they were impatient to show the people what they sell: wood and textile products made by their own hands.

The previous market was a good ‘business’ for Cornel. He was happy and proud to share his traditional handmade Romanian wood and textiles. He felt confident to earn in one weekend the same amount of money he could have received at least in ten days of begging. This time, the expectations were higher, the market was organized in the middle of the city of Visby and he thought he could sell even more products.
We called Cornel around six in the evening that day to ask about the sales. They were not as good as the other weekend; only 1730 SEK. Still, it was much more than begging.

On April 7th a temporarily hired worker was planting trees in the forests of the island: it was Romeo, one of the Romanians from the shelter. He found the job with the help of one volunteer from South of Gotland, Jonathan. Several nights before Romeo started working he could not sleep; he had many questions about the job; ‘What will I have to do? Will they hire me? How will I talk to them? I speak no English, only a bit German’ were only few of the thoughts he had in mind. He was worried. For him, it was a monumental day.

In the morning of the first working day we accompanied him. We met at the shelter 5 minutes before six. He was already awake for few hours, drinking the second coffee. We traveled 45 minutes to the work place. When we arrived, his face brightened up. One could read his happiness from his eyes and smile. He greeted the boss and his co-workers politely with a warm handshake. After the boss explained him how he was to perform his work, he did not hesitate a second: he started to plant trees like he had already been working for several days. Everybody was amazed.

Two weeks later, we visited the shelter. We asked Romeo how he felt working in the forest.

Romeo: I felt good. I worked before somewhere else as well (referring to his experience on construction sites in Germany). A bit tired, as it has been some time since I worked, but good. Begging is not good, people seeing us think we do not like working. They should take a beggar and see if he likes to work or not. My work is not easy, but this is what I have to do to have some living conditions. One must work.

We: Do you feel more proud of yourself, because you work instead of begging?
Romeo: Of course! Anybody would feel more proud. Especially me. When I was sitting down, I was doing it because I had to. The need will push you to sit down. But people look at you with different eyes. From all points of view. Sitting down, you humiliate yourself.

We asked him how he talks with his colleagues, as long as they cannot communicate in English. He responded that most of the time they use signs and body language, and that he started to learn some English words from his colleagues. He was happy to go to work. Instead of working eight hours, he
used to spend more hours at work, as long as his payment was done according to the number of trees planted.

I work more than eight hours. I work on Saturdays also, I have nothing to do if I stay... the shelter is closed during daytime; I have to stay in the car. I prefer working more hours and Saturdays also, that means more money. And if people see I like working they will give me more work. (Romeo, 23 Apr 2015)

His enthusiasm for work increased day by day. We saw him happier, more energetic and planning for future, as his wife is seven month pregnant.

“Maybe I will continue finding jobs, perhaps I will get officially hired, with contract, you never know. And this is good in the long run as well. We must think about the future, not only about the present”, told us Romeo full of hope.

Picture 4.5: Romeo’s first day at work (Picture by Eva Ianko)
Cornel and Romeo were not the only ones who replaced begging with work with the help of volunteers.

Soon after Easter, the farmers returned to their work and decided to ‘hire’ Romanians to help them: Tavi, Claudiu, Nadia, Andrea, Dorel, Manuel and Alin worked for several days. Unfortunately we were not there to talk to them that day, but we heard them at Radio Sverige, Tavi and Claudiu being interviewed by a reporter who asked how they feel about working.

Tavi: Oh, this is very good, to work. Is very, very good. I like to work, I do not like to beg. I want to work…
Reporter: What do you do when you are not working here?
Tavi: I am begging. I have no work, I want to work but I do not know where.
Reporter: How do you feel about begging?
Tavi: I feel bad. Is no money, like 50 SEK, 100 SEK per day, it is difficult.

The interview continued with Claudiu, who speaks little English.

Claudiu: I want to find more work. It is much better for everybody.
Reporter: So what do you do when you are not working?
Claudiu: I sit down.
Reporter: And how is that?
Claudiu: Very bad.
Reporter: Why?
Claudiu: Why? Because I am very ashamed of what I am doing…

As the reporter noticed, “[t]his is a temporary job, only for a few days. But, for those who work, some women and some men, these days have significant meaning to them”(Sverige Radio 21 Apr 2015)

Changing the shame provoked by begging with the feeling of pride offered by a daily job increases their desire to work more and improve their lives. Although working for few days makes a big difference for these people, it also represents risks. With other immigrant beggars coming because ‘they heard they can receive help’, leaving the spot free one day might mean losing it, and losing the begging spot means losing a secure source of money.
Will the shelter close or not?

The weeks that followed teemed with job opportunities for Romanians. Everybody had the chance to work for few days; some of them worked for few weeks, some started summer jobs, while others opened their own ‘businesses’ of trading mushrooms or selling handmade crafts. It was the time for opportunities and self-improvement.

Migranter Projektet Vinternatt was almost to an end. And everybody knew that, but no one knew what will happen next. The Romanians were getting ready to sleep in tents and cars; everybody was asking if we can provide mattresses, so they could sleep more ‘comfortable’. Others were planning to go back home, in Romania. But there were also some of immigrants hopping that the volunteers will find a solution. We asked Romeo how he feels knowing that the shelter had to be closed in few days:

Not good, of course. Especially me, my wife is pregnant and we cannot sleep in the car. Even if it is not so cold outside anymore. But a seven months pregnant woman cannot sleep in a car. We hope to get another house, but we do not know. I feel the worse, as I found job and made plans for the future… I cannot sleep in the car, go to work, and come back to the car. No shower, nothing. (Romeo, 23 Apr 2015)

He was worried, like all the others. We asked him if he thought of what will happen if there will be no shelter any more. “Honestly I did not think of it, as I rely very much on them. Perhaps we will have to sleep one, two, three days in the car, but they will find us a place afterwards”, said Romeo full of hope.

At mid-May 2015 the shelter was closed and the Romanians moved in a disused military camp arranged by volunteers. They slept in tents, with no access to water, kitchen or sanitation. During night there were six degrees outside and it rained most of the time. But this was for four days only. Romeo was right, volunteers found a better solution, a new shelter, with bedrooms, kitchen, toilets and shower. It was a new place where Romanians could sleep, cook, wash; a place which gives them joy, happiness, stability and hope.
Discussion and implications

Our approach for understanding how social value is created was born from the lack of previous studies of treating social value as an on-going social process. Most of the time, the creation of social value is presented as an impact of an organization or program, an approach that does not consider the effect of context and time. The focus is on the end results of value creation process, without considering why social value was created and what are the implications of this through time. Therefore, social value is studied as a snapshot which is supposed to present the story as comprised from the starting to final point. However, social value creation is a social phenomenon, and as Bidart, Longo and Mendez (2012) argue, social phenomena are processes embedded in time and space.

An effort to understand how social value is created as a process is an effort to understand the process of evolution and maturation of subjective well-being of individuals. Still, this process cannot be considered in its entirety in the same time. It needs to be de-conceptualized in order to capture the dynamics of the whole process that lead to changes in well-being. It is the context which sets the individuals’ assessment of quality of life, the external forces that drive these perceptions and the time which gives sense to it. Undoubtedly, the whole process of social value creation leads to changes.

The importance of understanding the context and enhancing complexities

The need to understand the context in which volunteering programs create social value for beneficiaries originated from the field study, in which we emphasize the circumstances of the events and the complexities of the situations. It was the context which made us understand how people experience different events, how they feel upon them and why.

In understanding how social value is created for Romanian immigrants from our study, various elements that formed the context combined and interact in order to set the ‘stage’ of the social value creation process. The poor living conditions such as sleeping in cars and tents, having no access to water and sanitation, together with the increase of public attention and the upcoming winter gave birth to Gotland Solidaritet and later to Migranter Projektet Vinternatt. Several subjective ingredients correspond to each of these elements. The Romanians immigrated because they wanted to escape poverty back in Romania, which resulted in precarious livelihood conditions on Gotland. The incident from the camp during summer 2014, where Elin attracted the public attention by the
use of media towards the condition of the impoverished people, led to an increase number of citizens that volunteered and formed Gotland Solidarititet. The upcoming winter, together with the pressure that came from Gotland Solidarititet’s members towards Region Gotland, resulted in Migranter Projektet Vinternatt.

The project offered Romanians material, relational and human support. The increase in livelihood conditions resulted in an increase in happiness and joy, people appreciating the evenings spent at the shelter, the warm environment, the possibility to cook and access to sanitation; perceiving the shelter as a ‘safe’ place gave them contentment. To notice here is how they evaluated their overall well-being: they compared the current life status with the previous experiences lived, aspect which influences the way they assess well-being both affective and cognitive. Meeting the basic needs increased their confidence and desire to improve life further: they expressed a high degree of willingness to work, aspect which sets the ‘backstage’ context: outrace the condition of begging.

The condition of begging which produces both physical and psychological pain, is reflected in their emotions towards it: they feel ashamed and sad because they have to beg, and they prefer not to talk about the treatment they receive from some people because they consider this as a ‘sacrifice’ for the benefits they obtain from begging. Still, important here is the motivation and desire to change life that these negative affects intensify: they are trustful about their capabilities and wish to work, as long as their basic needs are satisfied. This led to idea of selling magazines and daily work, which offered them a material satisfaction reflected in the increase of income and their pride of ‘doing something’.

On the other side, the switch from selling magazines back to begging might actually intensify the negative feelings they had towards begging, situation which is also met when they work for several days. Contradictory here was the immigrants’ reaction when ‘new comers’ arrived on Gotland; the fact that they might lose the only ‘secure’ source of income showed how important the ‘begging spots’ are for them. Even if the condition of begging produced many negative affects, they saw it as a secure source of income. This could be explained by the temporality of activities that produce positive affects such as the sale of Sofia Z-4515 and daily jobs, fact which diminish the social value created and intensify the negative feelings produced when they have to return to previous status.

Understanding how distinct ingredients shape the way in which social value is created is an effort in enhancing the complexities of the phenomena. The findings in our study highlight the importance of presenting information beyond the distinct events, such as actions and ingredients that led to the
consideration of social value or act as an impediment, turning points that change the normal course of events, and the temporality of actions. As Garfinkel (1984) argues, giving meaning to social value creation can be understood only by interpreting the actions that took place. The interpretation of actions allows for identification of the components of well-being that influence the subjective valuation of individuals; the circumstances in which people live give an explanation of the perceptual judgment of individuals towards well-being (Diener, 2006). This findings are in line with McGregor’s (2007) argument that people cannot be separated from their environment while evaluating well-being, therefore understanding how social value is created.

Considering time as sequences and the implication of this

Studying social value creation by considering the flow of time is crucial. Furthermore, exploring well-being and social value creation as a person-centered phenomenon implies considering how time unfolds the changes in people’s lives. The complexities of phenomenon (the amalgam of events, ingredients and changes in perception that interact), as shown previously, develop over the process of social value creation. How people judge the importance of different factors that compose the material, human and relational factors of well-being depends very much on the ‘living moment’. In order to consider the time dimension without losing the story, it is necessarily to ‘break’ the process into different sequences by identifying what has changed and what is on the way to change.

Returning to our study, an examination of the trajectory of social value creation shows that it can be divided into five periods. The first sequence is the result of the interaction between multiple ingredients which led to the creation of Migranter Projektet Vinternatt, described before, as a result of the poor living conditions of the Romanians. The improved livelihood condition shifts the attention of immigrants from fulfilling the basic needs to securing the income, the desire to change life, aspect which is noticed in their money-oriented disposition to work. The desire to compensate the lack of finances drove the social value creation process to the next sequence.

In the second period, the hope to raise income is fulfilled by the sale of the magazines which increases their pride and the overall satisfaction of life. Yet, certain duration effects are felt at the end of this sequence: a decrease of enthusiasm in the sale of Sofia Z-4515 is the result of the intensified shame and anxiety that is felt by returning to begging. The negative affects are deepened by the repulsive attitude of public opinion which directly influenced the relational factors of the immigrants’ subjective well-being: a poor perception of safety together with a strong feeling of discrimination intensified the worry and anxiety felt by these people. However, an unpredictable event that
took place creates a new temporary sequence, the fight for spots. The attention of Romanians in finding alternatives to begging is attracted by the concern of securing their primary source of income, which produces a lot of anger, anxiety and worry. The short-term characteristic of the sequence, the fact that ‘new comers’ left Gotland after several days, allowed for a fast transition towards the next period.

The fourth sequence is a continuation of sequence two where the attention is captured by the desire to change life. Here the interaction of multiple ingredients, such as the increased efforts of volunteers to help in finding jobs and the seasonal work opportunities, resulted in temporarily employment of several immigrants. The positive affects created through jobs are highlighted by immigrants when compared to the previous state of begging, considered as humiliating. Here we can noticed that the feelings of happiness and contentment are more intense compared to selling magazines action due to the duration of the employment which kept them ‘out of the street’ for a longer time.

The temporal sequences connect the ingredients that influence each other and give meaning to the process (Abbott, 1990), linking time with the changes observed in the well-being of immigrant beggars. The perception of individuals of well-being is affected by how events occur through time, every sequence retaining a ‘mark’ of the preceding sequence. To note here is that the change that follows during the second sequence is prepared with the first sequence in itself, except several sequences which are created by unpredictable events. De-constructing the process of social value creation in different pillars allows for the identification of ingredients that create social value. Nevertheless, how social value evolves over time is a combination of driving forces that guide its movement and dynamism.

What forces drive the creation of social value?

In every social phenomenon the context and the time are characterized by movement (Bidart, Longo and Mendez, 2012). There are different types of forces that contribute to the creation of social value, from the explicit goal of an organization or individual to dialectical forces described as events which led to positive changes (Van de Ven and Poole, 1995). The driving forces may be embedded into a principal driving force that leads the process of social value creation, or may be contradictory pushing in different directions. The way how driving forces guide the creation of social value directly influences the change in well-being of individuals.
In our five months study, different driving forces associated could have been observed. Within the first context, the social value creation process is driven by the cumulative effects of three forces. One is evolutionary, as many immigrant beggars came to Gotland during the summer of 2014; another one is dialectical, both the fight between Romanians and the incident from the camp with the police, which led to tension moments and attracted the attention of public; and the third one is teleological, showed by the explicit goal of Gotland Solidaritet formation. Also to note here are the key individuals and the role they play in the ‘story’: without the direct approach of Geanina, no relationship with Elin would have been created, and without this friendship and several others with volunteers, Gotland Solidaritet would have not been formed. All these led to the creation of Migranter Projektet Vinternatt that directly impacted on the well-being of the immigrant beggars.

Within the second context, the desire of Romanians to find alternatives to begging leads the process to the sale of magazines. Here an important role is played by Marius, who brought the idea up to the volunteers, everything being programmatic; this driving force led to an alternative source of money for immigrants and improvement of their wealth, which directly produced pleasant affects such as contentment and pride. However, conflicting interests enter the picture and led to the third sequence which is disrupting the normal course of social value creation by reordering the priorities Romanians consider. During this period, the evolutionary force, the increased number of people, combines with a dialectical driving force, the conflict with the ‘new comers’, deviate the course of social value creation, producing negative affects. Nevertheless, these forces are rejected by the mechanism and the process of social value creation continues with the fourth section, driven by a programmatic driving force. Here to note is the role Anna Maria plays, by putting all her efforts into finding jobs for immigrants.

Understanding social value creation as a process without considering the driving forces might limit the process to sequences which are simply chronological segments (Bidart, Longo and Mendez, 2012) and lead to a misinterpretation of what exactly made people feel in a certain way. The identification of driving forces which gives sense and movement to the process helps in understanding different actions and thought of people like a film, not like a snapshot. Still, understanding social value creation process implies also understanding the turning point that changes the trajectory of the process.
A shift in the social value creation trajectory

The course of social value creation may also face intense rearrangements of the ingredients which are caused by the unpredictable events. This turning points can be identified only by comparing the before and afterwards configurations of the ingredients, which also highlights the change made by the process (Grosetti, 2004). Understanding the turning points that occur in the process of creating social value may mean understanding what produces the social value creation and the events that disrupt the process and lead to a major restructuring of the ingredients.

For the example of immigrant beggars, the conjunction of several ingredients that form the context, temporalities and events explain the two turning points from the lives of immigrants. The improper living conditions together with the context which sets the ‘stage’ of social value creation, start the actual process of creating value. An unpredictable event, the launch of Migranter Projektet Vinternatt, influences the way immigrants live and shifts the way they look upon their well-being. This is the point which ‘starts’ the social value creation process, the decisive point which gives the trajectory of the story.

Another turning point is the unpredictable threats towards the Romanians and the fight for begging spots, apparently unconnected with the process of creating value. This events result in a shift of the perceptual judgement of well-being of immigrants: focused in sequence two on finding alternatives to begging, now they are concerned about their safety, concern which brings unpleasant feelings. Interesting here is how the process of creating value is disturbed by these events, which actually drive to an intensification of value creation in the afterward sequence.

Identifying the turning points of the process offers a clear picture of the elements that contribute or not to social value creation. They also prove the ‘deep’ of the change and offer an explanation of why the process took a specific direction. To note here is the importance of these turning points in the social value creation process: the effect they produce would not have been the same in a different context at a different time.

Concluding remarks

Regardless the importance of setting the context and enhancing the complexities within which the social value creation takes place, exploring the phenomenon by the means of well-being is based on a subjective valuation. Assessing the value created by comparing the current situation of the people with what they should have or do may lead to a misinterpretation of the contribution of volunteering.
programs to society as shown in our examples. How much value a volunteering program creates for its beneficiaries depends on individuals’ perception of what is a ‘good life’.

Social value, when associated with well-being, suggests that there is a status that can be accomplished, ‘being’. However, how people define well-being depends on how people perceive the quality of their lives, which is centered in individuals’ assessment of priorities (White, 2010). Understanding how social value is created by exploring beneficiaries’ perspectives implies not only understanding how they feel, think and act, but also what makes them feel and act in certain ways.

The constellation of the dynamic interaction between different events embedded in a context influences individuals’ assessment of well-being. How people perceive their well-being at a certain point in time is affected by their previous experiences which give sense to their thoughts. The way people’s lives change is clearer if we understand the movement and the driving forces that lead to their life improvements. Though, in the value creation process, radical shifts of direction might occur as a result of unpredictable events, which shape the way individuals perceive their well-being and set their priorities.
Conclusion

Given the importance of the voluntary sector in today’s society towards poverty alleviation, it is obvious that voluntary programs contribute to individuals’ well-being and create social value. Still, the concept of social value is under-researched. The aim of this thesis was, therefore, to enhance the understanding of social value creation by exploring beneficiaries’ perspectives.

The characteristics of social value as “subjective, malleable, and variable” concept (Mulgan, 2010:38) made us depart from a subjective assessment of well-being of individuals. Instead of focusing on what people should have and be able to do, this research explored how individuals perceive well-being in terms of what they think, feel and act with respect to what they have and do. However, the context-based characteristics of social value together with the subjectivity of individuals in assessing value (Auerswald, 2009) called for a different approach to enhance the subject. As every social phenomenon, social value is an on-going process dependent on the context and its evolution through time (Bidart, Longo and Mendez, 2012). Hence, our processual approach of studying the social value creation phenomenon as a subjective assessment of beneficiaries.

Considering the context, individuals, organizations and events that take place simultaneously and the way they develop through time offers a better understanding of how social value is created. As our study showed, the process of social value creation is not a linear one, and cannot be resumed to ‘cause-effect’. Dating and linking different ingredients, ordering them in sequences and identifying the driving forces and turning points offer a complex story of how the well-being of individuals develops through time (McGregor, 2007), thereby a better understanding of social value creation. Most important here are the context and the time which set the stage of the story and its temporality. These two aspects reveal how people perceive well-being and explain the rationality behind it, and displays how their perceptual judgments change over time. It also uncovers the motives people feel, think and act in a certain manner and the implications of this.

However, it is worth to notice that de-constructing the social value creation process is not a common way to study the phenomenon. Separating temporarily the four conceptual pillars from each other gives meaning to the individuals’ judgment of well-being by shedding light on the combination of factors that influences their assessment. Nevertheless, only by deploying jointly the process in its entirety we can better understand how social value is created. Therefore, the social value creation process could be illustrated as a story.
What we can learn from our collaborative fieldwork is that understanding the social value created by voluntary programs or any other organization from an ‘outsider’ perspective might be counter-productive. How can we possibly know what people need to make them feel happy and what will be relevant when we consider social value creation as an ongoing and unfolding process? Every process of creating social value is unique and needs to be understood in its own way. Understanding how and why people think, feel and act in certain manners enhance our comprehension about social value concept.

By this we mean that engaging in fieldwork by approaching the subject from an ‘insider’ perspective gives new glasses to social value creation concept. This is also of high importance for practitioners who want to understand the difference made by their organizations and how they could improve their practices. For instance, before meeting the Romanian beggars, our reflection upon the effort made by volunteers and EU-Migranter Projektet Vintternat was limited at meeting the basic needs human beings have. During the fieldwork, we realized that for the Romanian immigrants a shelter is the place which gives them hope and dreams, while the access to sanitation increases their self-esteem.

Creating social value, therefore, goes hand in hand with understanding the perspective of beneficiaries upon the nature of well-being, which implies that, consciously, we have to build relations based on trust with the people in the field. In other words, to understand the social value created by voluntary programs requires an understanding of people, moments and contexts and how this constellation evolves through time.

Further research of the study

There are several aspects which are not considered within this study and may represent topics for further research. First, we delimited the study of social value creation in terms of well-being, due to the nature of our empirical findings. However, the definition of social value also comprises social capital and environment, areas that present potential for further research. Second, this research considers only the social value created from the beneficiaries’ perspectives, while an area for further research could be the perspectives of other stakeholders such as volunteers.

Third, during the fieldwork, we observed that Romanians also contributed to the creation of value by bringing new ideas, skills, and resources, aspect which is not emphasized in this research and may represent a potential field for further research within the social value creation subject. Fourth,
as the study was conducted by the use of an ethnographic methodology, the time dedicated to the fieldwork plays an important role on the validity of the data; even if in our study clear trends that suggested the saturation of data collection emerged, an extended length of the study may reveal new ingredients that were passive during our research but might become active afterwards.
References


Electronic sources


The Local, (2014 April 08) ‘Sweden cares more for beggars than Romania’, The Local, Retrieved 6 April 2015, available on internet: http://www.thelocal.se/20140408/we-have-more-empathy-for-beggars-than-romania


Appendix 1: Literature review - relevance tree

How social value is created for beneficiaries?

- Social Value Creation
  - Definition
  - Well-being

- Subjective Well-Being
  - Definition / perspective
  - Dimensions
    - Affective
    - Cognitive

- Evaluating SWB
  - Context and ingredients
  - Sequences
  - Driving forces
  - Turning points

Source: Own production, 2015
Appendix 2: The key factors of subjective well-being

- **The material** concerns practical welfare and standards of living.
  - Objective aspects include:
    - income, wealth, and assets
    - employment and livelihood activities
    - levels of consumption.
  - Subjective aspects include:
    - satisfaction with income and wealth
    - assessment of one’s standard of living compared with others’
    - assessment of present standard of living compared with past.

- **The social** concerns social relations and access to public goods.
  - Objective aspects include:
    - social, political, and cultural identities
    - violence, conflict, and (in)security
    - relations with the state: law, politics, welfare
    - access to services and amenities
    - networks of support and obligation
    - environmental resources.
  - Subjective aspects include:
    - perceptions of safety, respect, and discrimination
    - dissatisfaction with access to services
    - assessment of treatment/support given or received
    - perceptions of environmental quality.

- **The human** concerns capabilities, attitudes to life, and personal relationships.
  - Objective aspects include:
    - household structure and composition
    - education, information, and skills
    - physical health and (dis)ability
    - relations of love and care.
  - Subjective aspects include:
    - dissatisfaction with levels of health, information, skills, education
    - self-concept and personality
    - sense of competence, (in) capability, and scope for influence
    - trust and confidence
    - religious faith.

Source: White, 2010
Appendix 3: Agreement of confidentiality during research project

Uppsala University
MSc Economics and Business Administration
Sustainable Management

Agreement of confidentiality during research project

The agreement involves that the parties commit themselves to keep students work confidential also after the termination of the cooperation.

Visby, on the _________________________ the above agreement of confidentiality has been entered into between, as the one party:

Student Uppsala:  
____ Inne Eva Jenko_____________  ____ Charles Follet_____________  
____ Solberga gatan 16B, Visby, Sweden____  ____ Solberga gatan 16B, Visby, Sweden____

Supervisor Uppsala:  
____ Jenny Heim_____________  ____ Fredrik Sjostrand___________  
____ Crampérgatan 3, Visby, Sweden____  ____ Crampérgatan 3, Visby, Sweden____

and the following organization as the other party:


15.01.2015
Appendix 4: Researchers’ journals

Charles Follet Journal

March 5, 2015
A Spanish woman been rude with me "F*ck you, go back in your country" = Hard conditions of begging...

March 18, 2015 (Morning)
Red Cross meeting, topic: "Rights for refugees" to refugee family upset about family living at the Plaza (of course serious this time)
* Big meeting tonight Red Cross 18.00 everyone

March 18, 2015 (Evening)
Red Cross - Around 18:00s everyone there
Leve (and new guys on the left) the other on his right - Tension, do they feel comfortable...
* Police was at the meeting. (good)
* Fight again no one edition
* 23:00 and meeting no needed next to be (continued)
Eva Ianko Journal

TUESDAY 24/4/2015 evening
We brought Edward to sleep at the shelter. He was better now.
Everybody punched.
They thought he wanted to take their spots. I was sure and gave him food.

SATURDAY 21/11/2015 evening
Hella Holland newspaper
so interested in the shelter
talked to l. 81 - 81 - 81..."
In check newspaper in few days
Jennifer showed them the rooms also.
Appendix 5: Fieldwork activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee(s)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elin</td>
<td>12 Jan 2015</td>
<td>Individual interview</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurelia</td>
<td>16 Jan 2015</td>
<td>Individual interview</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>17 Jan 2015</td>
<td>Individual interview</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elin</td>
<td>12 Mar 2015</td>
<td>Individual interview</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Maria</td>
<td>12 Mar 2015</td>
<td>Individual interview</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornel</td>
<td>04 Apr 2015</td>
<td>Individual interview</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorel, Andrea, Manuel</td>
<td>06 Apr 2015</td>
<td>Group interview</td>
<td>Romanians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miruna, Ilie, Camelia and Viorel</td>
<td>06 Apr 2015</td>
<td>Group interview</td>
<td>Romanians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romeo</td>
<td>23 Apr 2015</td>
<td>Individual interview</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own production, 2015
Appendix 6: Interview guide

Main themes for conversation with immigrant beggars

- **Situation back in Romania**
  - Basic needs perspective (i.e. living conditions)
  - Income perspective
  - Capabilities (empowerment) perspective (i.e. education)
- **Migration**
  - Basic needs perspective in host country (i.e. living conditions)
  - Income perspective
  - Psychological needs perspective
- **Shelter**
  - Psychological needs/fulfillment
  - Physical needs/fulfillment
- **Begging**
  - Psychological condition
  - Physical condition
- **Jobs/Magazines/street market**
  - Basic needs perspective (life improvement – psychological and physical)
  - Income perspective
  - Capabilities (empowerment) perspective (i.e. education)

Main themes for conversation with Migranter Projektet Vinternatt participants

- Gotland Solidaritet/ Migranter Projektet Vinternatt formation
- Motivation to volunteer/ help immigrant beggars
- Current situation of the immigrant beggars from Gotland (i.e. living conditions, number of people, shelter locations)
- Organizational and management aspects
Appendix 7: Informed consent for interviews

Uppsala University
MSc Economics and Business Administration
Sustainable Management

Informed Consent for Interviews

I, ______________________________________, agree to be interviewed for the project entitled __________________________ which is being produced by __________________________ of Uppsala University.

I certify that I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this project and the anonymity of my participation; that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning project procedures and other matters, and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without prejudice.

I agree to participate in one or more electronically recorded interviews for this project. I understand that such interviews and related materials will be kept completely anonymous, and that the results of this study will be published in an academic report.

I agree that any information obtained from this research may be used in any way thought best for this study.

Uppsala University
MSc Economics and Business Administration
Sustainable Management
Eu, ______________________________________, sunt de acord sa fiu interviu(ata) pentru urmatorul proiect __________________________ care va fi produs de ________________ de la Uppsala University.

Certific ca am s-a spus de confidentialitatea informatiilor colectate pentru acest proiect si de participarea mea anumita; ca am primit raspunsuri satisfacatoare la intrebările mele cu privire la procedurile de proiect si alte aspecte; si ca am fost informat(ata) ca sunt liber(a) sa mi retrag consimtamantul si sa intreup participarea la proiect in orice moment fara a aduce prejudicii.

Sunt de acord sa particap in unul sau mai multe interviuri inregistrate electronice pentru acest proiect. Inteleg ca astfel de interviuri si materiale vor fi păstrate complet anumite, si ca rezultatele acestui studiu vor fi publicate intr-un raport academic.

Sunt de acord ca orice informație obținută prin acest studiu poate fi folosită în orice mod considerat cel mai bun pentru studiu.

Signature of Interviewee/Semnatura persoanei intervievate Date/Date

__________________________________________  __________________________

xv
Appendix 8: Shelter journal

23/12 Morgon
Dugn Morgon. Alla har gått vid

23/12 kväll

D och J har rest tillbaka

till Rumänien, även R. Lugt mycket god mat lagas och hjälps

25/12 Morgon

Väcker någalopp Morgon med ett

litet torkt lager snö på marken...

Låp i spisen och det börjar rosa

på sig uppe... Tarbass och städning

av rom... Men är nog sköta snäll

i dag... Ingen behöver byta rom.

om dom inte ber om det... Åker

tillbaka till grän efter 14 och

lägger för omöjlig inför kvällen

från 15 på däten.

God jul, Jackye. Magna Marre.

På gyllar inte att det dukas upp in

massa mat som ingen känner ansvar för...

Bordet fullt med mat som börde vara

i kjullen... låter stå! kanske försvinner...
Appendix 9: To be born poor is not a choice - the story of Aurelia, 16 Jan 2015

All migrants have the same explanation while asked why they traveled to another country to beg. ‘I have nothing at home, that’s why I came here’. This is how a migrant beggar story begins.

Poor people from Romania mainly live in remote areas, where infrastructure and social services lack. Horses and donkey are almost the only source of transportation while running water system is either not available or precarious. The agricultural activities are the only source of food for the rural poor, while resources are limited. The deprived quality of roads directly affects people’ access to proper education and healthcare system, while employment opportunities are limited because of low qualifications and occupational status. Most of the indigenous are illiterate and unemployed, depending on government support and day labor work.

For them, the easiest way of escaping poverty is to leave their homes and search for better opportunities overseas. Migrating towards other places seems to be the best guarantee for a better life: no matter if they find a job or beg on the streets of foreign countries, the living conditions cannot be worse than home.

* * *

Aurelia is one of the people who decided to leave Romania to search for something better in Gotland. It is her second time in Sweden: she has been on Gotland during the summer of 2014, left after three months and came back in autumn, same year. She left her home country because of the poor living conditions, low income and chance to get a job. Like many other migrants, her aim was to find a place to work, earn some money and send back home, to her ill mother. Unfortunately, her dream did not come true: she is one of the beggars that live on the mercy of Gotlandic people.

We met Aurelia for the first time in mid-January, at the shelter. She was sturdily built, with curly long hair and brown eyes through which you could read the sadness and feel the pain. Like many other people form the shelter, she looked even older than she really was; the difficult situation from home, together with the cold temperatures and rough wind from the streets left a mark on her. When we met Aurelia, her story was already familiar to us: we knew she comes from a numerous family, with very low income and poor living conditions back in Romania, with unsafe access to water and
no sanitation system, like many other beggars that live on Gotland. However, we knew that four of her sisters and brothers are also on the island, together with their husbands and wives, counting more than half of the total number of homeless foreigners from the island at that time. This attracted our attention and we started to be impatient to know more about her and her family story.

Her friendly personality allowed us to get close very quickly. Only after one week of regular visits at the shelter we dared to ask for a private conversation. She told us she was born and raised in a poor family in Micești, together with other 10 brothers and sisters. She has been in school until the age of 11, like most of her siblings. Because of the miserable living condition, she was unable to continue.

It was far and one had to pay for transportation, books. I did not even have money for a sandwich. School was nice, but the days when I was going to school, I had to walk around seven km one way and seven km to return. You were looking at other kids, who had money for sandwich, sweets… I was leaving home at 11 in the morning and returning in the evening, around seven without eating anything the whole day.

Back home, she lives with her husband, mother, one of her brothers, his wife and the little ones, a sister and her three sons, all at the same residence. The family shares two rooms and one kitchen; they have access to water but no sanitation system. They use to work most of the time during the summer, as daily workers.

We (referring to her family members) do not even receive social benefits… In order to receive social benefits, you need to have your own residence, a house, some land… We tried to obtain benefits once, but the social worker told us she cannot finalize the file because ‘we have no role, no nothing’. So I did not receive anything… My mother receives a pension fund as a successor of my father, around 200 RON$9.

She paused dramatically and took a deep breath. We dared to ask how they manage to survive with such a low amount of money.

We made soup, other things… at the country side, you find vegetables in the garden… we managed with what God gave us. We also performed daily jobs to the neighbors in summer. Everyone contributes. We eat together. My brother comes and brings a plate of food, my sister also. All of us. Everyone gives whatever he has… we all contribute and we buy food together. Like here. This is how it is. No matter if we are rich, poor, and even poorer than we are now, we will always be siblings.

9 the equivalent of 425 SEK
Aurelia was willing to talk about everything; she obviously enjoyed telling her own story and seemed to have nothing to hide. For us, it became clear the reason why she is here, on Gotland.

Nobody hires me, as I only went to school for five years. In order to get hired in Romania, you need a university degree; you need to have a qualification. Otherwise nobody will pay attention to you, not even to sweep the streets. You need at least 10-12 years of education. Yes, I tried, I went to the city (referring to Pitești), checked several places, I was thinking I could work at the garbage removal company. Same story, they did not take me, as they required at least 10 years of education. I wanted to sweep the streets, but same story; they asked for the 10 years of education diploma. So I said to myself I should try to come here (referring to Gotland), maybe it will be better. This is why I came. Anyway, I have nothing in Romania. This is why I came. I could not allow my mother to support me anymore. For how long? She is old, she is 65 years old… I said to myself that I do not want to depend on her anymore. I said to myself that, with God’s will, if I make enough money for food, at least I have food on the table in the evening. So I will not need to ask my mother give me, give me… It’s a different thing to be independent, not to depend on my mother anymore.

That evening after the conversation with Aurelia we came back home. Both of us were moved: for Aurelia, to be born poor means to live in miserable living conditions, no chance to education, social services and employment. Her motivation to escape poverty made her come to Gotland and ask for help to pedestrians.
## Appendix 10: Main themes analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Antagonist</th>
<th>Pleasant affects</th>
<th>Unpleasant affects</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>Gotland Solidaritet +</td>
<td>Miruna, Ilie, Camelia, Viorel, Mariana, Nadia</td>
<td>Happiness/contentment “Our living standards... our living conditions are much better.” (Camelia)</td>
<td>Contrast to shelter Sadness/ashamed &quot;We are really grateful we do not have to live in cars anymore, without the minimum hygiene, without clean clothes and so on... We had no way to cook some food” (Miruna)</td>
<td>Current life satisfaction “Yes look, we are living better, we feel better. People look at us differently. We have what to eat. Especially now: we have where to sleep, we have where to wash” (Miruna)</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2015</td>
<td>Physical Begging</td>
<td>The local</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Physical pain &quot;the hips ache, the back becomes stiff and the legs sore. One must be prepared to “adjust the body to lessen the pain” (the local)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Physical Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2015</td>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>Andrea Marius</td>
<td>Pride/contentment “It is much better when you do something [else] than begging. Everything</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Current life satisfaction “It feels very good that now we can sell this. It is much better than sitting out in the</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Anger/anxiety/worry</td>
<td>Current life satisfaction</td>
<td>Desire to change life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2015</td>
<td>Psychical Begging</td>
<td>Volunteers Romanian</td>
<td>“but suddenly everything turned around and the ‘brawl’ about the spots from the city started again”(shelter journal)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2015</td>
<td>Jobs/Market</td>
<td>Tavi Romeo</td>
<td>In contrast with job ashamed/sadness “When I was sitting down, I was doing it because I had to. The need will push you to sit down […]Sitting down, you humiliate yourself” (Romeo)</td>
<td>Current life satisfaction “Oh, this is very good, to work. Is very, very good. I like to work” (Tavi)</td>
<td>Desire to change life “I will continue finding jobs, perhaps I will get officially hired, with contract, you never know” (Romeo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own production, 2015
Appendix 11: Coding scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFFECT (AF.)</th>
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<th>Negative Affect (N.A)</th>
<th>Life Satisfaction (L.S.)</th>
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</tr>
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Source: Own production, 2015
Appendix 12: Time order display

Source: Own production, 2015
Appendix 13: Logical chain of evidence

**Context one**

**Gotland Solidaritet**
- Poor living condition
- Increase of Romanians
- Fight between Romania
- Camp evictions
- Increase public attention
- Geanina asked for help to Elin

**Winter**

**Migranter Projektet Vinter-natt**

**Turning point**
- Shelter
  - Safety conditions
  - Increase livelihood
  - Happiness
  - Joy
  - Contentment
  - SCL
  - DCL

**Magazines**
- Condition of begging (physical and psychological)
- Marius idea combined with volunteers

**Turning point**
- Magazines
  - Increase incomes
  - Pride
  - Contentment
  - SCL (temporary)

**Fight for spots**
- Fight between Romania
- Camp evictions
- Geanina asked for help to Elin

**New comers**
- Marius idea combined with volunteers
- Increase in incomes
- Pride
- Contentment
- SCL (temporary)

**Back to begging**
- Poorness of living condition
- Increase of Romanians
- Increase public attention
- Geanina asked for help to Elin

**Safe ty conditions**
- Increase livelihood
- Happiness
- Joy
- Contentment

**Back to begging**
- Decrease in incomes
- Shame
- Dissatisfaction
- SCL (temporary)

**DCL**

**Legend**

**Legend:**
- SWB affective assessment
- SWB cognitive assessment
- Ingredients
- Action
- Evolutionary driving forces
- Dialectical driving forces
- Teleological driving forces
- Programmatic driving forces

**Source:** Own production, 2015