

Older people's participation in socially productive activities

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'Valuing older people' and 'Full of Life'. Why this contradiction in our image of ageing?

A political storm is brewing over proposals to raise the state pension age to 67 (BBC News 2005)



Monday 29 September –
Friday 10 October 2008



Manchester Full of Life Festival

Living La Vida
Older!

Manchester Full of Life Festival is back, bigger than ever, and bursting with things to do.

The country's biggest free celebration of older people returns to the city from Monday 29 September to Friday 10 October and we don't want you to miss a thing!

Inside this special issue of the VOP newsletter you'll find listings for the **FULL OF LIFE FESTIVAL**,



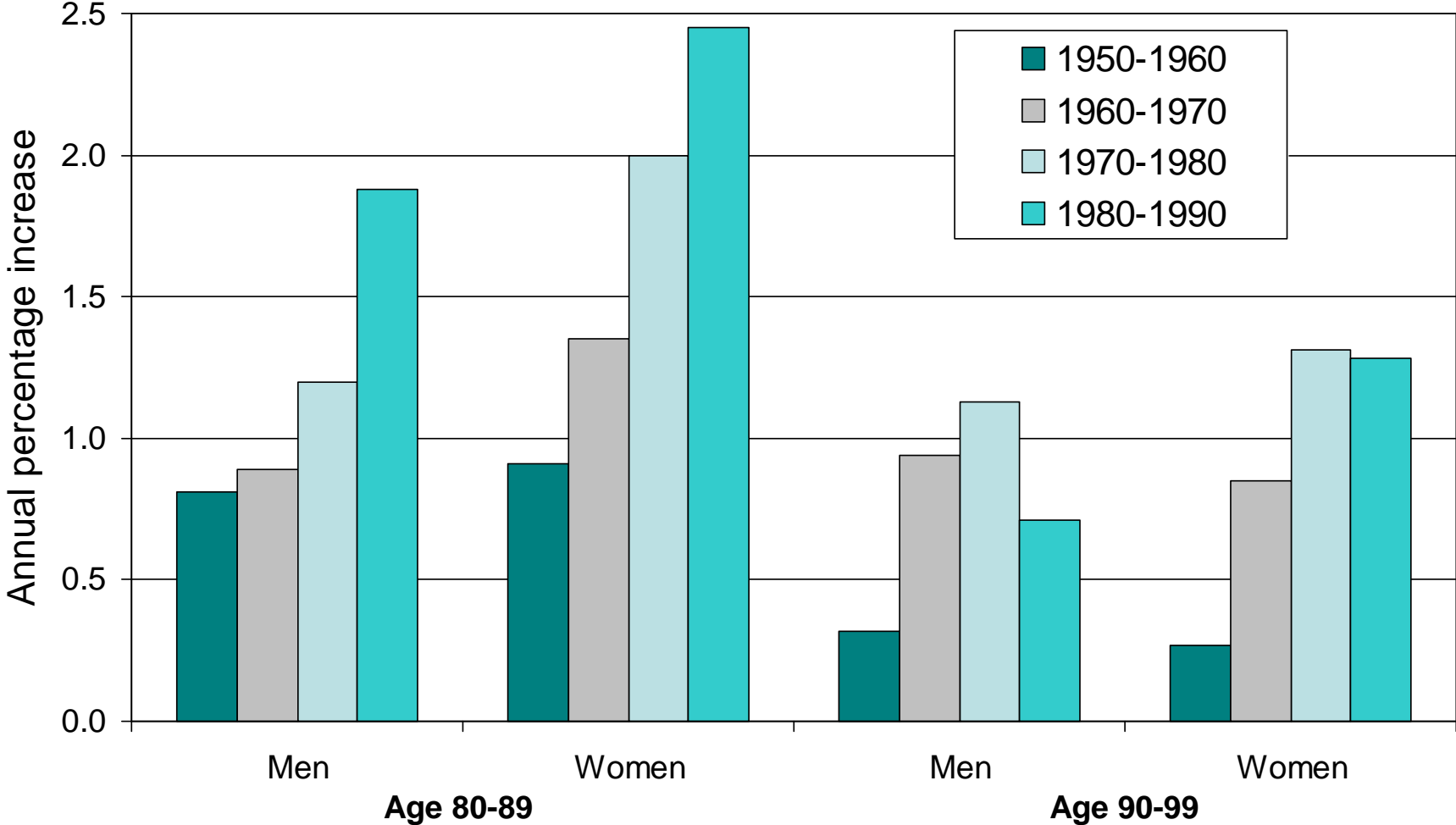
Outline

- Background: an ageing world, emerging crisis, possibilities and social inequalities
- Third age and social and economic productivity
- Implications of social productivity for wellbeing
- Some real life stories
- Social participation, social inequality and wellbeing
- Conclusions

How the world is ageing (1)

- Life expectancy has risen dramatically in the last 50 years, it continues to rise, and is not only improving annually, improvements are accelerating:
 - Worldwide the numbers of those 65-84 will grow threefold between 2000 and 2050;
 - The numbers aged 85 and older are projected to grow sixfold; and
 - The numbers aged 100 and over are projected to grow sixteenfold.
- Death rates do not appear to be close to a biological maximum, those countries with the lowest current death rates continue to have large annual improvements in survival.

Changes over time in improvement in mortality for 19 countries



How the world is ageing (1)

- Life expectancy has risen dramatically in the last 50 years, it continues to rise, and is not only improving annually, improvements are accelerating:
- Death rates do not appear to be close to a biological maximum, those countries with the lowest current death rates continue to have large annual improvements in survival.
- Fertility in every developed country has fallen beneath the replacement level of 2.1 – in 1960-65 the range was 2 to 3.6, in 1995-2000 it was 1.2 to 2.
- In 2030 almost one in four people in the developed world will be aged 65 or older.

How the world is ageing (2)

- Retirement ages have been steadily falling – in the UK from 66.2 in 1960 to 62.7 in 1995 – so, in most countries, only one-quarter to one-third of men aged 60 to 64 are still in paid work.
- The employment rate of older workers (55-64) is less than half that of 'prime-age' workers (25-49) in Europe.
- Between 2000 and 2050 the 'old age dependence ratio' will drop from 4 down to 2 people of working age (15-64) for every person aged 65+.
- The ratio of tax-paying workers to nonworking pensioners in developed countries will fall from the 200) level of three to one down to 1.5 to one in 2030. In some countries it will drop below one to one.
- Public spending on pensions and health care is estimated to significantly rise – in the UK from 10.5% of the GDP in 1995 to 15.5% in 2030.

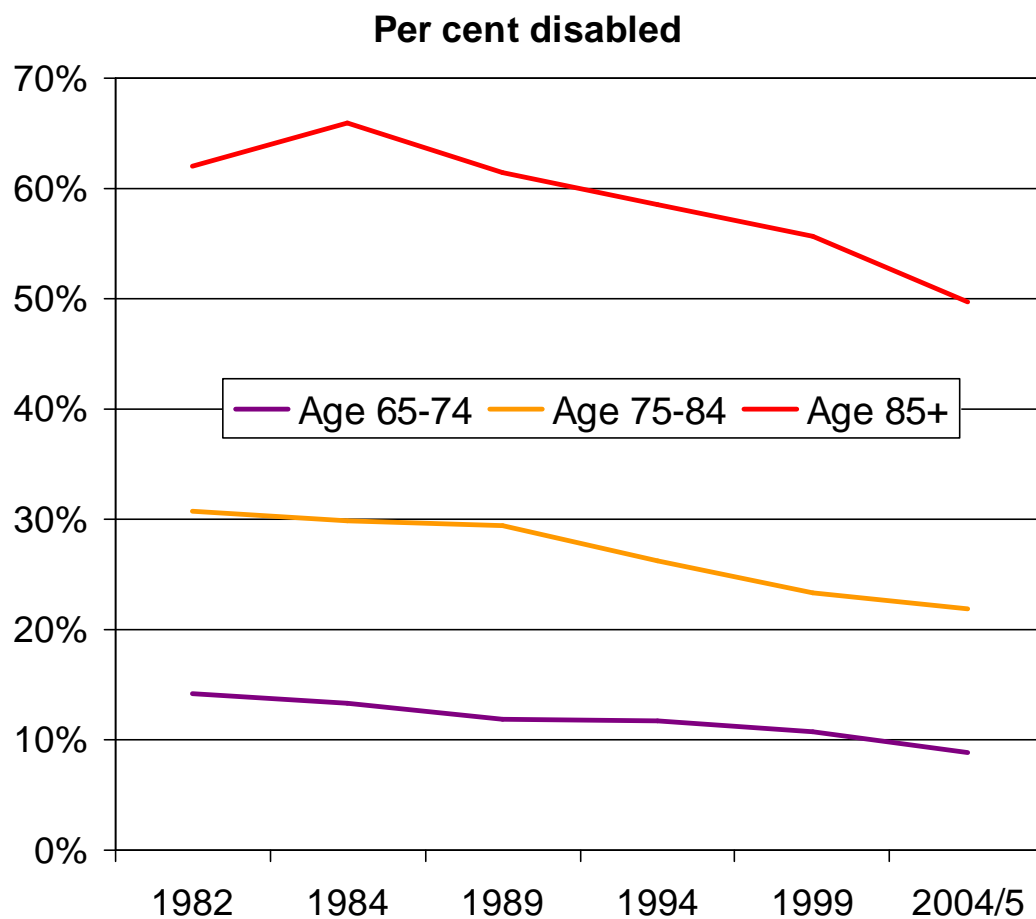
The perceived impact of an ageing world

- Vastly increase the cost of pension and health-benefit programs;
- Generate enormous pressure to reduce benefits and pensions, raise taxes, and reduce spending on other public services;
- Higher taxes for businesses;
- Reduced labour supply;
- Decreased consumption;
- Extended working lives;
- Increased family involvement in care provision.

[But] aging brings with it a systematic transformation of all spheres of social life ... beneath the daunting fiscal projections, lies a longer-term economic, social and cultural dynamic ... What will it be like to live in societies that are much older than we have ever known or imagined?

Adapted from The Commission on Global Aging (1999)

Accelerating improvements in disability rates that go with improvements in survival



Not only are chronic disability rates declining, the rate of decline is accelerating, starting from 0.6% per annum in 1982-1984 and increasing to almost four times that level (2.2%) by 1999-2004/2005. And rates are decreasing more rapidly for older people.

Manton *et al.* 2006

Active Ageing: policy solutions for an ageing world

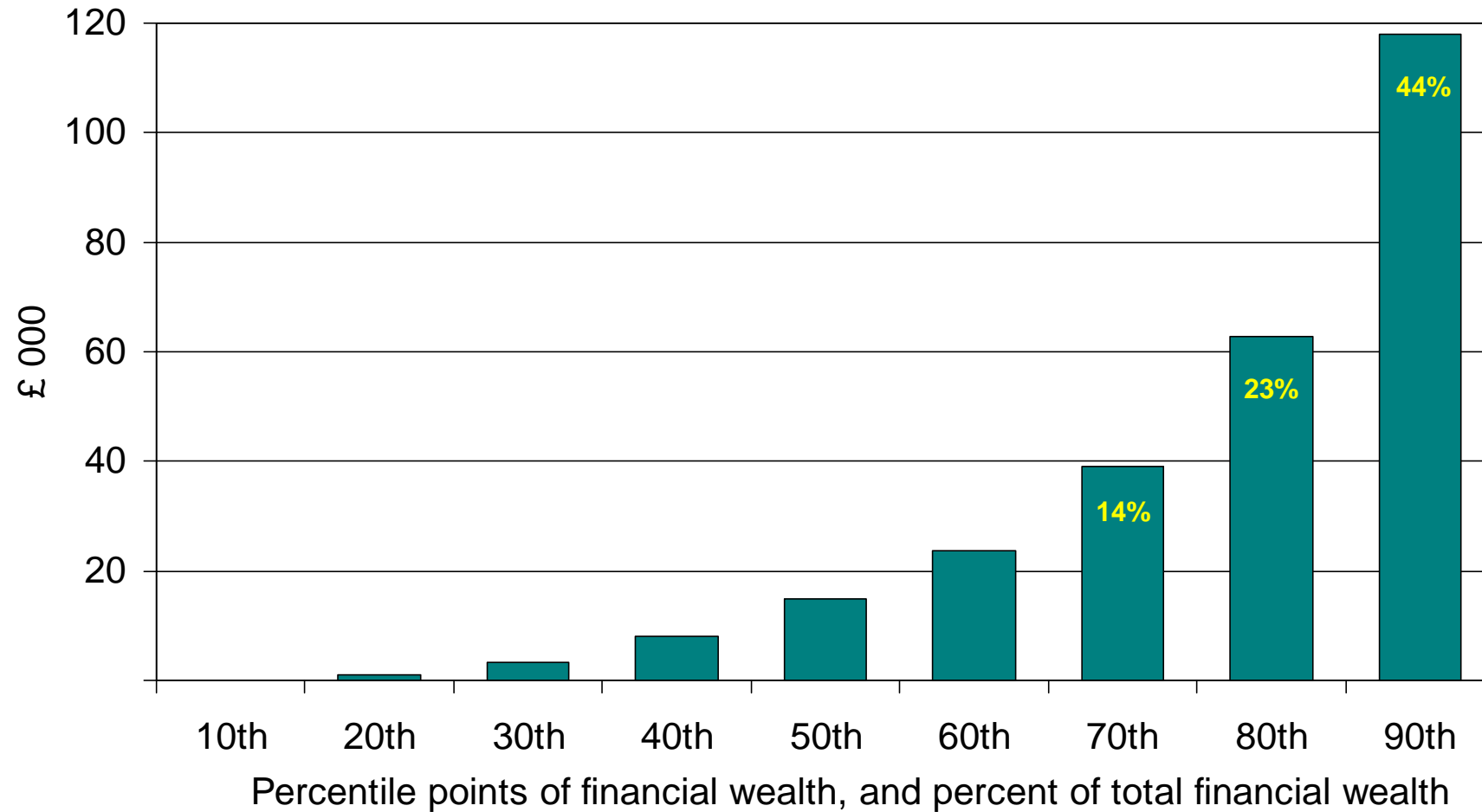
- Core active ageing practices include life long learning, working longer, retiring later and more gradually, being active after retirement, and engaging in capacity enhancing and health sustaining activities.
- Such practices aim to raise the average quality of individual lives and at the same time, at a societal level, contribute to larger growth, lower dependency burdens and substantial cost savings in pensions and health.
- They therefore represent win-win strategies for people of all ages.

European Union (2002)

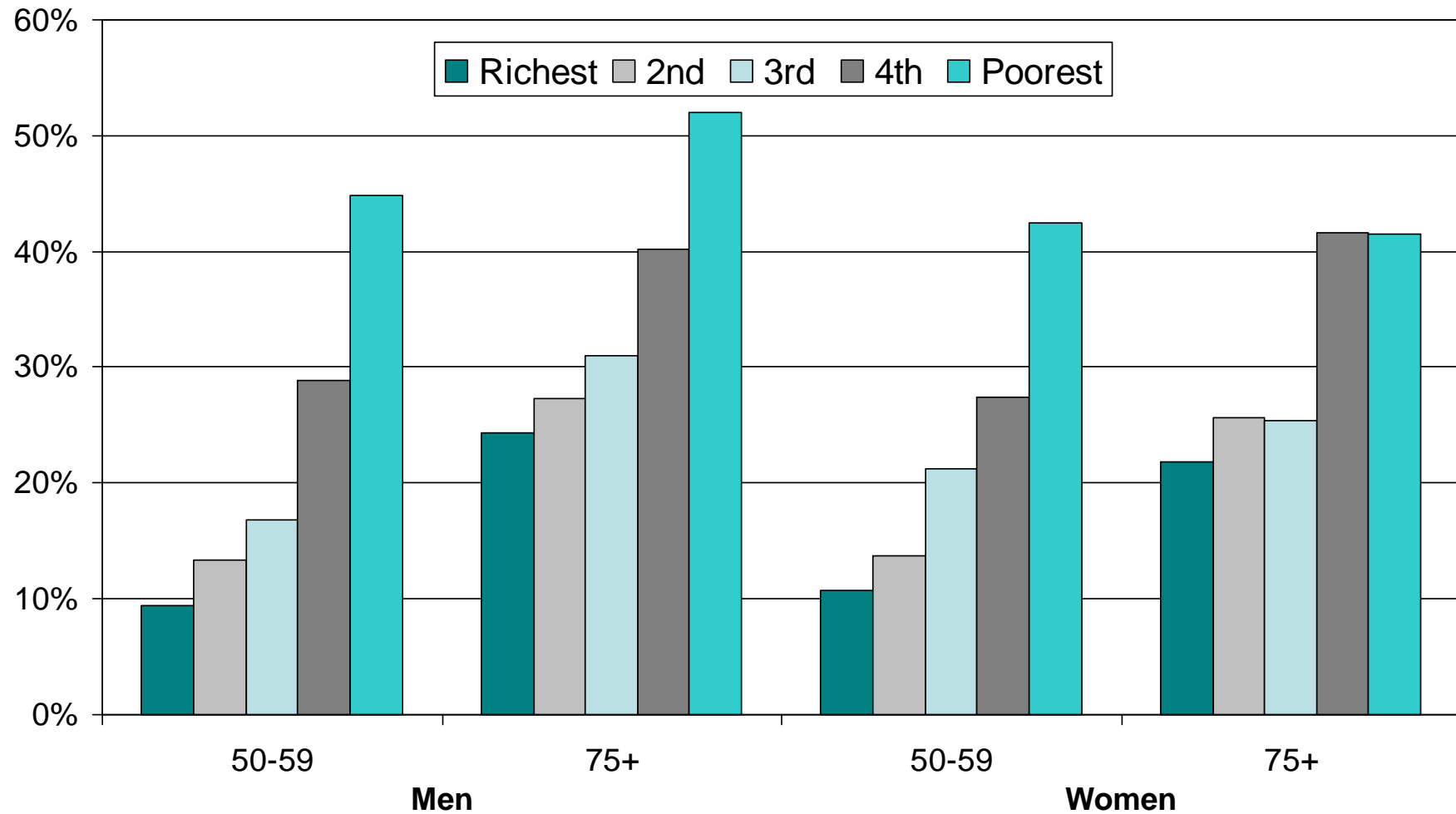
A Third Age: healthy, wealthy and engaged?

- Post-retirement, post-parenting, but pre-dependency.
- Contributing to society:
 - Voluntary/community activities;
 - Political/civic engagement.
- Consuming and enjoying life: leisure, cultural mainstream.
- Self-fulfilment:
 - Having a role;
 - Having status;
 - Having fun.
- But persisting class inequalities?

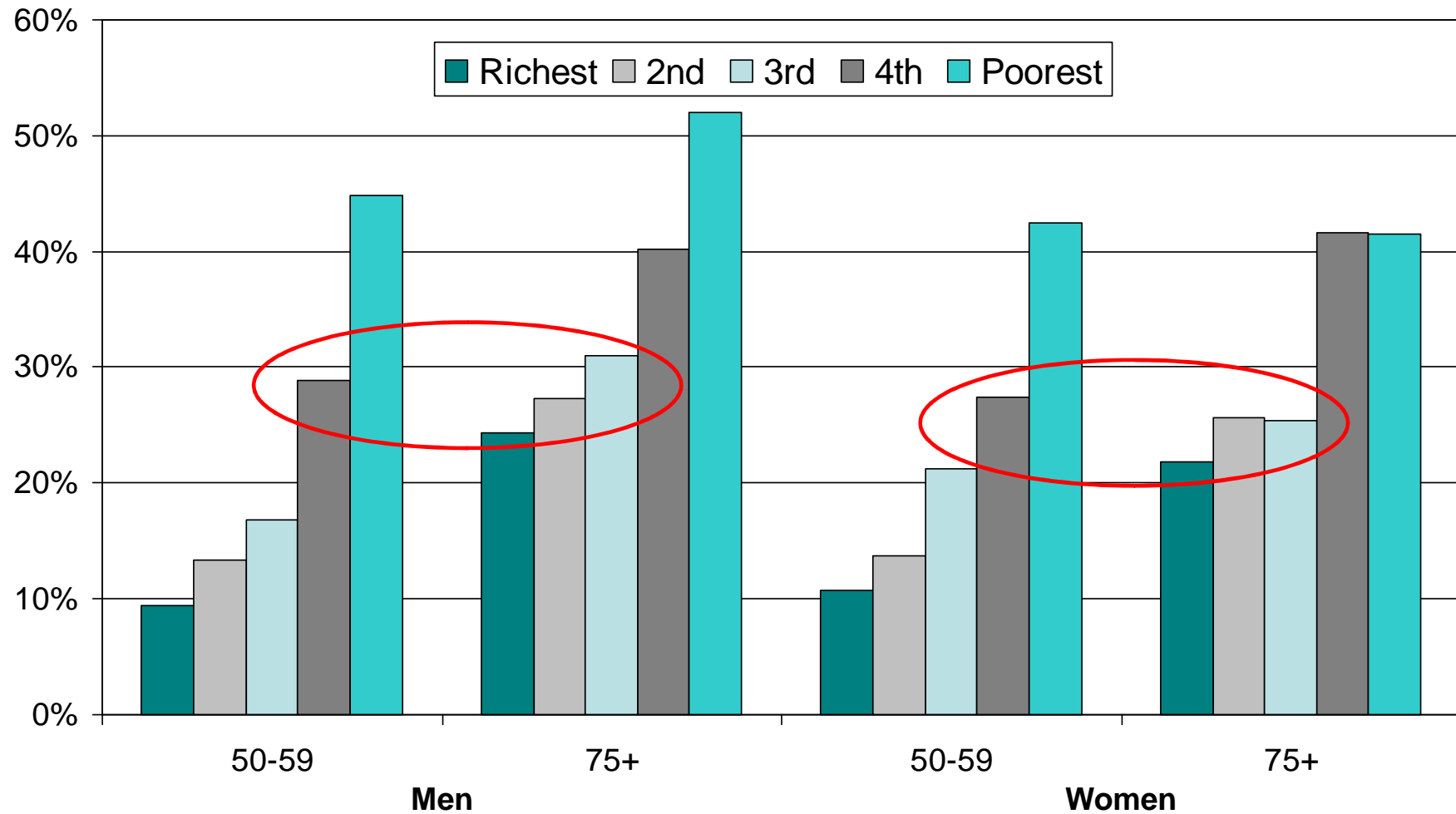
The distribution of financial wealth, age 60-74



Fair/poor self reported health and wealth



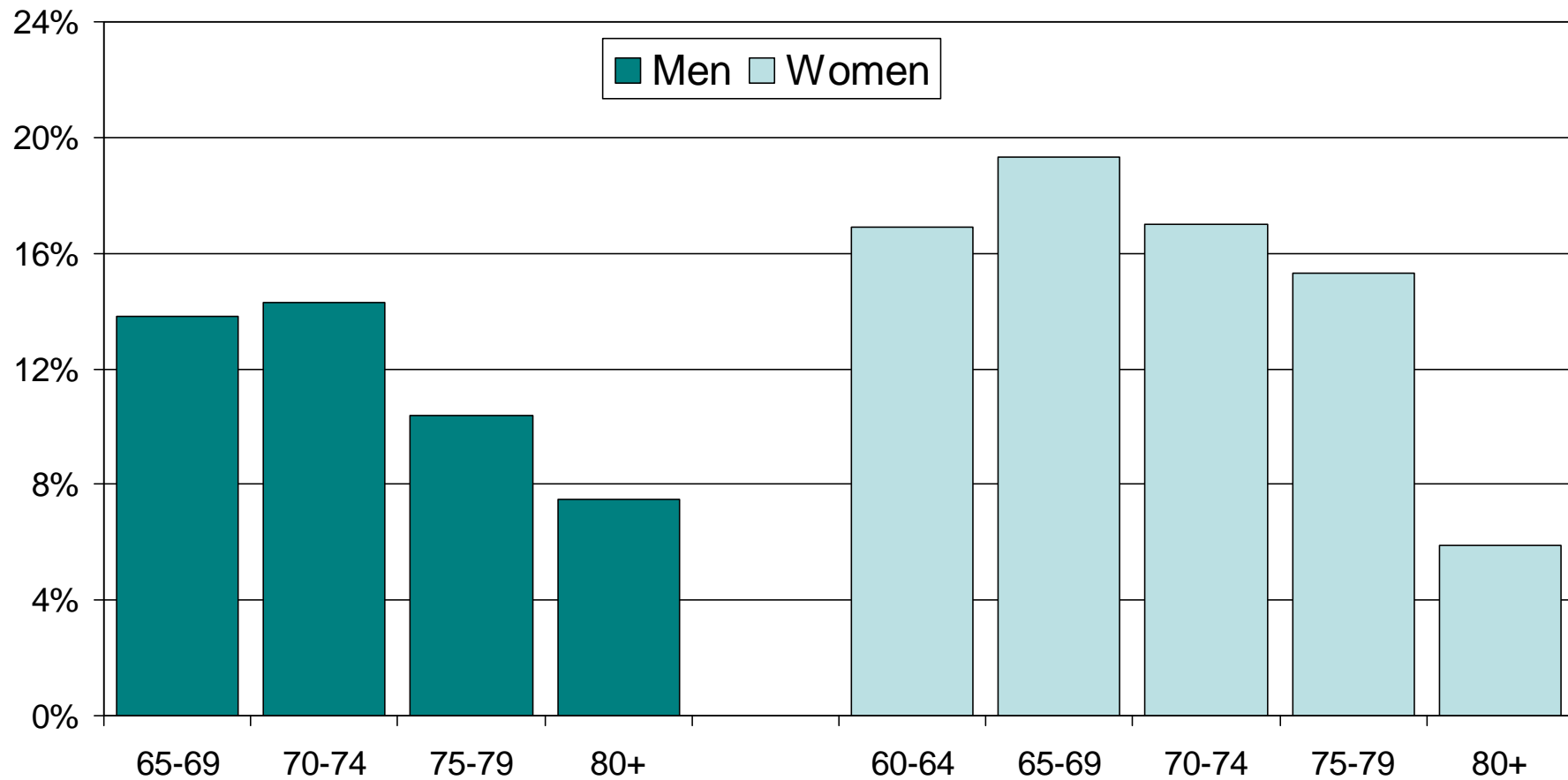
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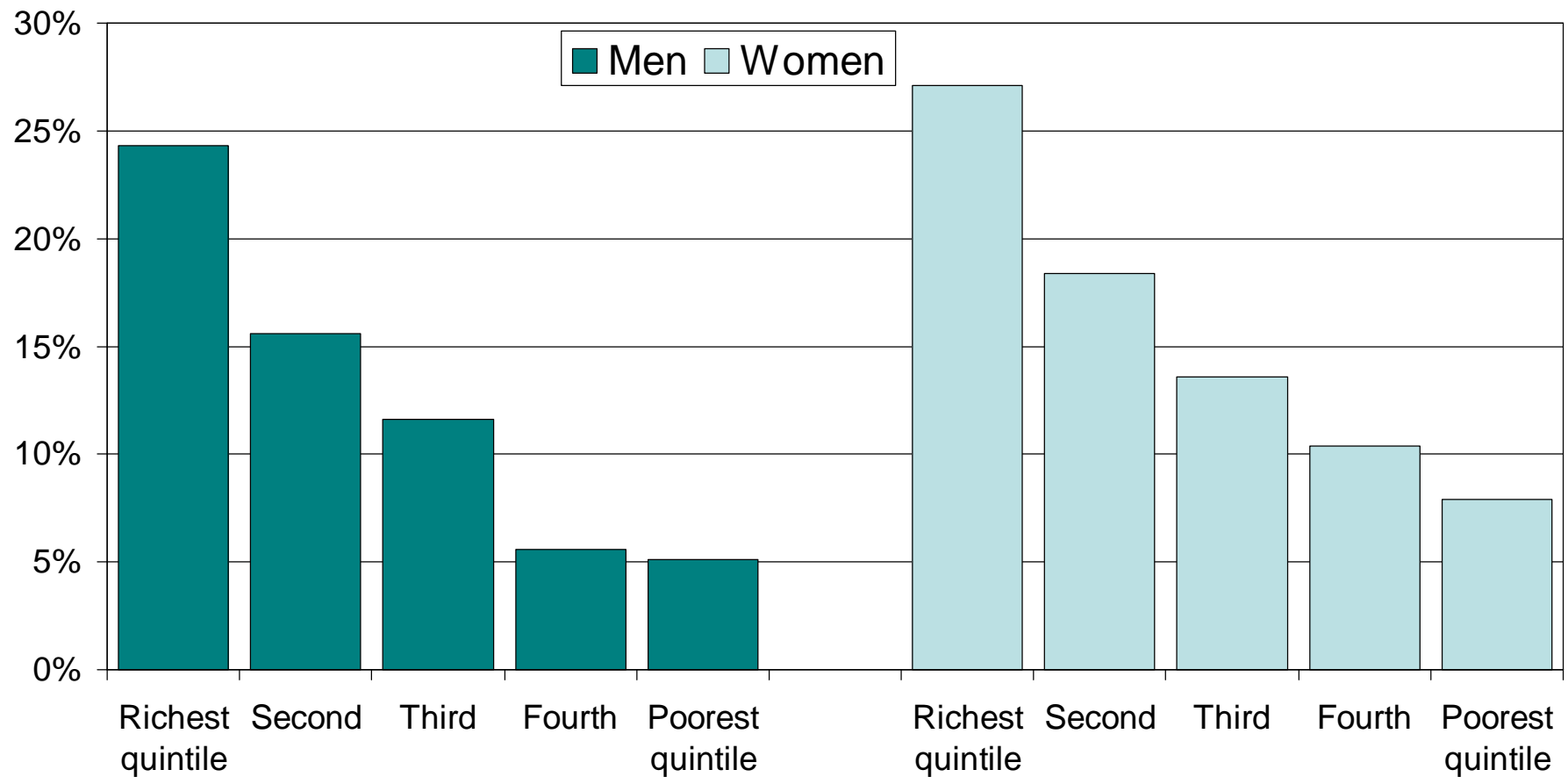
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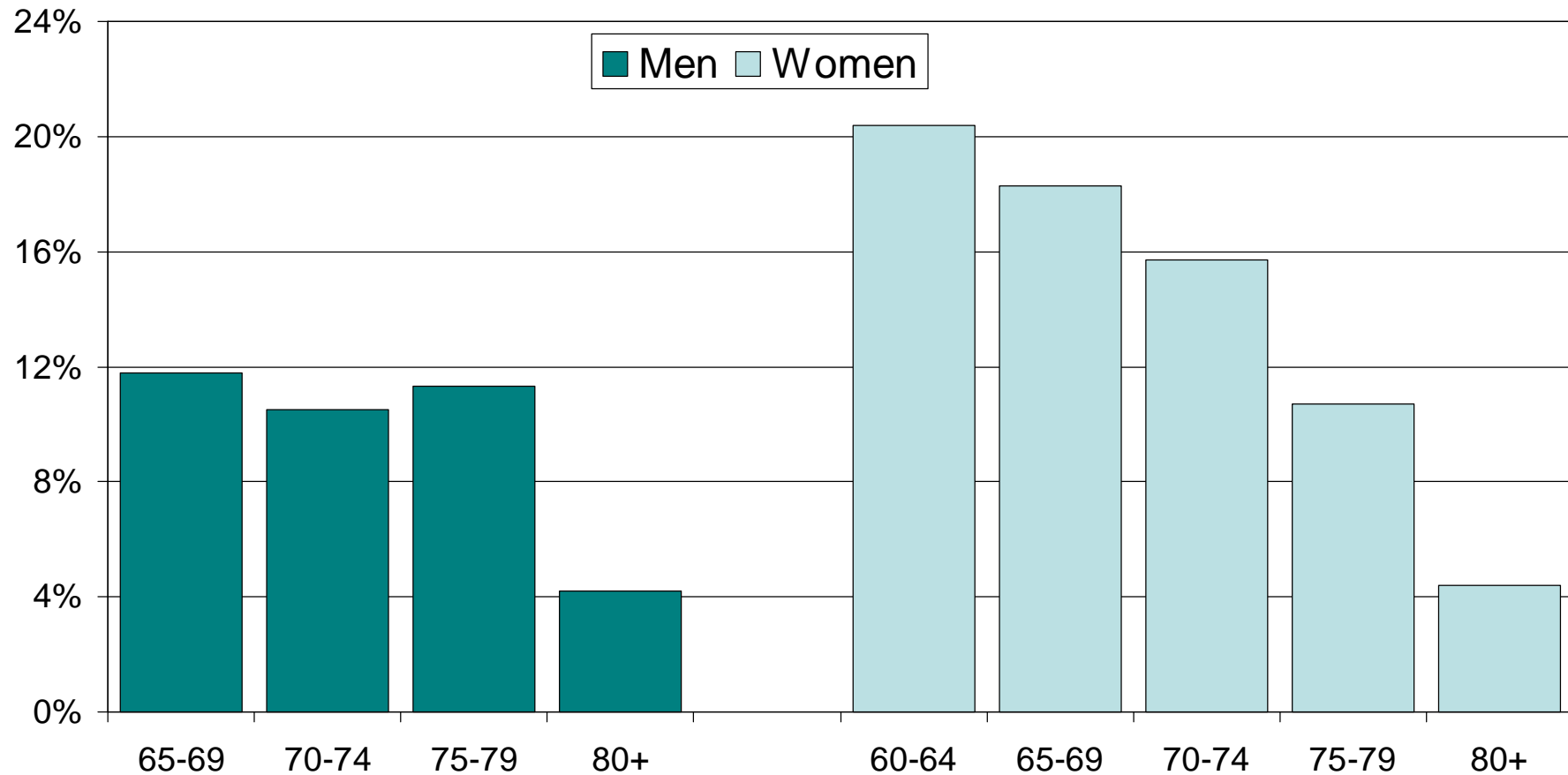
Volunteering post-retirement by age



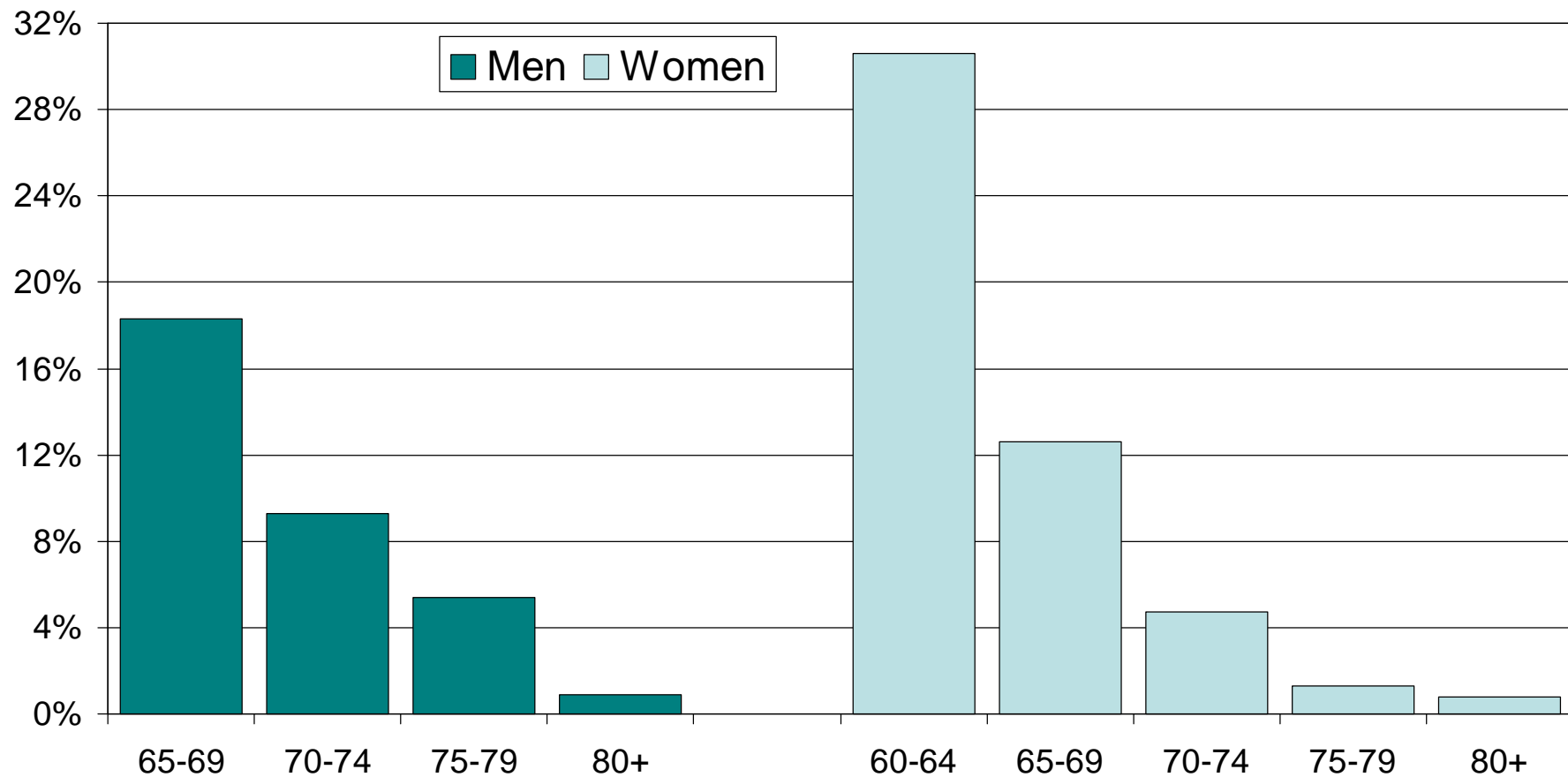
Volunteering post-retirement age by wealth



Caring post-retirement age

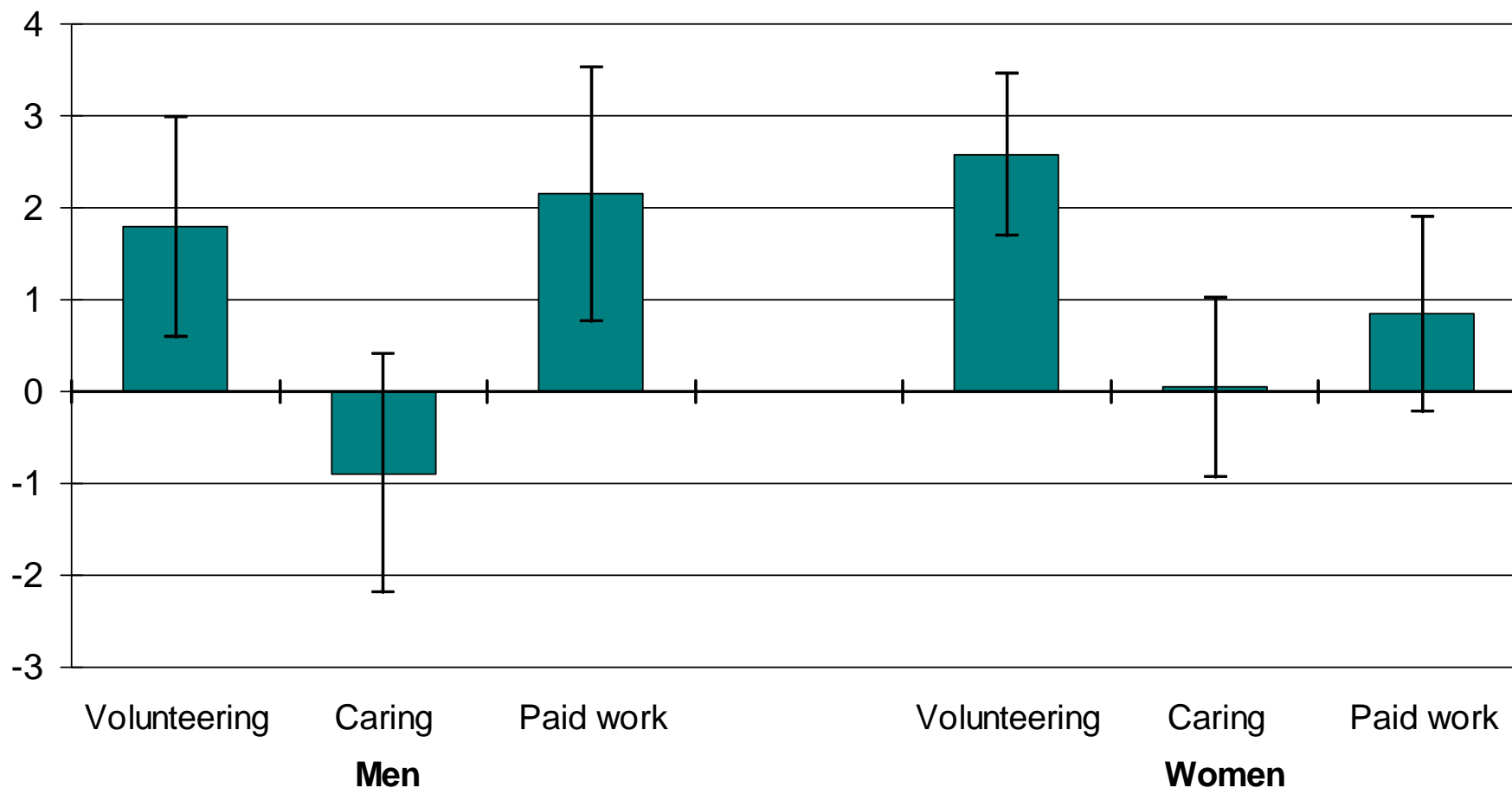


Paid work post-retirement age



Social productivity and quality of life (CASP19)

Fully adjusted* difference in score compared with those not active



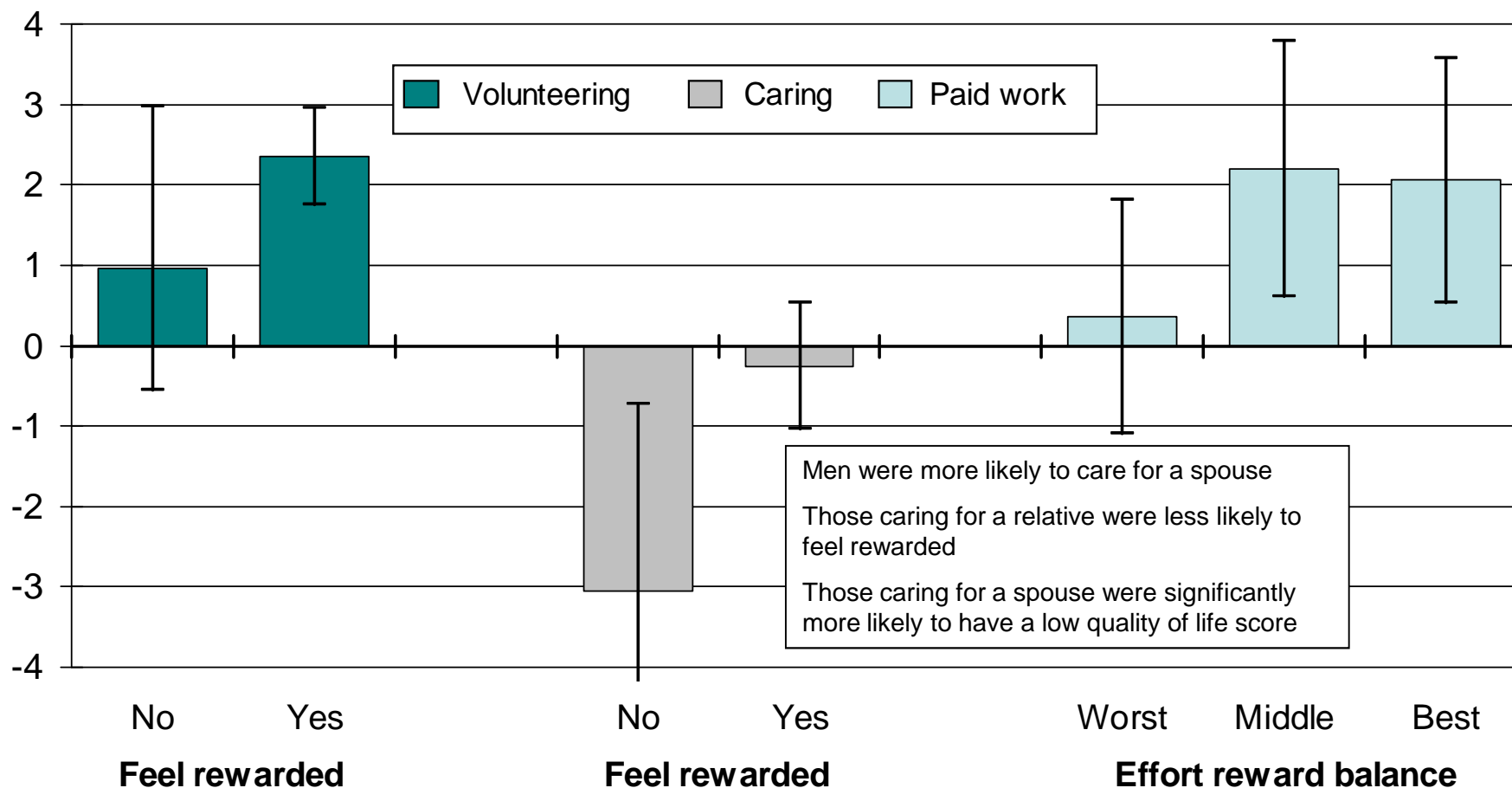
*Adjusted for age, marital status, health and wealth

Effort and reward (reciprocity) from post-retirement age activities

- Voluntary work/caring for someone: considering all the efforts that I have put into this, I am fully satisfied with what I have gained so far. (agree/disagree)
- Voluntary work/caring for someone: considering all the efforts that I have put into this, I have always received adequate appreciation from others. (agree/disagree)
- Paid work: get recognition for contribution; feel under time pressure/have to work fast; have freedom to decide how to do the work/have control of work activities

Social productivity, reward and quality of life

Fully adjusted* difference in score compared with those not active



*Adjusted for age, marital status, health and wealth

Some examples (1)

We have a women's centre just down the road here and I went there and asked them how I could help. And of course I never looked back, I've been at the women's centre ever since. And that again is helping women, sometimes in distress sometimes they're just lonely. I've had a lot of domestic violence training at victim support and we're now going to go through a new one in March this year at the women's centre because we do find that the police are very unsympathetic.

[I go there] only one day a week ... But it will become more because we're hoping to work with other organisations and have a crèche ... not a proper crèche, they're not childminders or anything but just to be there with mums who need some support in another building with another charity. That's going to happen soon. So it is becoming more and yesterday was my first attempt at organising a group for older women and that was interesting. So that's going to take off.

Woman aged 68

Some examples (2)

I'm a handy person, what they call a handyman. I'm quite handy really, as I say I'm a carpenter and do a bit of electrical work. Fix the washing machine and things like that. I got quite a (words indistinct) my friends have anything broken down ... If they have anything wrong I'll go and fix it, keep me occupied.

Man aged 69

[I go to the Mosque at] 3.30am ... I go and open the doors, I get there first ... At every prayer ... I open the doors for all five prayers.

We bought [the Mosque] as a factory, there were small rooms we knocked them down and made a big hall. These others have been newly built, the land was bought and they were made ... There are many Mosques, there are many facilities the children go to read there.

Man aged 67

White man, age 66, retired aged 58

We travel a lot. That's the other thing I do in my spare time, I do travel talks for the local hospice for charity. I did two last week actually. People like ... the groups like Probus ... retired businessman's association, and I talked to them about Japan where my daughter had lived for four years and we visited them quite a lot. So I do slide shows. And I did Peru on Friday ... I do those I suppose ... well once or twice a month I suppose. Have lunch and ... or evening sessions with different groups of people, talk to them about different places round the world that we've visited.

When I was at the county high school I looked after Modern Languages for a period of time as a governor. And so I had a talk about ... the area around Avignon. So I had some slides and did a talk in French ... we then set a test for the youngsters. And we tried to make the subject live rather than ... you know. So I could bring from something outside into the school. You know with my own knowledge of languages, which is reasonable, and with [the teacher's] expertise we could actually together make the language more interesting than just learning for the sake of learning.

White man, age 75, ex lorry driver, interviewed with his wife

R: I enjoy driving that's all there's to it ... Like as I say it's a bit rough at the moment with the cost of petrol and all that but we like to ... that's our pleasure getting around.

W: We only can go out say once a fortnight or a month now, can't we?

R: If we can keep the car moving we're quite happy ... we bomb off to a different town nearly every week. When it's good weather we'll do over the mountain way to Aberystwyth and up round the dams (Laughs) some people think we're a bit crazy ... In the winter and that we're just the same, we go off out and ... the car's warm.

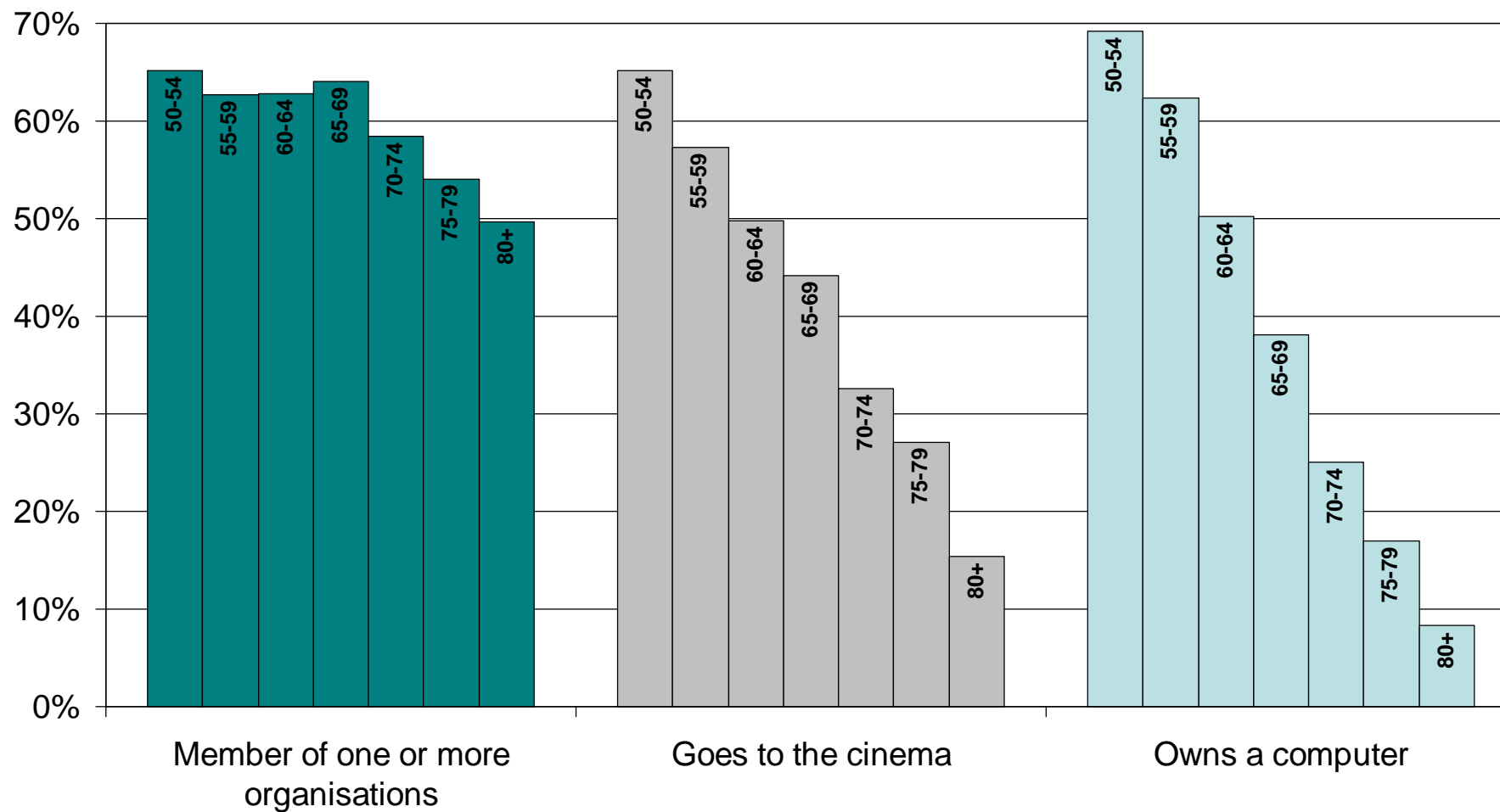
W: It's warmer in the car than in here because we can't afford to have our central heating on all the time, can we ... ?

R: It don't matter who you vote for ... that's out of all sense and reason what they've done to it. If you work out you're paying above four pound a gallon. Four pound a gallon for blooming petrol.

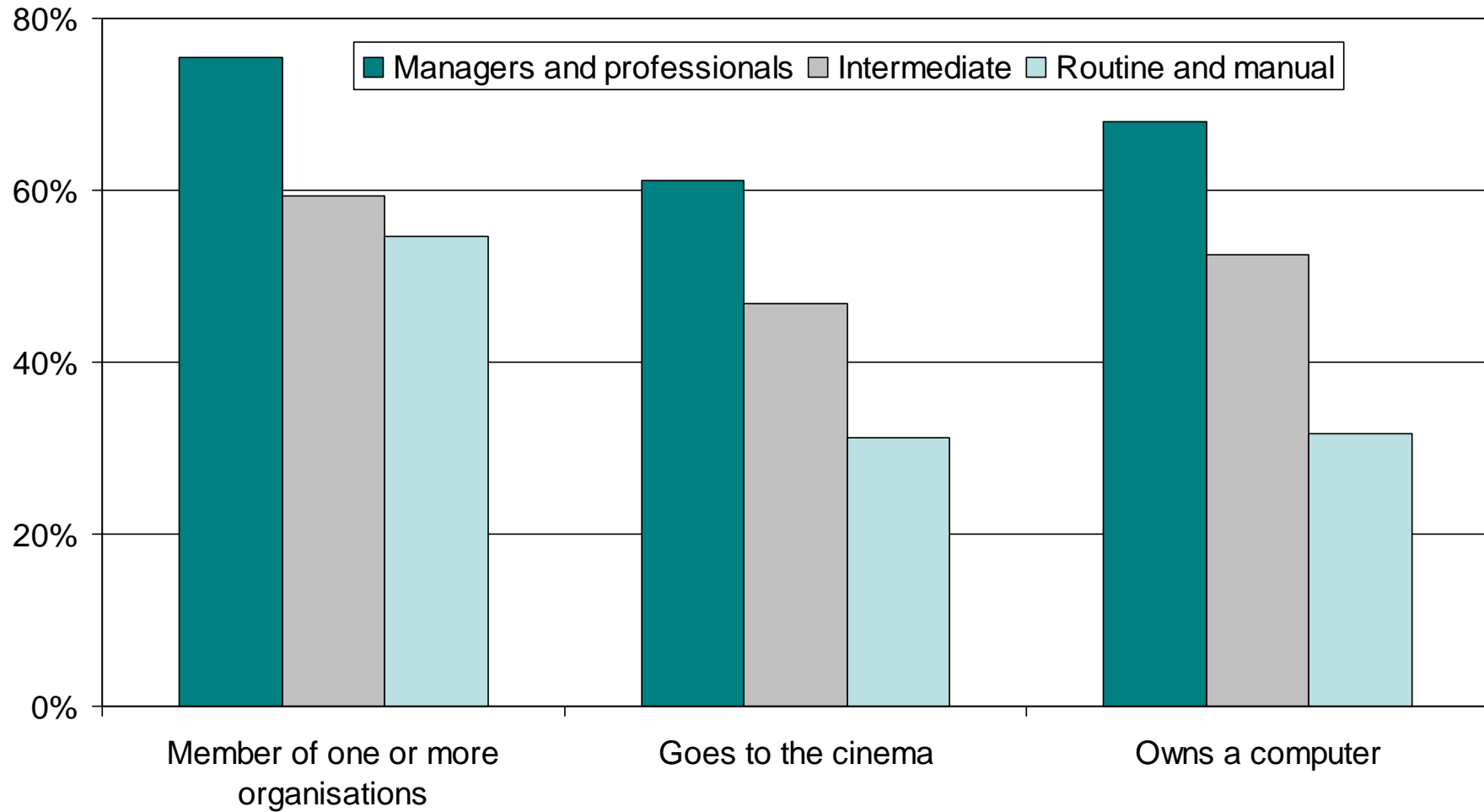
Social engagement

- Involvement in civic/social organisations (political party, trades union, tenants'/residents' association, religious group, charity)
 - Participation in recreational/cultural activities (social/sports clubs, evening classes, hobbies, going to theatre/cinema/museum/eating out)
 - Day trips, holidays
 - Contact with family and friends
 - Quality of social support from family and friends
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- In the following figures social detachment is defined as missing three of these dimensions (recreation and culture treated separately).

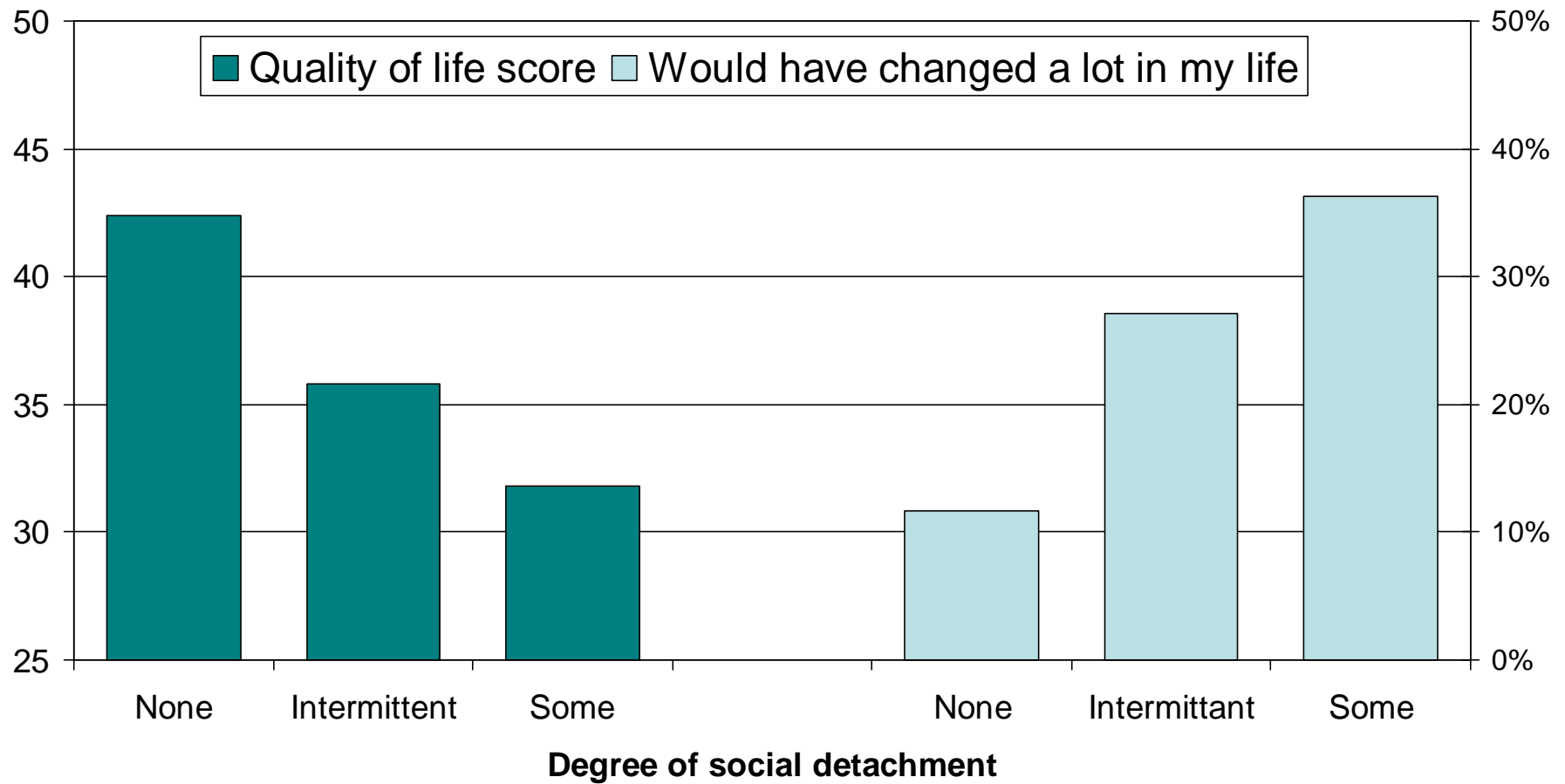
Age and social engagement



Occupational class and social engagement



Social detachment and wellbeing



Concluding comments

- Globally we have rapidly ageing populations, driven by increases in life expectancy (and declines in fertility).
- Not surprisingly, this has led to concerns about increasing proportions of financially and physically dependent adults, with consequent implications for reductions in social welfare.
- But dramatic shifts in health, economics, and the social and cultural location of older people raise the possibility of a socially productive third age.
- Indeed, alongside reductions in social welfare, policy increasingly focuses on the potential for productive (active) ageing.
- But attention needs to be paid to the rewards from such activities, as well as motivations for doing them.
- And to the enduring importance of class inequality: disability/health; cultural capital and social productivity; consumption; and quality of life.

Odds to be in professional/managerial class for five age cohorts

	<u>Year of birth</u>				
	< 1920	1920-29	1930-39	1940-45	1946-52
Class of origin					
Semi/un-skilled manual	1	1	1	1	1
Skilled manual	1.46	1.39*	1.35	1.51	1.26
Administrative/Skilled non-manual	1.86*	3.30	2.76	2.31	2.06
Manager/professional	2.76	4.94	4.02	3.40	3.32
Female	0.37	0.29	0.53	0.61	0.65

Bold figures $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$