



Intergenerational relationships in ageing societies

Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam

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**ECE Working Group on Ageing
Geneva, November 23-24, 2009**



Generations &
Gender Programme



Three key premises

- ❖ **population ageing affects people of all ages**
- ❖ **there are critical interdependencies between family generations and between men and women which are built and reinforced by social policies**
- ❖ **to understand intergenerational interdependencies, a range of levels must be distinguished and recognized**



Findings from



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- ❖ Generations and Gender Programme (ggp-i.org)
- ❖ MULTILINKS, an FP-7 project focusing on multiple linkages in families, across time, and across levels (multilinks-project.eu)



multilinks



Demography of intergenerational family relationships

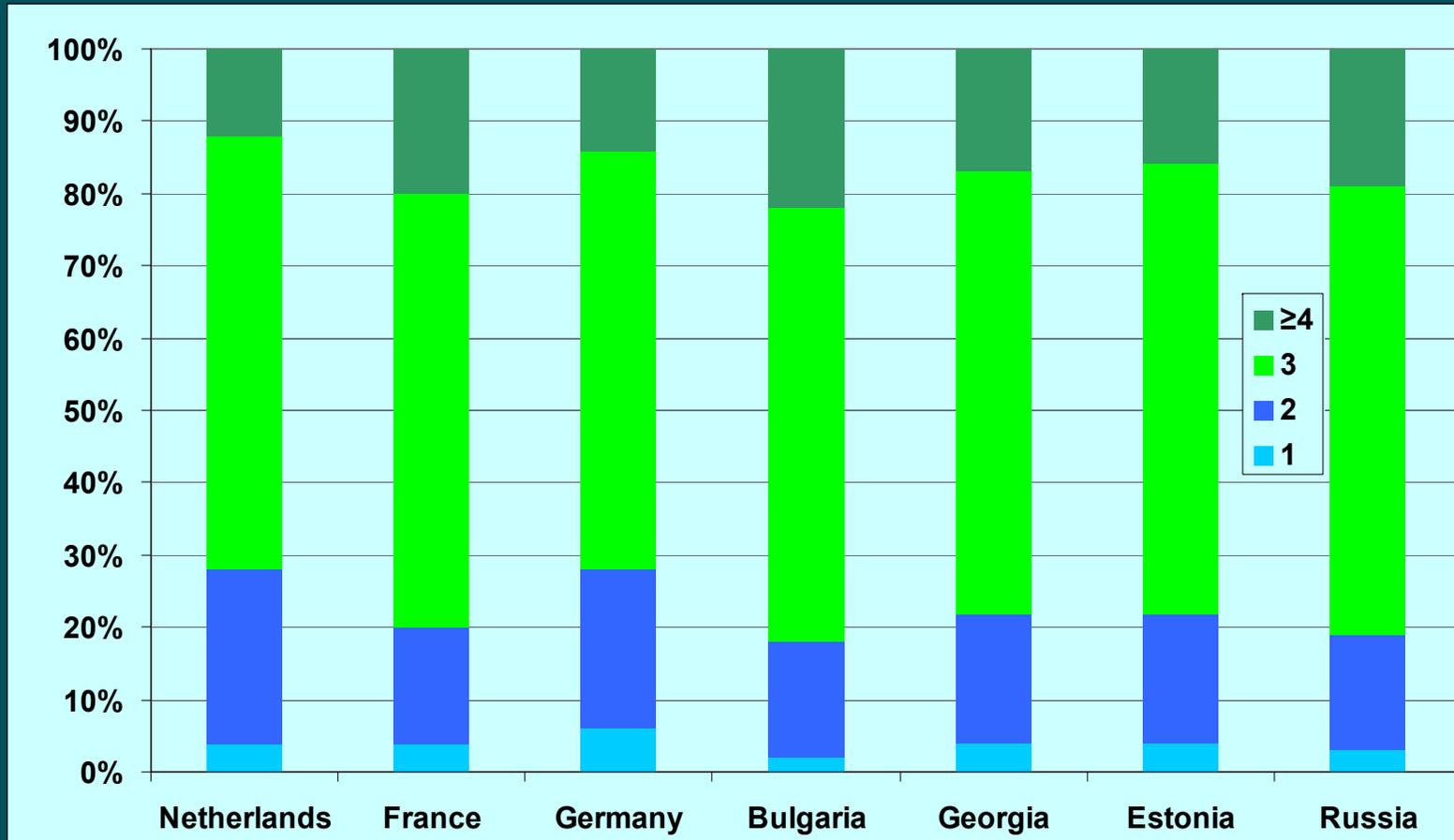
❖ **three-generation families are the norm**



Mean number of family generations, GGP countries



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Demography of intergenerational family relationships

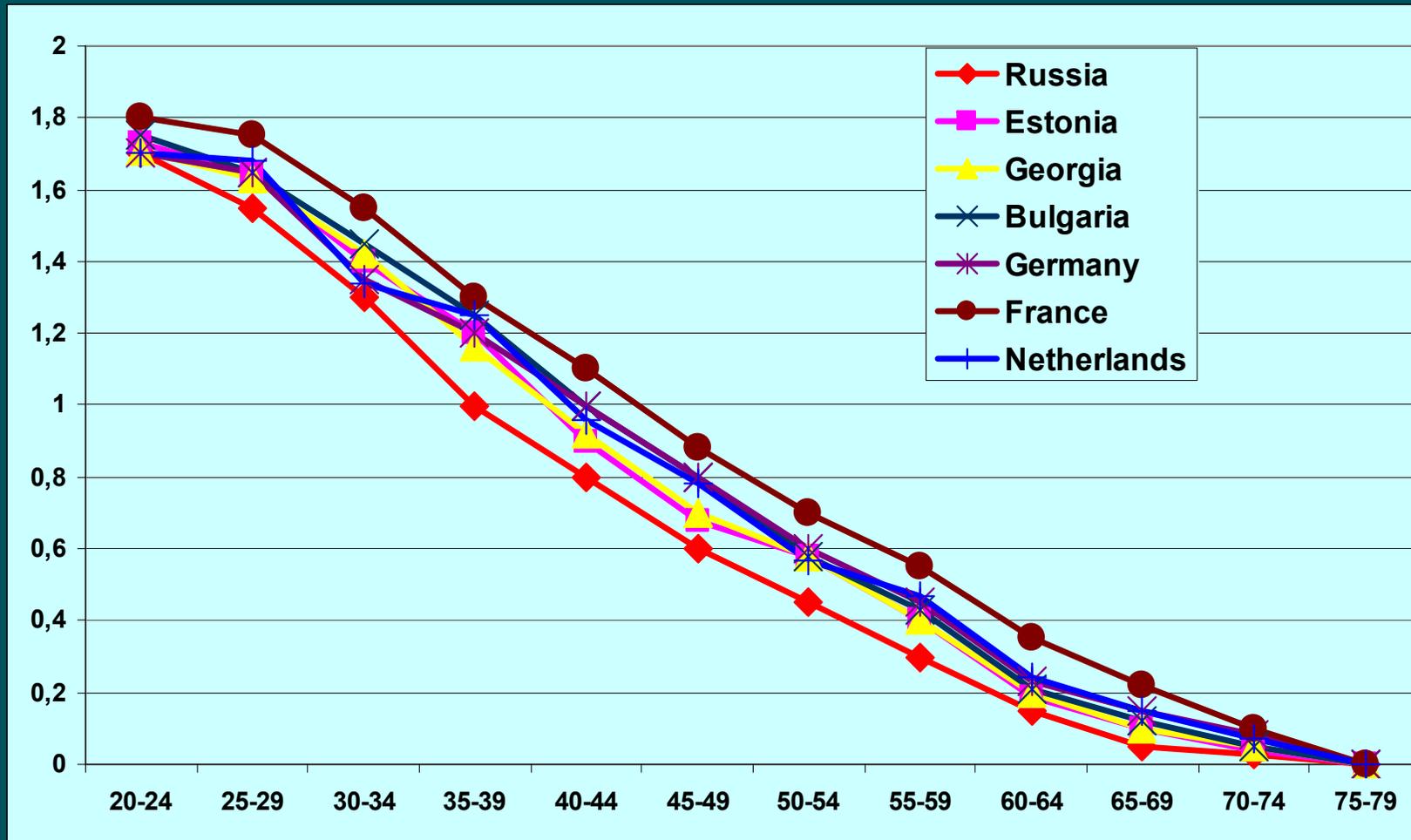
- ❖ **three-generation families are the norm**
- ❖ **opposing effects of increased longevity and postponed childbearing**



Mean number of ascending family generations, GGP countries



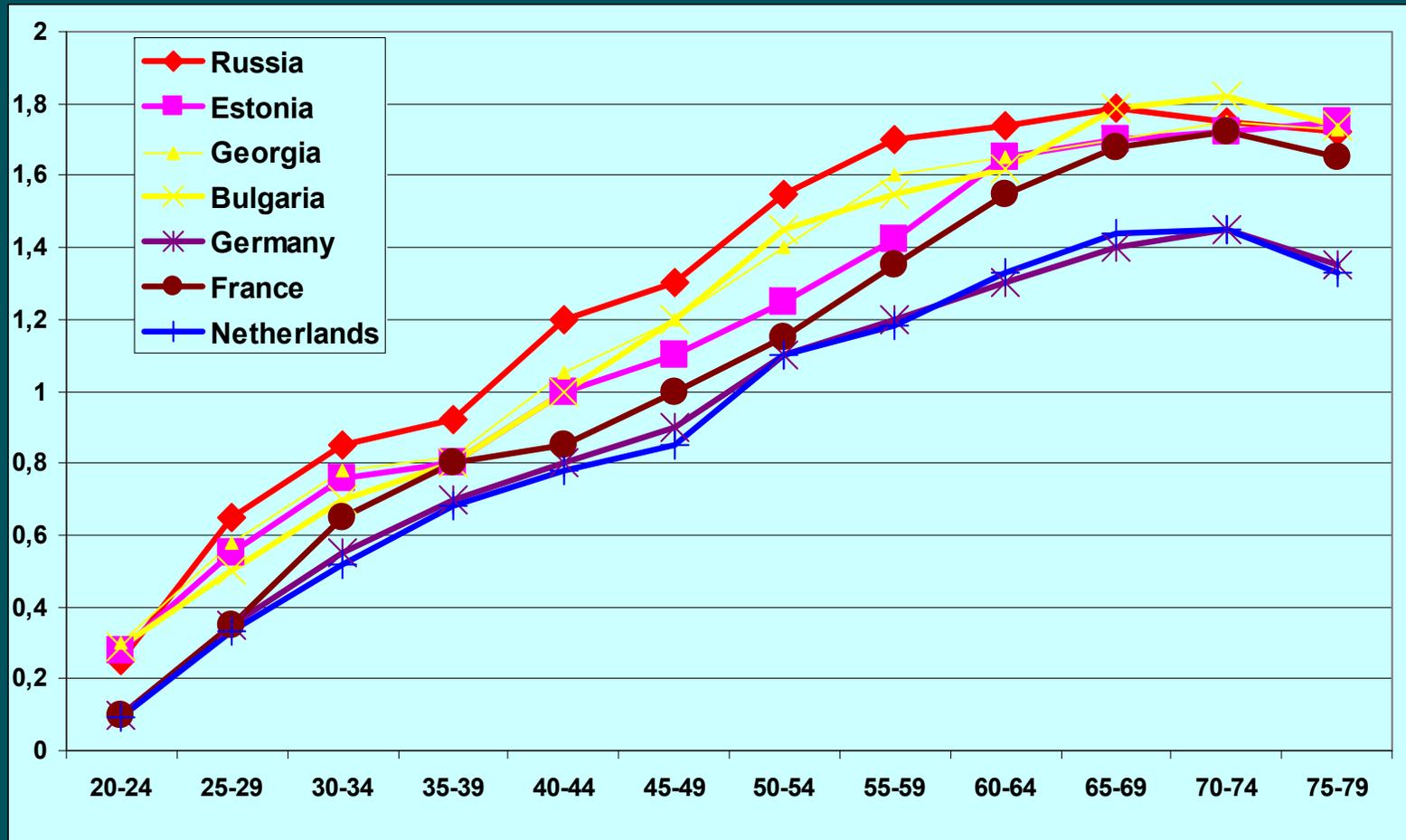
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Mean number of descending family generations, GGP countries



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Interdependencies between older and younger family members

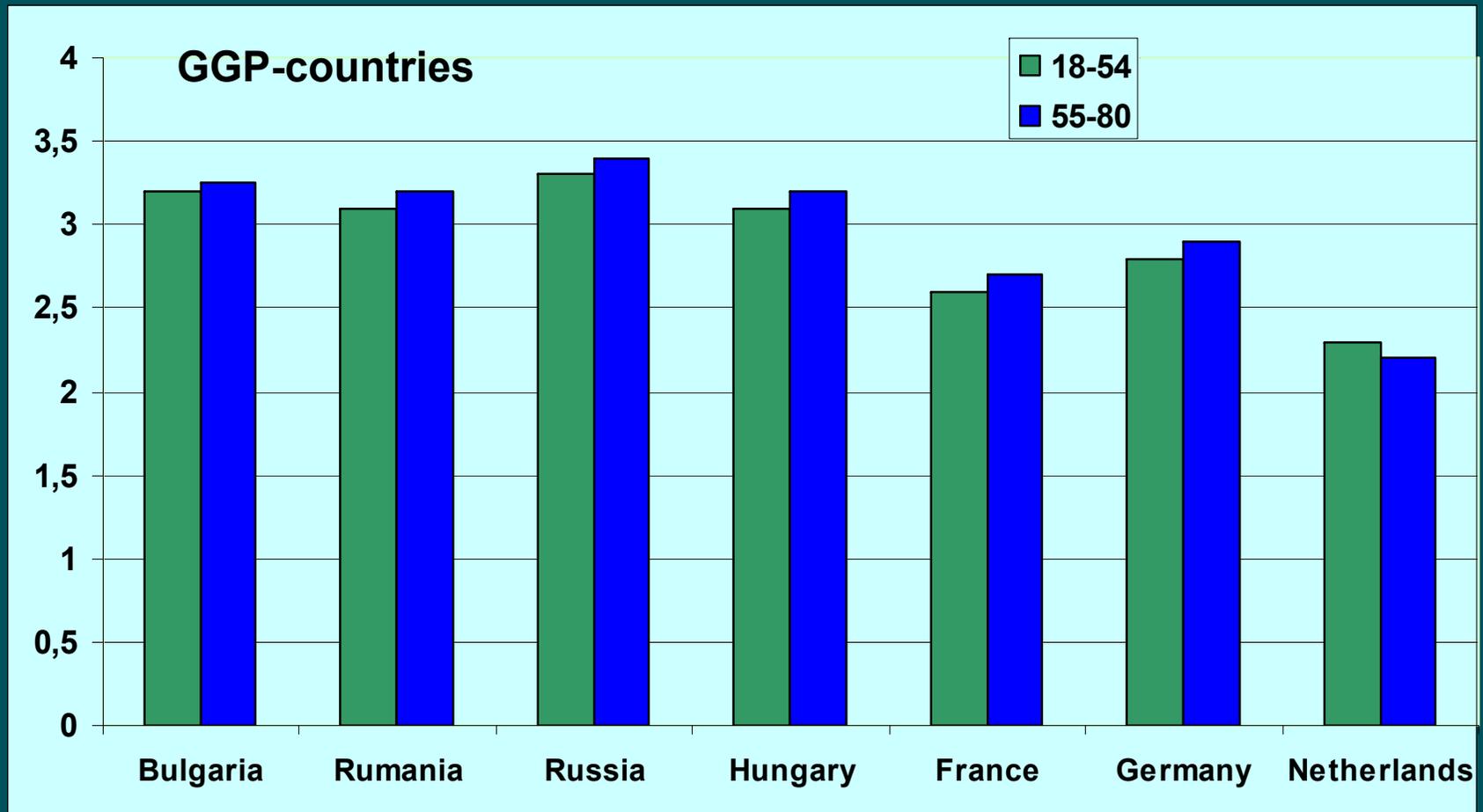
- ❖ **family obligation norms tend to be weaker in generous welfare states**



Children should take responsibility for caring for their parents when their parents are in need



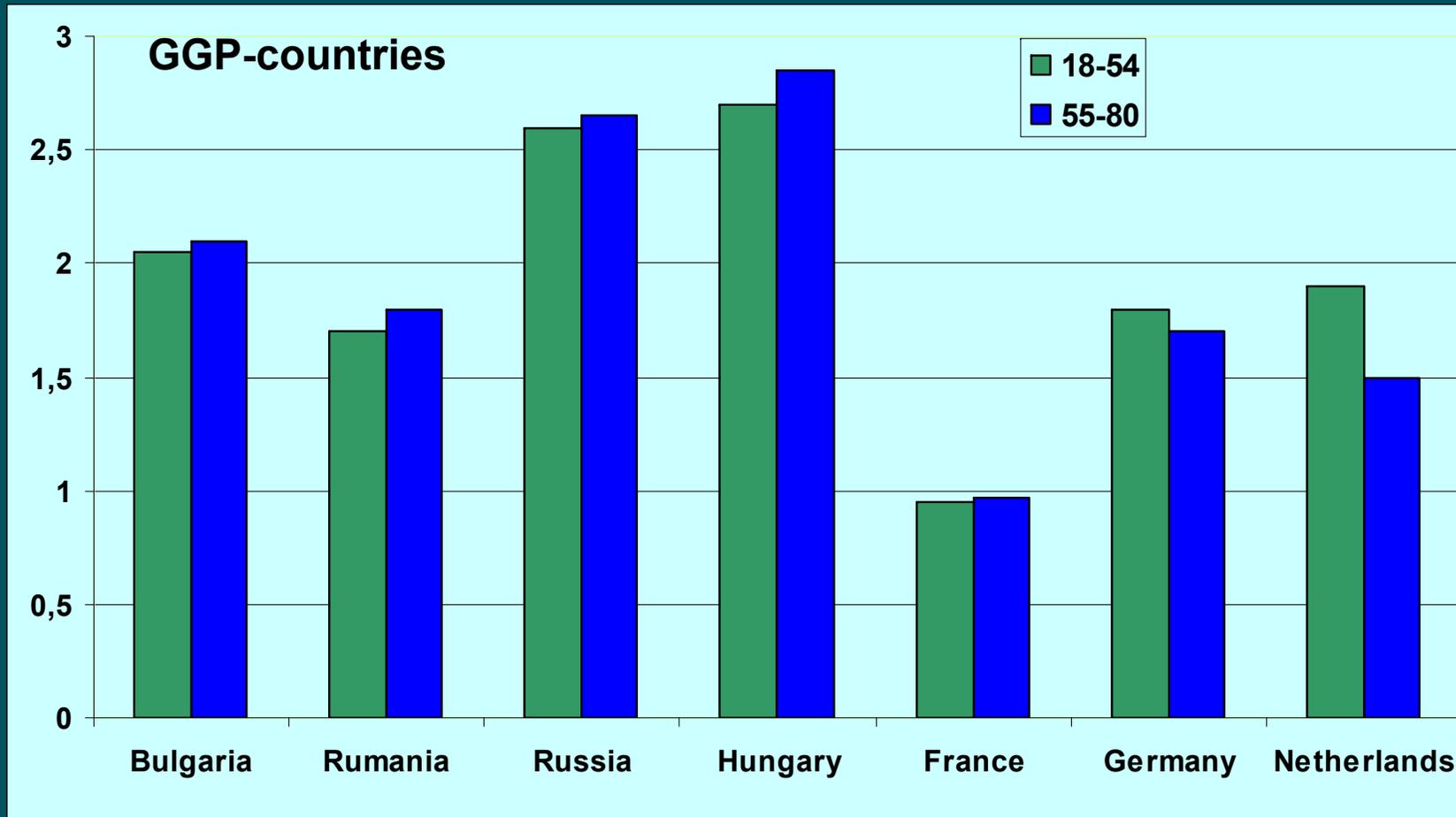
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Children should adjust their working lives to the needs of their parents



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Interdependencies between older and younger family members

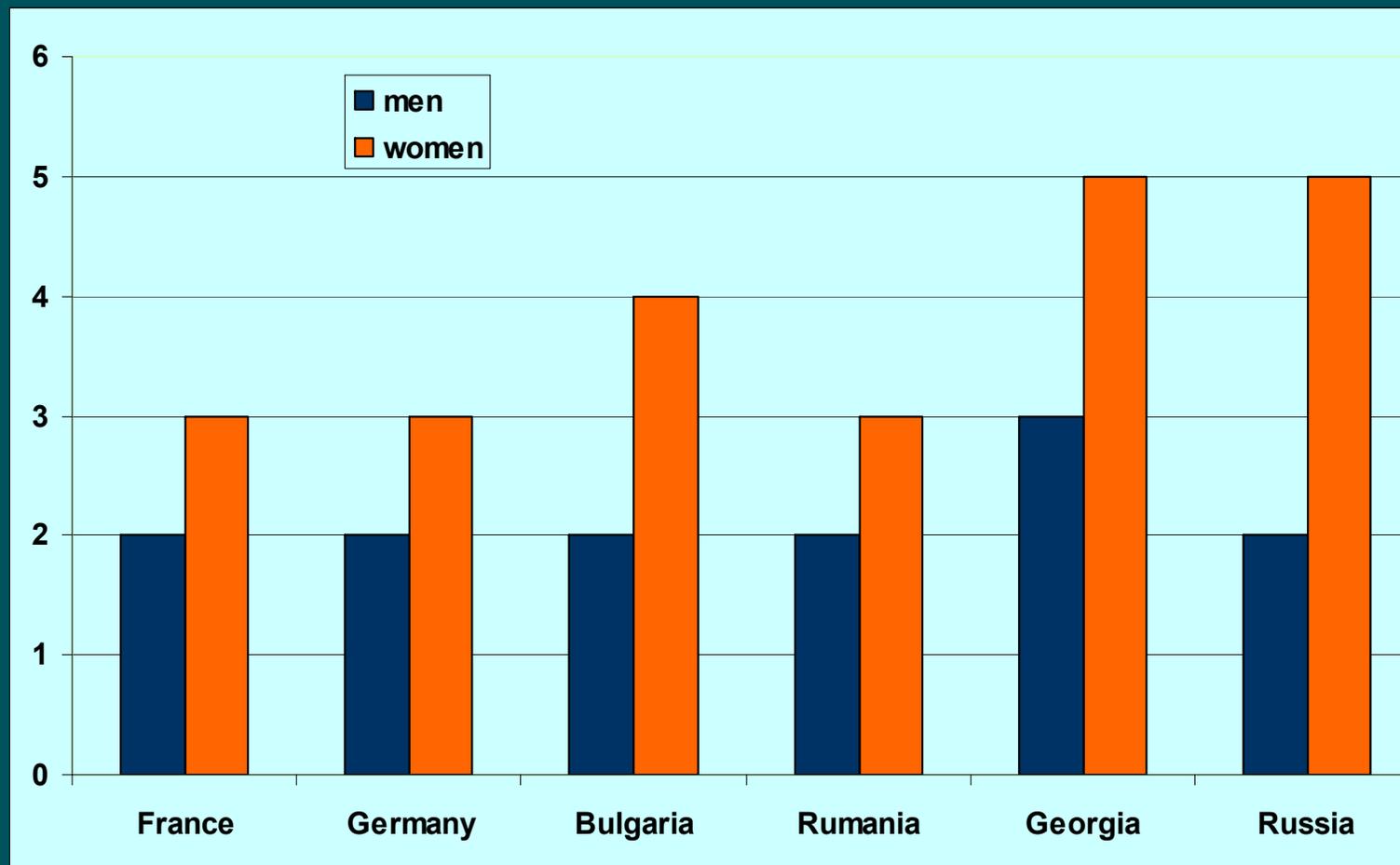


- ❖ family obligation norms tend to be weaker in generous welfare states
- ❖ intergenerational support flows primarily downward
- ❖ little empirical support for the view that public transfers crowd out family transfers in Western welfare systems (complementarity rather than substitution)
- ❖ paucity of data on non-Western countries

% adults providing personal care to parents, GGP-countries



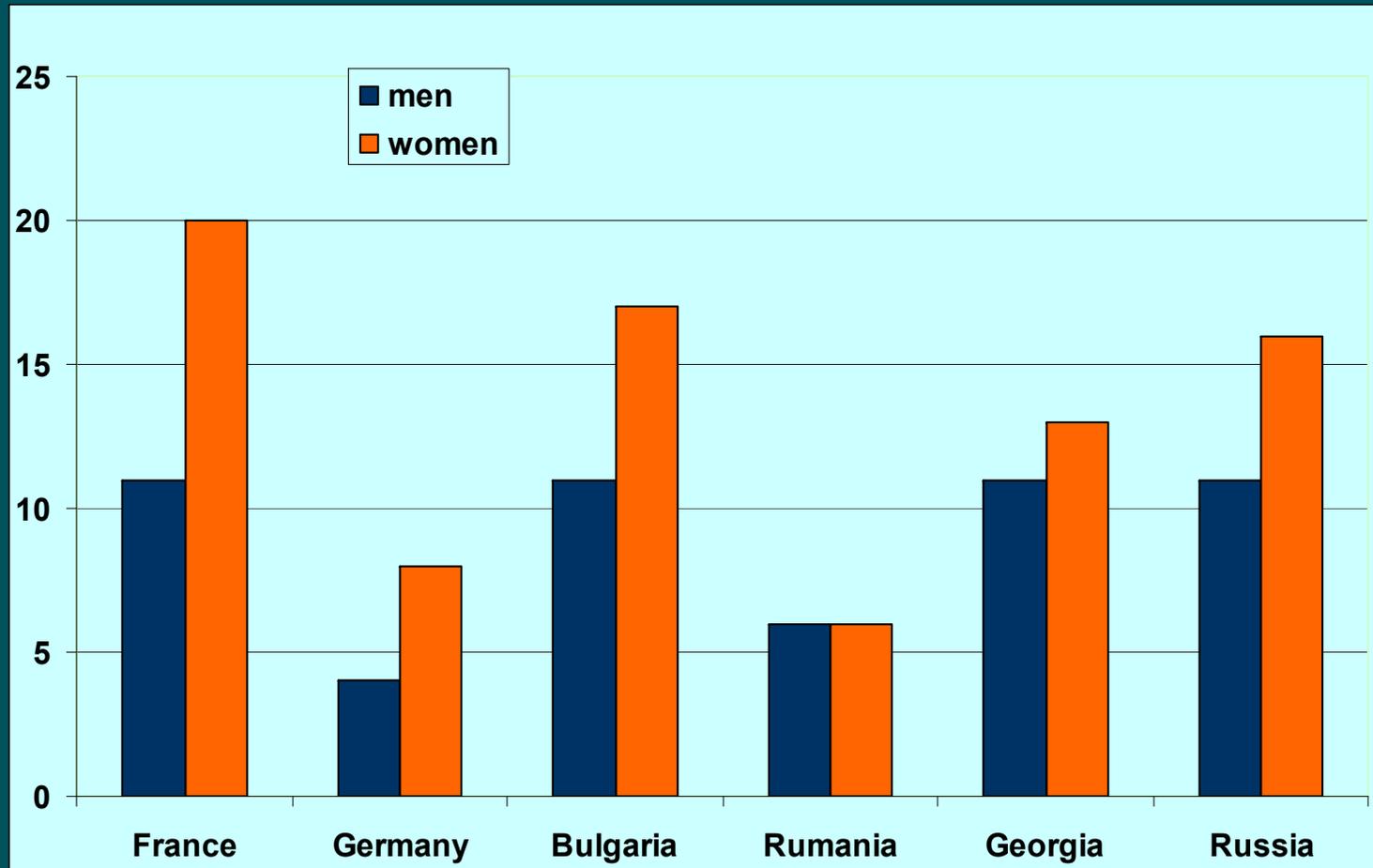
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% adults providing emotional support to parents, GGP-countries



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Question for discussion

❖ Can national policies make caring men?



Gendered intergenerational regimes, four patterns



- ❖ ***familialism by default***: no publicly provided alternatives to family care and financial support
- ❖ ***supported familialism***: policies support families in keeping up their financial and caring responsibilities
- ❖ ***optional familialism***: some kind of option is given between being paid to provide care or to use publicly supported care
- ❖ ***defamilialization***: care and financial needs are partly answered through public provision

Question for discussion



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- ❖ **What kinds of interdependencies between family generations and between men and women in families are built and reinforced by the legal and policy arrangements in your country?**

Beyond the public/private responsibilities dichotomy



- ❖ **generous parental leaves support parental care**
- ❖ **a father's quota supports the caring role of men**
- ❖ **child care services lighten parental responsibilities**
- ❖ **at-home, day care or institutional services for the frail elderly partly substitute family care**
- ❖ **earmarked payments for care also partly substitute family care**
- ❖ **not earmarked payments for care support family care, but also encourage recourse to the market**

Question for discussion



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- ❖ **Should national governments aiming to help families with intergenerational care needs be encouraged to provide care services, income transfers or a mix of the two?**

Legal and policy arrangements are not neutral

- ❖ long parental leaves tend to strengthen the gendered nature of family care
- ❖ long parental leaves further polarize women of different social classes
- ❖ a reserved father's quota can help de-gender family care
- ❖ good quality child care services are not only a conciliation measure but also a resource for children themselves
- ❖ over-reliance on family care for frail older persons crystallizes the gender division of labour



In summary



- ❖ **Exclusive or primary reliance on the family**
 - brings risks for the well-being of frail older persons
 - strengthens socioeconomic inequalities between families, and
 - jeopardizes women's economic independence
- ❖ **Insufficient economic independence among women implies**
 - limited pensions for women , and
 - poorer life chances for children
- ❖ **It is important to consider the prospects of future generations**
 - of pensioners (which include women), and
 - of workers (today's children)

Question for discussion



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- ❖ **How can national policies develop intergenerational regimes that do not reinforce social class inequalities and gender inequalities?**



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