

Vulnerabilities and Resources of Central and Eastern European Homeless People Living in Geneva and Zurich

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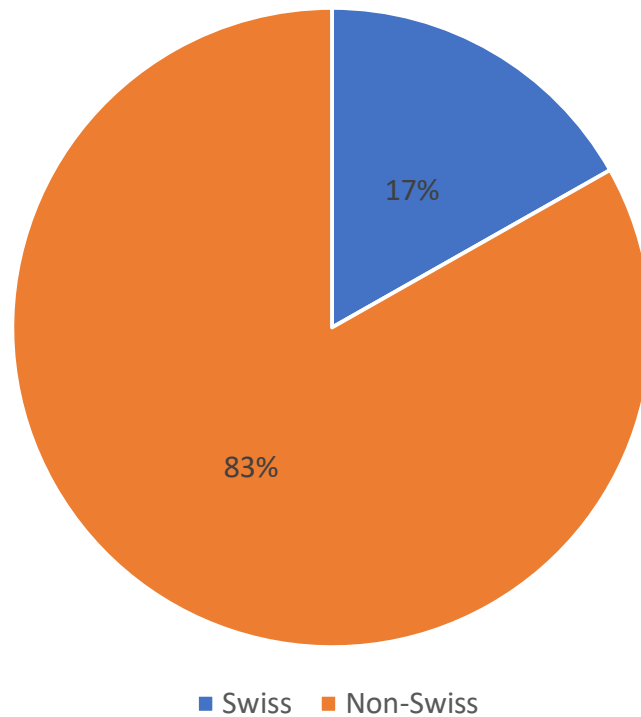
FEANTSA Research Conference, Bergamo, 22-23. September 2022

Focus of the study:
The Central and
Eastern European
region

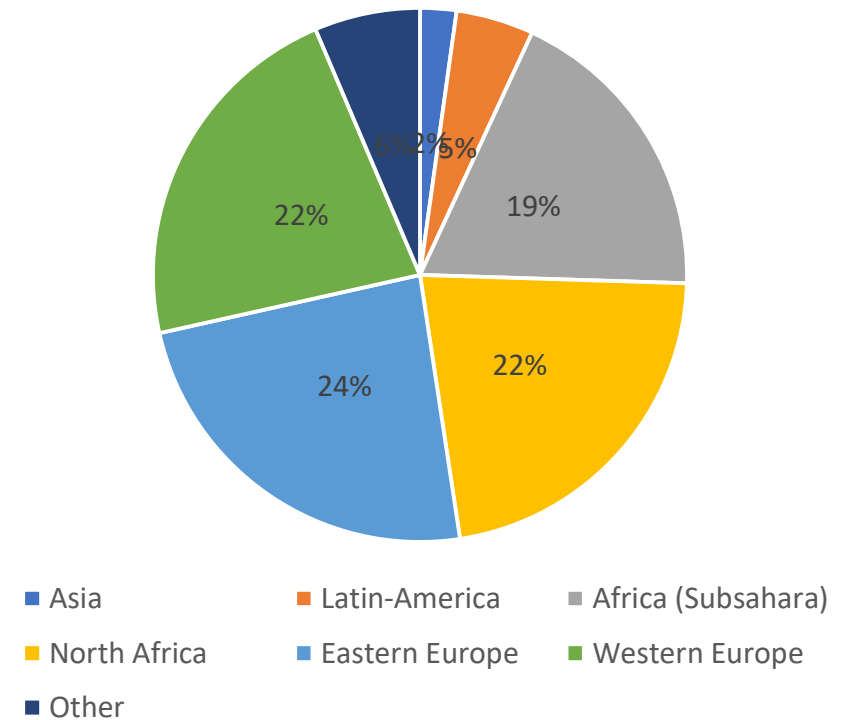


Migrating homeless people in Switzerland

Proportion of Swiss and non-Swiss homeless people (n=543)



Origin of non-Swiss homeless people (n=452)



Goals of the research project «Routes into Destitution»

- To identify **vulnerabilities and resources in the life-course** of destitute CEE migrants living in Switzerland
- To identify **coping strategies** that contribute to overcome homelessness
- To discover the **responses of the Swiss social welfare system** regarding homelessness and migration from EU/EFTA countries





Target group

- **CEE citizenship**: Citizens of one of the EU/EFTA member CEE countries
- **Sans-Papiers**: Without Swiss residency permit
- **Homelessness**: based on the ETHOS categories

Special legal conditions

- **3 months of stay** is allowed for CEE citizens without a residence permit
- After 3 months they **must clarify the reason of stay** and apply to a permit
- Without labour and housing contracts their **claims are rejected**
- Without papers they are **not eligible for most social and medical services**

Ausländerausweis
Livret pour étrangers
Libretto per stranieri



Applied methods

Research approaches and methods

- Basic research with mixed methods
- Ethnographic & anthropological research perspectives
- Expert-Interviews (16 interviews in 2 cities)
- Biographical-narrative Interviews (40 Interviews in 2 cities)
- Vulnerability scale to explore hidden dimensions (100 questionnaires in 2 cities)

Life-History Calendars_Zürich.xlsx - Zuletzt geändert: 17. Februar

Start Einfügen Seitenlayout Formeln Daten Überprüfen Ansicht Hilfe Acrobat

Calibri 10 A⁺ A⁻ Standard Bedingte Formatierung Einfügen Σ ZY

F K U A Zellen Bearbeiten Analyse

1. Residency and housing conditions

2. Work and education

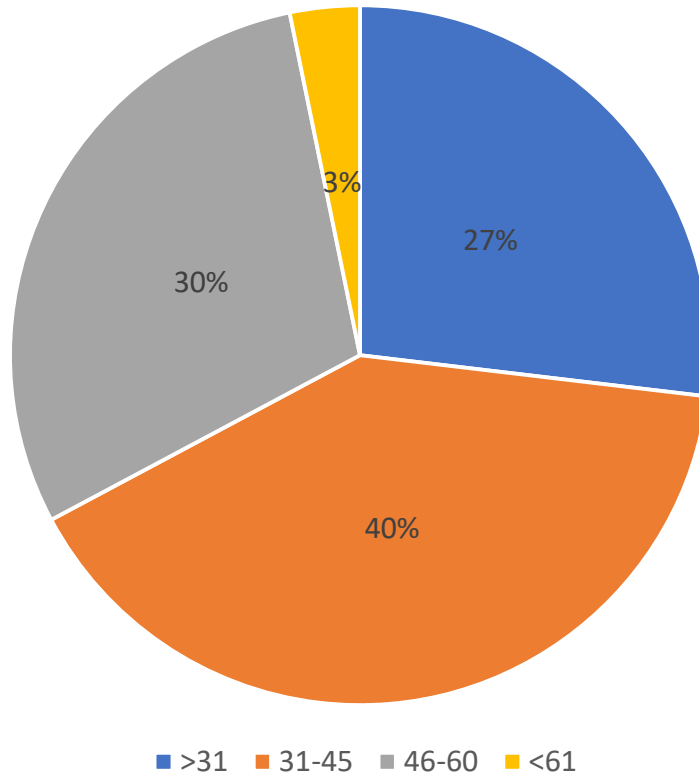
1.1 Country (CH: canton initials)	1.2 City/village	1.3 Type of housing	1.4 Residential instability (if yes, check the box)			1.5 Residence permit (CH)	1.6 Nationality(ies)	1.7 Staying/residing out of Switzerland, while the centre of living was in CH (> 3 months)	2.1 Occupation and education training/school
		1- own flat/house 2-with family 3-with friends/other persons 4-other (precise)	emergency and residential shelter	"Sofa surfing" at family/friends	inadequate housing (squat, garage, camping)	happened to sleep rough	1- CH citizen 2- C Permit 3- B Permit 4- N Permit 5- L Permit 6- No permit		
Switzerland (CH)	Düsseldorf	1- own flat/house	x						
Germany	Cologne	3 (new girlfriend)		x					Working at constructions Quit business because of debts
		4 (homeless)			x				
		1 (own home GER, Kassel)							Own company (laundry and drying)

ZH9_Ariana | ZH10_Elek | ZH11_George | ZH12_Christiano | **ZH13_Montu** | ZH9_Ariana (6)

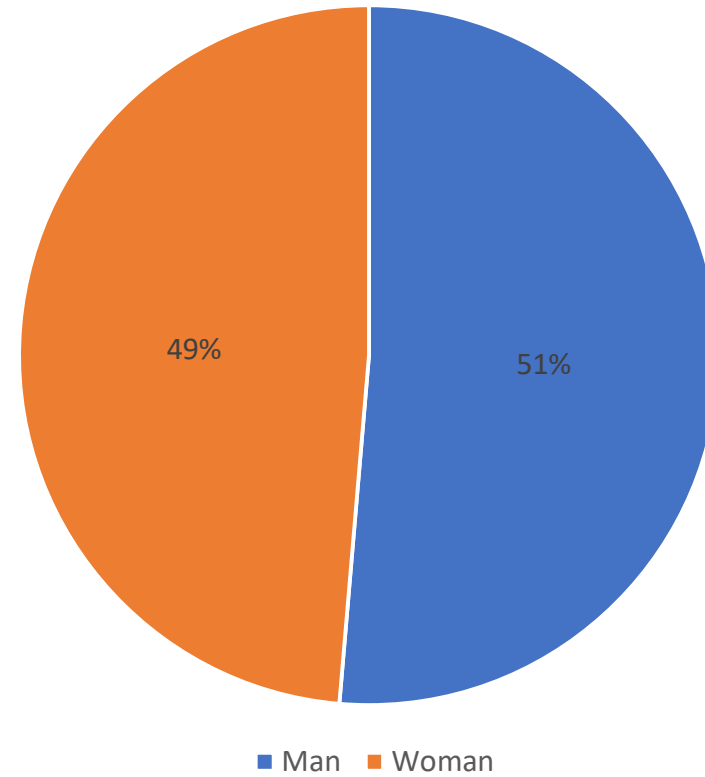
Seite 1

Sociodemographic characteristics

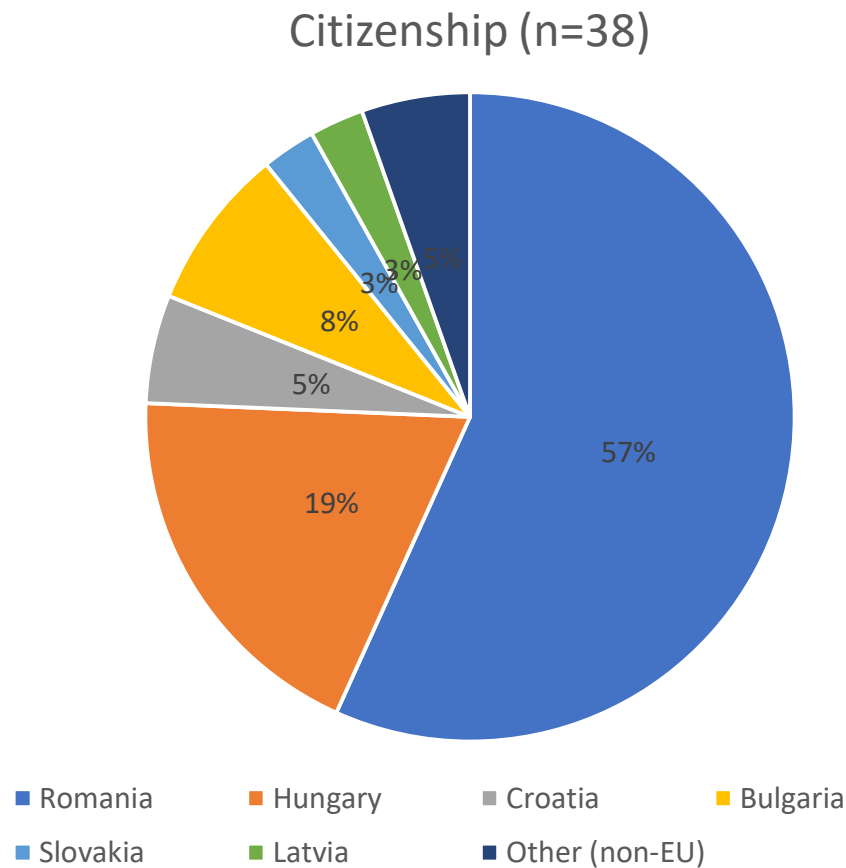
Age groups (n=38)



Gender (n=38)



Sociodemographic characteristics

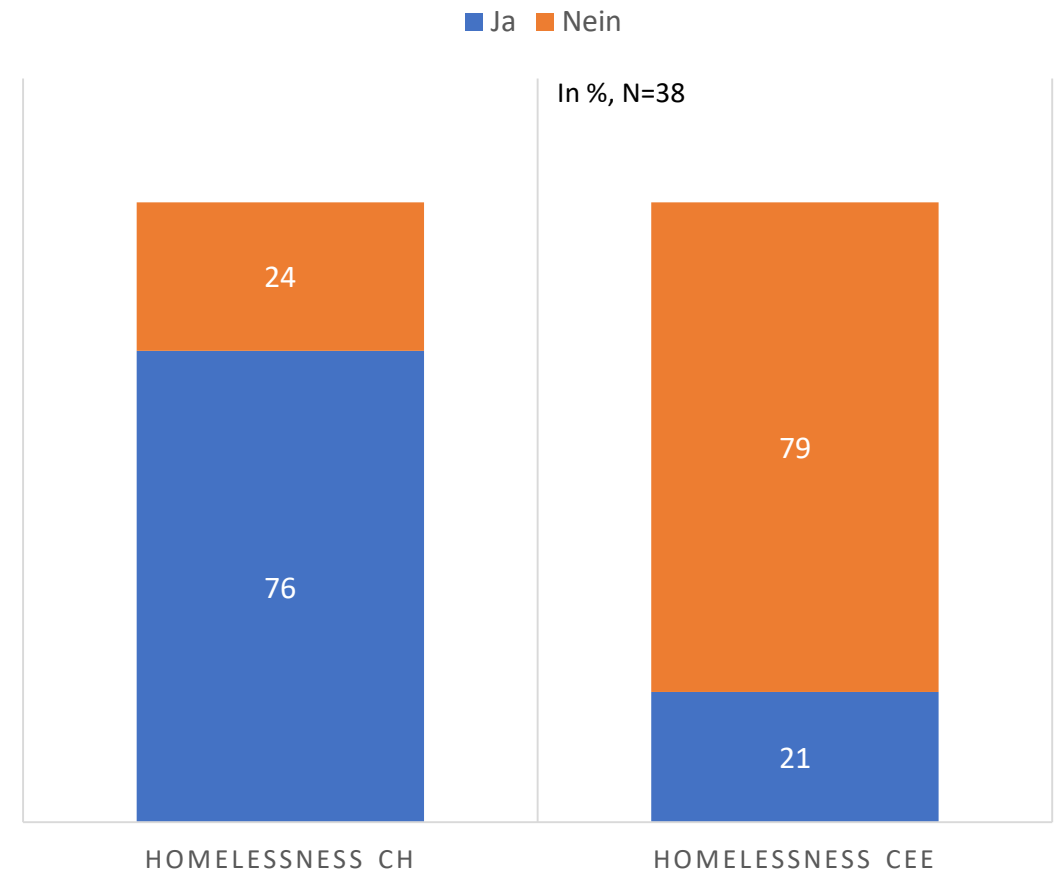


- The vast majority (57%) of destitute CEE migrants **arrived from Romania**
- They are **significantly younger** compared to the whole homeless population
- **Roma (63%) are significantly overrepresented** among the homeless migrants
- **4 of 5 people (82%) were undocumented**
- More than **half (58%)** of the poor wanderers **were single**
- **Women are overrepresented** compared to the “Swiss” homeless

Experience with homelessness in Switzerland and the home countries

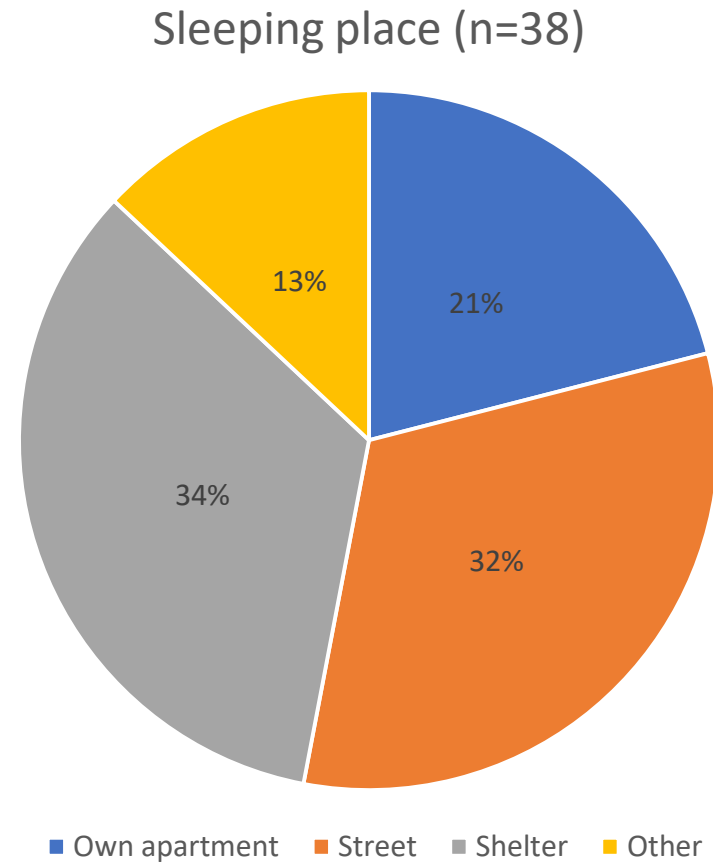
I was in Budapest, because there is no social system in Győr. In Budapest I lived on the street and in homeless shelters when I could get in. (Attila, 49, Hungary)

I lived on the streets of Bucharest as a street child. It was bad. There were a lot of people using drugs. (George, 21, Romania)



Homelessness in Zurich and Geneva

- 94% in Geneva and “only” 60% in Zurich identified themselves as **homeless**
- 45% in ZH and 94% in GEN used **homeless shelters**
- 4 of 5 respondents used **outreach services** in both cities
- Third of the respondents had an **own apartment** in home countries



Experience with rough sleeping

*I have a sleeping bag, and if I do not have money for accommodation, I sleep elsewhere, everywhere. It is **better in summer**. I am **afraid sleeping outside**, particularly in the winter. (ZH; Cristiano, 25, Romania)*

*If I have sleep three or four days outside, it won't be shocking. But after that, two weeks, I can't! I just can't! It's **difficult to sleep outside, for a woman, and all alone**, there are tramps who come, people who are on drugs. (GE; Elena, 37, Romania)*

*I live on the street. At midnight, when people go to sleep, I seek a bush or a gateway where I can lay my mattress and I leave early in the morning, so that **people do not even know that I sleep in their doorway at night**. (ZH; Sandor, 43, Slovakia)*

*It is getting colder and darker outside and not too good sleeping on the street. Maybe a night shelter somewhere, **but I do not know where to go and where I can have some help**. (ZH; Christian, 30, Romania)*

SEASONALITY AND VULNERABILITY

GENDER VULNERABILITY

HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS

LACK OF INFORMATION

Experience with living in shelters

I lived in a night shelter called Iglu. I could stay only 10 days at Iglu, and there is another shelter in the city center, where I could sleep for 3 more days. (ZH; Ferenc, 41, Hungary)

LIMITED ACCESS

I have heard about the night shelter for Eastern-European homeless people called Iglu, but it is open only from the 1st of November. I cannot sleep on the street so long. (ZH; Peter, 51, Slovakia)

OR NO ACCESS AT ALL

My belongings disappeared in the shelter and almost everyone there is a drug addict. They often steal to be able to buy drugs. (ZH; Elek, 51, Hungary)

POOR CONDITIONS AT SHELTERS

If there wasn't this shelter, I don't know what we would do! They've taken me in and I hope it lasts a little bit longer. Because otherwise I don't know what would have happened. (GE; Elena, 37, Romania)

UNCERTAINTY

Exploitation and housing usurers

*I was his **slave!** Prepared the dinner, went to bed as he wanted. And if I wasn't happy, sometimes he brought whores, and I had to go out and come back. And **I had no other solution, because of my situation, the lack of permit.** (GE; Dijana, 52, Croatia)*

*This woman accommodated us in an apartment in Leimbach (...). She said **she pays 4000 CHF for the apartment, and we must pay it from now.** Now I know that it was too much money for that flat. (ZH: Tünde, 50, Hungary)*

*He was happy that I slept more in his apartment, but for me it was only **escape from homelessness.** (...) Later he used **my problem** with the sans papier status **against me and abused me.** (ZH; Ariana, 34, Kosovo/Serbia)*

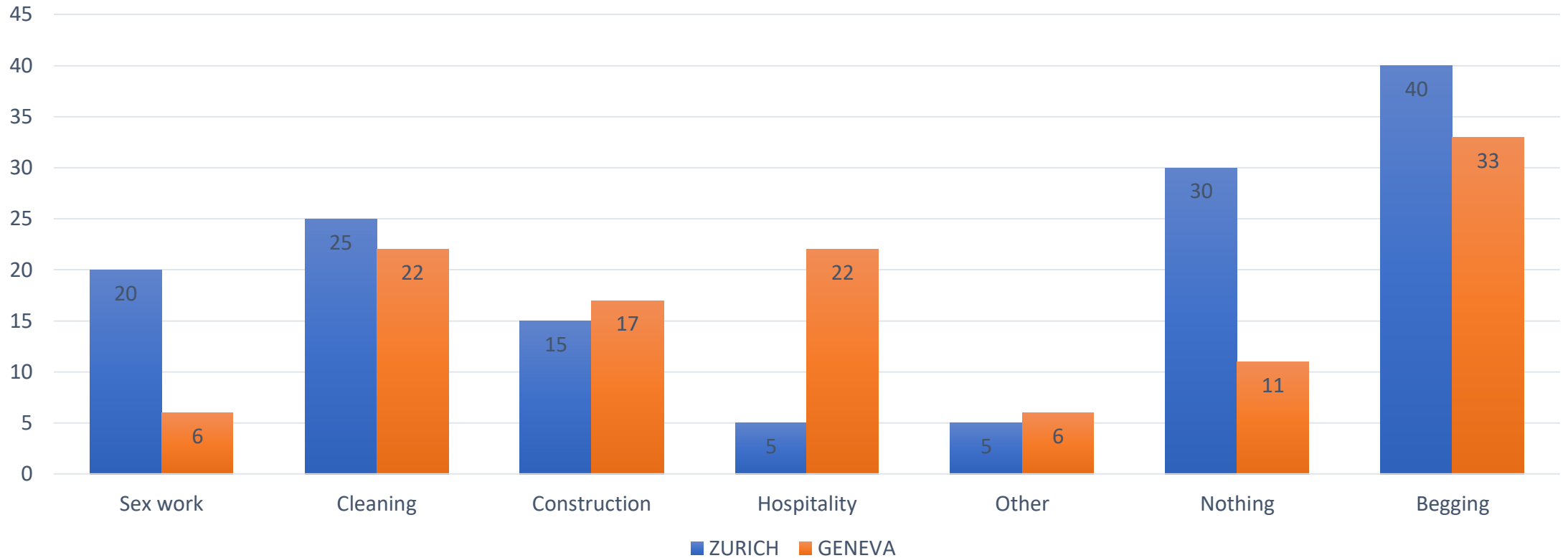
**HUMILIATING CONDITIONS AND
MODERN SLAVERY**

**OVERPRICED APARTMENTS AND
ILLEGAL SUBLETS**

EXPLOITATION OF HOMELESS WOMEN

Employment

Type of activity (% , n=38, cumulated)



Vulnerabilities at employment

I do not have a special qualification. After finishing elementary I had to go to work to support myself and my family. (ZH; Bayram, 43, Kosovo)

POOR QUALIFICATIONS

If I could speak the language better, I would be able to find an organization that would help us. (ZH; Ariane, 34, Kosovo/Serbia)

POOR LANGUAGE SKILLS

There was a possibility at the Zürich Airport, a cleaning position. Only cleaning, but I did not have too much experience and I wasn't admitted. (ZH; Virág, 30, Hungary)

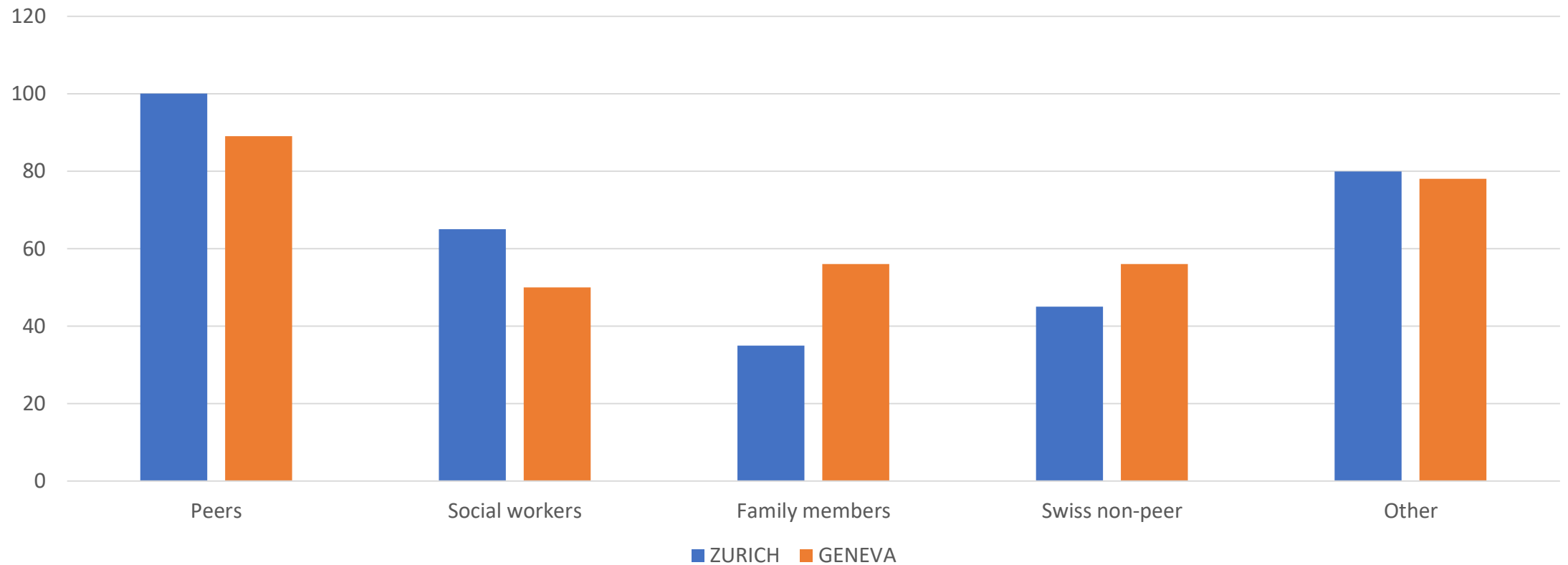
LACK OF EXPERIENCE

What bothers me is the work, the lack of salary. I had a good education in Bulgaria, but I can't utilize it here, I can't realise it. It's hard for me. (GE; Devora, 59, Bulgaria)

QUALIFICATIONS

Social relationships

Daily social relationships with... (% , n=38, cumulated)



Vulnerabilities in social relationships

I came alone and I am still alone. Sleep alone, eat alone and walk alone the whole day long. (ZH; Adrian, 39, Romania)

*I have found some friends. But **they are all homeless people** with a lot of problems. (ZH; Montu, 37, Kosovo/Croatia)*

*Sometimes I call my mother; she is the only one remained me. She is worrying a lot about me and tell me to go home, but **I do not want to be a burden for her.** (ZH; Peter, 52, Slovakia)*

*I still think a lot about my mother, she is always in my head. We talk rarely, and only for 10 minutes. You OK and me Ok, and that is all, **we have nothing to say to each other.** (ZH; Dusan, Bulgaria, 34)*

*I have four children in Romania. They are 20-, 18- and 15-year-olds and the little one is only five. **They are all with my wife in Romania** and attend school. (ZH; David, 50, Romania)*

***I don't ask [social workers] for help.** All the people who work in social work **don't help us, the Roma.** We have to manage on our own. (GE; Marian, 44, Romania)*

LONELINESS

ONLY THE PEER GROUP

BURDEN FOR THE FAMILY

WEAKENING RELATIONSHIPS

CHILDREN REMAIN AT HOME

MISTRUST/DISCRIMINATION

Summary

- The “**poorest among the poor**” (Sen 1976) – revival of destitution in Switzerland
- **Extreme poverty in the home countries** lies behind migration-related decisions
- **Homelessness in CH**, but not in the home countries
- **Accessibility of shelters** is much better in Geneva
- Most of the CEE homeless are **active in the Swiss labour market**
- **Social relationships are limited to the peer group**
- “**Higher-level relationships**” are mostly with social workers



THANK YOU FOR YOUR
KIND ATTENTION!



Website:

www.obdachlosigkeit.ch