"New Forms of Intergenerational Solidarity in European Local Communities"

Conference "Intergenerational Solidarity for Cohesive and Sustainable Societies" on the occasion of the Slovenian EU Presidency

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Outline

1. Demographic/social change and intergenerational family relations

2. Implications for intergenerational family solidarity

3. Intergenerational solidarity in local communities

4. Examples of good practice in intergenerational community support in Europe

5. Conclusions: Strengthening families + civil society to provide intergenerational solidarity in local communities

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1.

Demographic/social change and intergenerational family relations

Drivers of demographic change

1. Mortality

   ➢ (rising) life expectancy ➡ more older people ; people aged 80+ fastest growing age group

2. Fertility

   ➢ (declining) birth rates ➡ fewer younger people

3. Migration patterns

   ➢ emigration or immigration?

   ➢ age: young or old emigrants/immigrants?

Social change and the family

- **Education**
  - Today women equally well qualified as men – even better in future?!

- **Employment**
  - Female labour market participation increasing

- **Economy**
  - From industrial to service economy
  - Flexibility and mobility required

- **Life course**
  - Discontinuity more common (several careers, temporary jobs, periods of unemployment, non-employment)

- **Work-life-balance**
  - Reconciliation of employment and family care more difficult

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Changing intergenerational family relations

- Rising life expectancy results in longer lasting relationships with children and grandchildren

- Increasing 'healthy life expectancy' (HALE) changes nature of grandparent-grandchild relationship
  - other leisure activities
  - enables grandparents to see their grandchildren growing up

- Falling fertility results in fewer family members per generation → 'beanpole family' (Bengtson, Rosenthal & Burton 1990)
  - Currently particularly in younger generations (fewer children, grandchildren)

- Increasing numbers of (older) people without children
  - Childless elders care for their parents – but who cares for them?

- Transnational emigration (CEE) + domestic migration of younger people
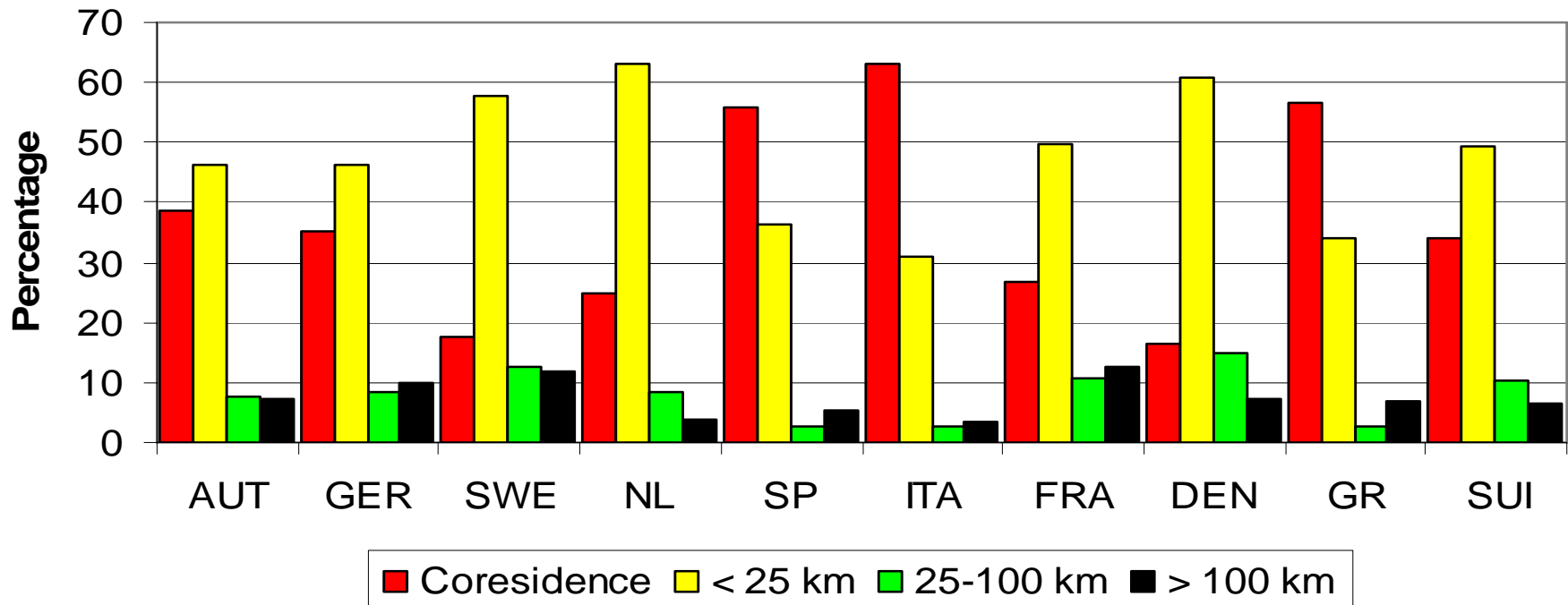 - Growing numbers of older people without local kinship support

Geographical proximity to adult children
(Hank 2005 – SHARE 2004)

Geographical proximity to nearest child

Geographical proximity to adult children
(Hoff 2006a, 2006c – German Ageing Survey)

	40-54		55-69		70-85		40-85	
	1996	2002	1996	2002	1996	2002	1996	2002
Same HH	69.9	67.4	34.3	27.3	25.9	22.2	47.0	39.7
Neighbour hood	6.2	4.8	14.7	14.3	17.6	19.0	11.8	12.2
Same vil-lage, town	8.9	9.4	24.4	23.8	23.9	28.8	18.1	20.1
< 2 h	11.3	13.2	19.6	26.1	23.4	22.3	17.0	20.8
> 2 h	3.7	5.2	7.1	8.6	9.1	7.7	6.1	7.2

2.

Implications for intergenerational family solidarity

Changing family solidarity?

- ↑ growing geographical distance

- ↑ rising number of childless people

  ➔ increasing number of older people without local kin support

  ➔ family can no longer provide regular instrumental support (help in household, personal care) to older people

  ➔ grandparents can no longer provide regular childcare

  – Financial, cognitive, emotional support can nevertheless be provided

  ➔ growing risk of social isolation of older people (women!)
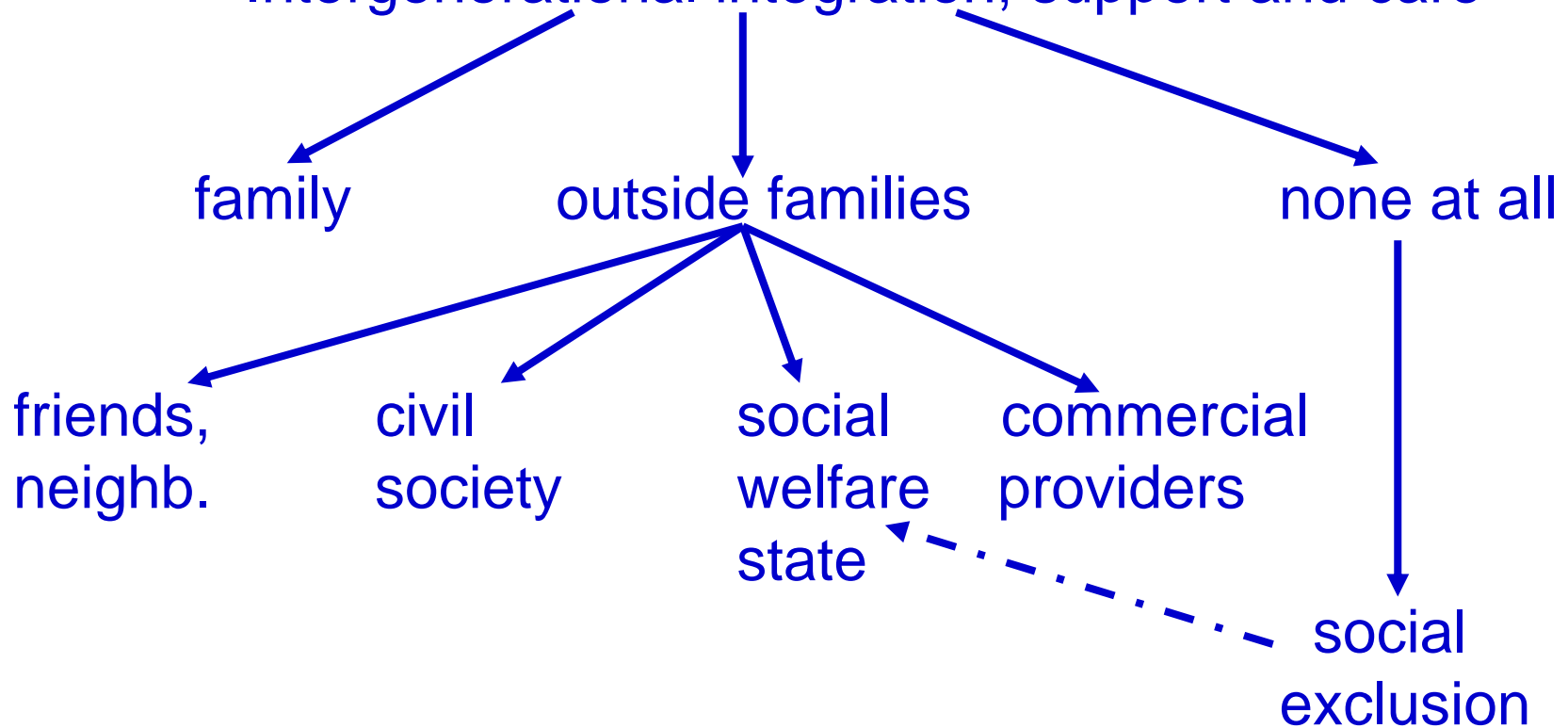
  ⇨ If not the family, who else?

Who provides intergenerational support?

Intergenerational integration, support and care

- family
- outside families
- none at all

From outside families:
- friends, neighb.
- civil society
- social welfare state
- commercial providers

social exclusion

3.

Intergenerational solidarity in local communities

Responses by local communities

- Who socialises with older people if there is no (local) kin?
- Who helps/supports older people if there is no (local) kin?
→ emergence of intergenerational programmes, projects and self-help groups
  - According to national coordination office „Projektbüro Dialog der Generationen" (2007) number of such projects in Germany multiplied from about 100 3 years ago to more than 10,000 today
  - Boosted by government funding for "multigenerational houses"
→ partly initiated by voluntary sector organisations
→ partly set up by older people (self-help groups)
- Following example of US/UK with tradition of such programmes

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OIA/HtA Study on "Social Inclusion Strategies for Older People in Europe"

- Commissioned by ‚Help the Aged' – research carried out at Oxford Institute of Ageing in 2006

- **Objectives:**
1. To evaluate social inclusion policies for older people in EU
2. To identify examples of good practice for social inclusion of older people in Europe

- **Methods**
  - Review of policy + legal documents in 24 EU member states
  - Expert interviews in 24 EU member states (except UK)
  - Experts representing central government, civil society + indep. experts
  - Qualitative telephone interviews using topic-guide
  - Tape-recorded + transcribed
  - Duration 30-45 min

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Intergenerational solidarity in local communities

- **Lack of family ties identified as main risk factor for social exclusion!**
- Local community centres as ‚social clubs for the elderly' is most common local social inclusion strategy (universal, but particularly common in CEE & South)
  - Often including day-care facilities
  - Sometimes linked to health care + social services (CY, GR)
- Alternatively: Visiting service for older people (Scandinavia + NL)
- Often including intergenerational meeting opportunities
- Specific civil society actions targeting social groups lacking IG relations
  - „Adopt a granny!" (PL, SP, AUT)
  - Matching lone parents with older people (PL)
  - ‚Homeshare' (SP, AUT, UK, GER, CZ)
- „Adopt an older person"(widows) in rural areas (AUT)

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4.

Examples of good practice in intergenerational community support in Europe

Example 1: „Adopt a granny!" (Austria)

- Developed to address the specific problems with residential care in rural areas in Austria

- Targeted at older Austrians who have no next of kin living locally in the rural areas of the mountainous Alp regions who are particularly affected by social exclusion and poverty

- Person in need of care lives together with a farmer's family on a farmstead

- The scheme is of mutual benefit to both parties. The elderly person receives family care and can continue to live in a rural area, whereas the farmer does no longer rely on his agricultural business as the main source of income.

- Various quality assurance measures are in place to make sure that there is appropriate accommodation available for housing an older person in need of care.

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Example 2: „Adopt a grandma!" (Poland)

- a NGO from the poorer regions in the southeast of Poland established a project to adopt a grandmother.

- They matched two particularly vulnerable groups in Polish society – lone mothers and old people living in institutional care.

- The lone mothers who agreed taking part in this scheme are visiting these older people on a regular basis. The lone mothers would come with their children to visit these so-called grandmothers.

- They also have common activities, like meetings, they talk to each other, they are playing cards. Many of them developed new friendships.

- This informal socialising programme turned out to have practical beneficiary consequences as well: Some of the unemployed lone mothers found a new job in these care homes.

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Example 3: Daycare centres (Greece & Cyprus)

- KAPI (English: Centre for the Occupation and Protection of Older people) or Open Care Community Centres

- Day-care centres still relatively new services for older people provided by NGOs, sometimes also by municipalities

- often attracting people from an entire region who would live very isolated otherwise

- Families spread all over Cyprus – their children live in small houses, too small for accommodating their ageing parents

- Day-care centres often provide the only opportunity for these elderly to socialise. Social contacts and having joint meals are particularly important for Cypriots.

- Some day-care centres established links with local doctors or local health services. In Larnaca, for example, there is a nearby medical centre where they can have some medical treatment (e.g. blood testing), see a doctor or receive physiotherapy.

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Example 4: Intergenerational holidays (France)

- Intergenerational leisure programmes enable pensioners to spend their vacations with their families in a holiday resort.

- French retirement pension system has funds devoted to the construction of intergenerational vacation centres.

- Most of them are situated along the coastlines in southern or northern France, many of them in popular holiday resorts.

- These are large complexes that provide accommodation and facilities for old and young, literally for grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren. These facilities also include easy access for disabled people and sheltered housing with medical and care facilities.

- Generally speaking, people have to pay for using these facilities. But if they haven't got the resources they will receive assistance from the so-called complementary system.

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Example 5: Teenagers teaching ICT (Poland)

- Forum 50+, which is a voluntary organisation campaigning for the interests of older people, established some programmes where young people teach older people how to use computers.

- Forum 50+ also commissioned a contract for starting a programme of free training on computers and internet for older people.

- service was paid for by Forum 50+ and was thus free of charge for older people.

- Given the incredible success of these programmes they started to establish themselves in a new market for older clients

- Following this success, the company wants to extend this to the rest of Europe.

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Homeshare – an international success

- Bring 'Homesharer' s together homeowners ('householder') in need of help, many of them **<u>older</u>** people, AND people in need of inexpensive housing, many of them **<u>young</u>** people, mostly students ('homesharer') offers accommodation in exchange for agreed level of help
- Precondition for matching 'householders' and 'homesharers' is careful selection process over period of several months
- Idea originates in United States
- In most countries set up as means to help young people finding accommodation – except UK, US (?) where driving force was finding support for older people
- In AUT, CZ, GER set up by universities – in UK, US by NGOs or individuals

Homeshare International

- Homeshare International founded in 1999 in London to serve as platform for homeshare programmes in 9 countries (AUS, AUT, CAN, CZ, FRA, GER, SP, UK, US)
- Most popular in US (240 projects), in Europe in Spain (17)
- Age structure / needs of 'householders' vary cross-national:
  - AUT, GER – in 60s who need some practical help
  - SP – mean age 75 who value help and companionship
  - UK – most aged 80+ who need care/support and lost independence
- Age structure / needs of 'homesharers' also vary:
  - UK – most employed aged 23+
  - Everywhere else in Europe young students aged 18+

Homeshare projects worldwide

- Australia (3) – Melbourne, Sydney, Tasmania
- Austria (1) – Graz
- Canada (1) – Quebec
- Czech Republic (1) – Prague
- France (1) – Paris
- Germany (11) – Aachen, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Giessen, Karlsruhe, Cologne, Mainz, Marburg, Munich, Muenster, Stuttgart
- Spain (16) – Albacete, Alicante, Almeria, Barcelona, Bilbao, Cadiz, Granada, Gran Canaria, Leon, Madrid, Malaga, Murcia, Santiago de Compostela, San Sebastian, Sevilla, Valladolid
- UK (4) – London, Oxfordshire, West England, West Sussex
- US (240) in 38 states; most popular in New Jersey (31), New York (25), Illionois (22)

5.

Conclusions: Strengthening families + civil society to provide intergenerational solidarity in local communities

How to achieve sustainable intergenerational solidarity in local communities?

Support families in maintaining stable intergenerational relations!

1. Give younger people incentives to stay + to provide instrumental support, including

   - Provision of affordable all-day quality childcare

   - Investments in local economy

   - Encourage reconciliation of employment and care for younger + older family members, by giving example + encouraging locally based employers

2. Enable older people to continue supporting younger generations through financial transfers + (grand)childcare

   - Reasonable retirement pensions

   - Extension of working life → reconciliation employment + family care

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How to achieve sustainable intergenerational solidarity in local communities?

Enable civil society to offer intergenerational interaction + support outside family!

- Make facilities (community centres, public buildings) available where generations can meet

- Provide financial help with costs of running such projects (staff, rent, bills, transport, etc.)

- Help with publicising initiatives

- Co-operation by local authorities

➜ Perhaps, we need to re-think the concept of intergenerational solidarity! Community responsibility!

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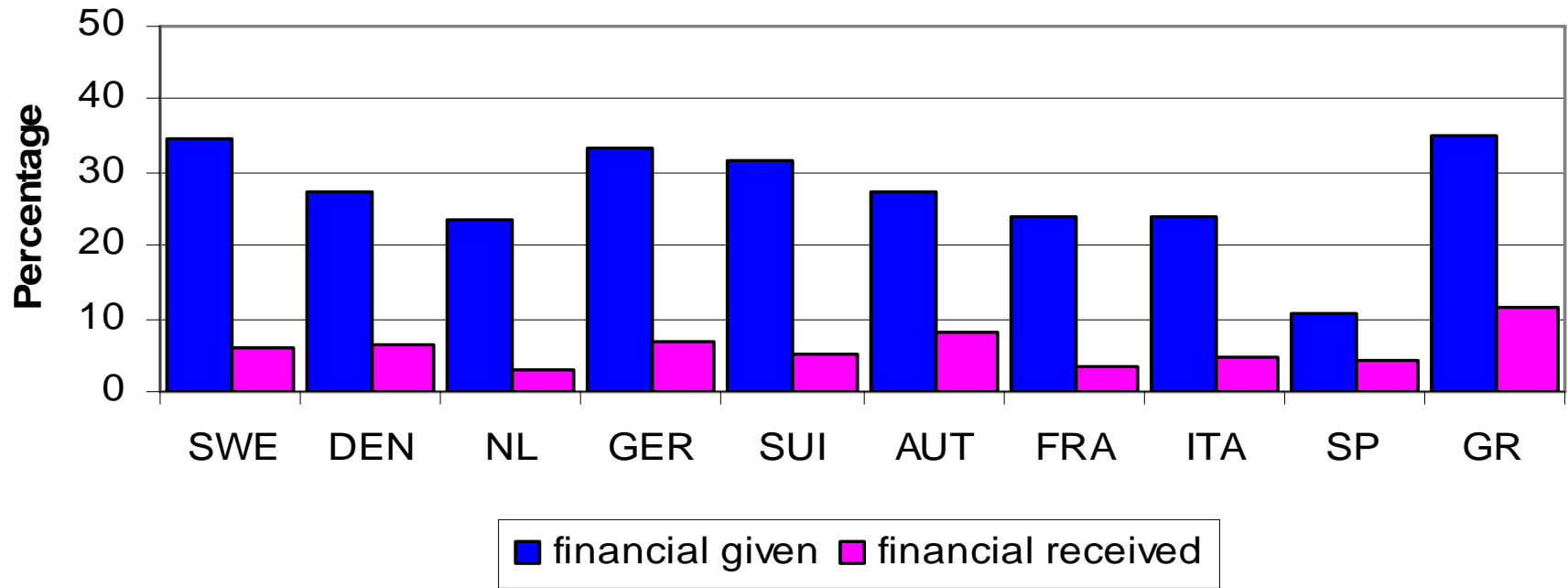
Thank you very much for your attention!

Financial transfers in European families
(Attias-Donfut, Ogg & Wolff 2005 – SHARE 2004)

Financial transfers

Instrumental transfers in European families
(Attias-Donfut, Ogg & Wolff 2005 – SHARE 2004)

Instrumental transfers