



Ageing, Wellbeing and Architectural Design

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Overview

- Introduction: collaboration (interior) architecture and adult educational sciences
- Greying of population in Belgium
- Need for innovation in housing design
- Innovative housing projects for older people
- Conclusion

Architecture & interior architecture:
design for subjective wellbeing

Adult Education: housing
in later life, age friendly communities

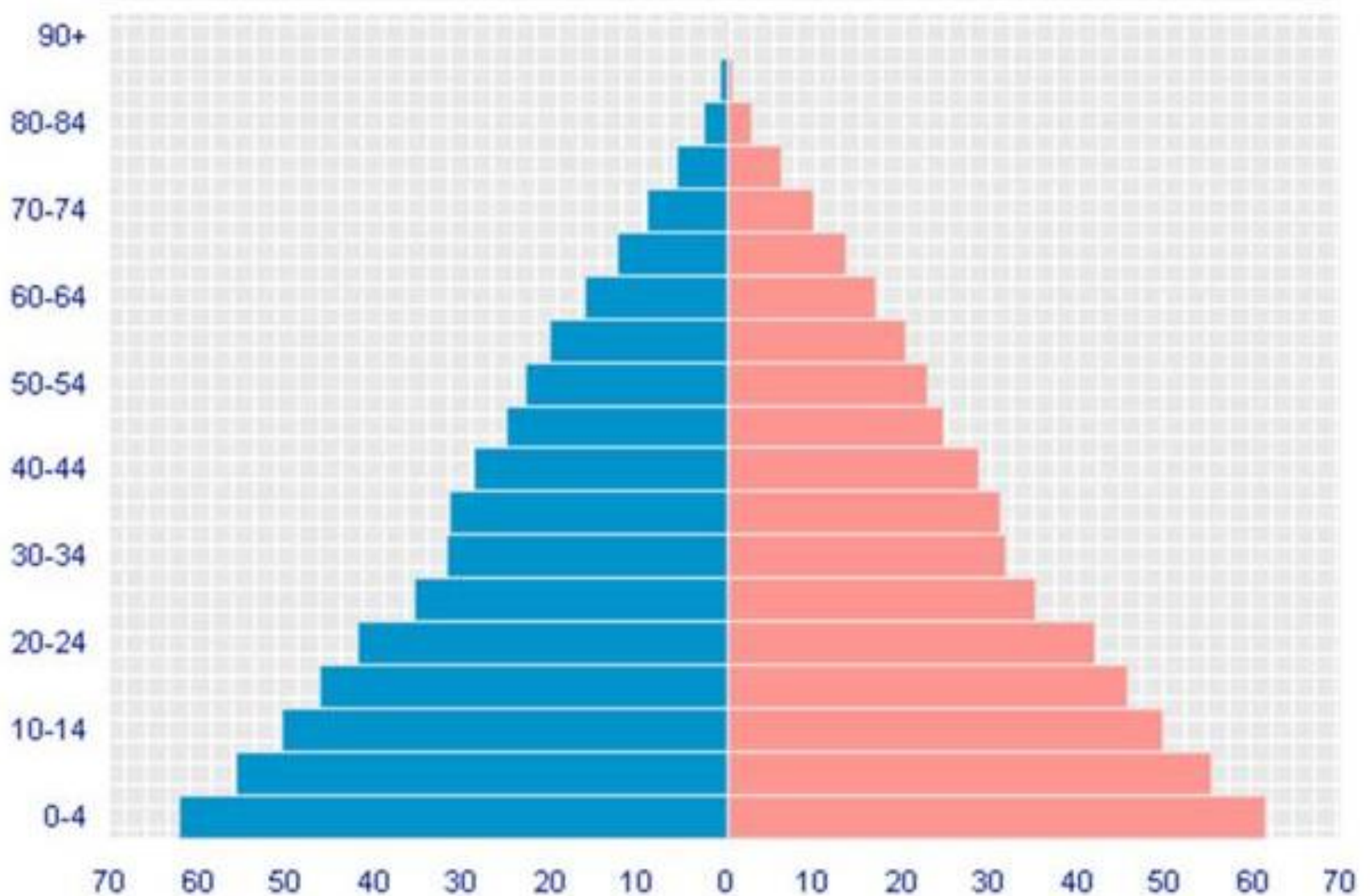


Greying of population in Belgium

Structure of Belgian population in 1881 Per age class of 5 years and for 10.000 inhabitants

MALES

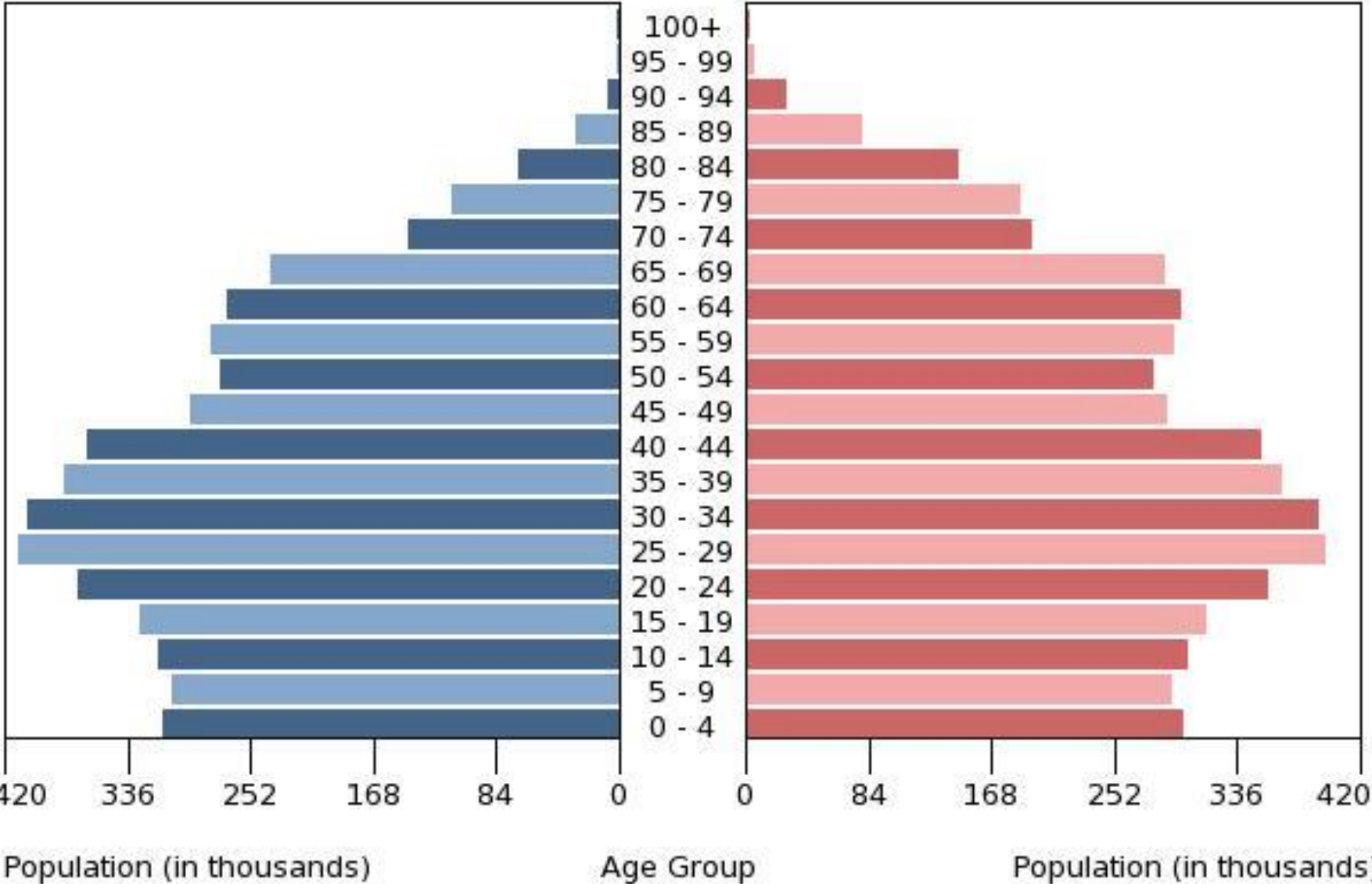
FEMALES



Belgium - 1991

Male

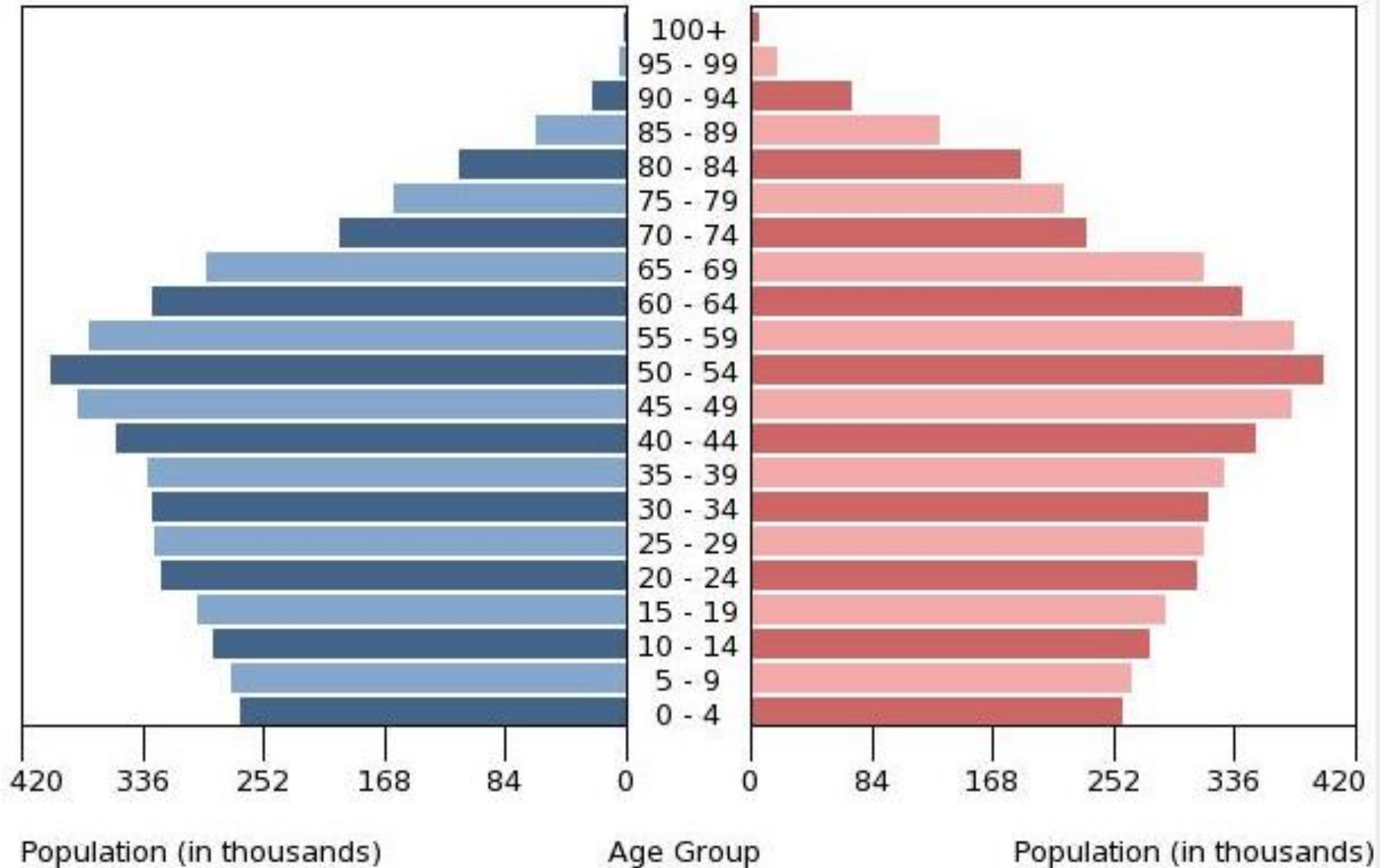
Female



Male

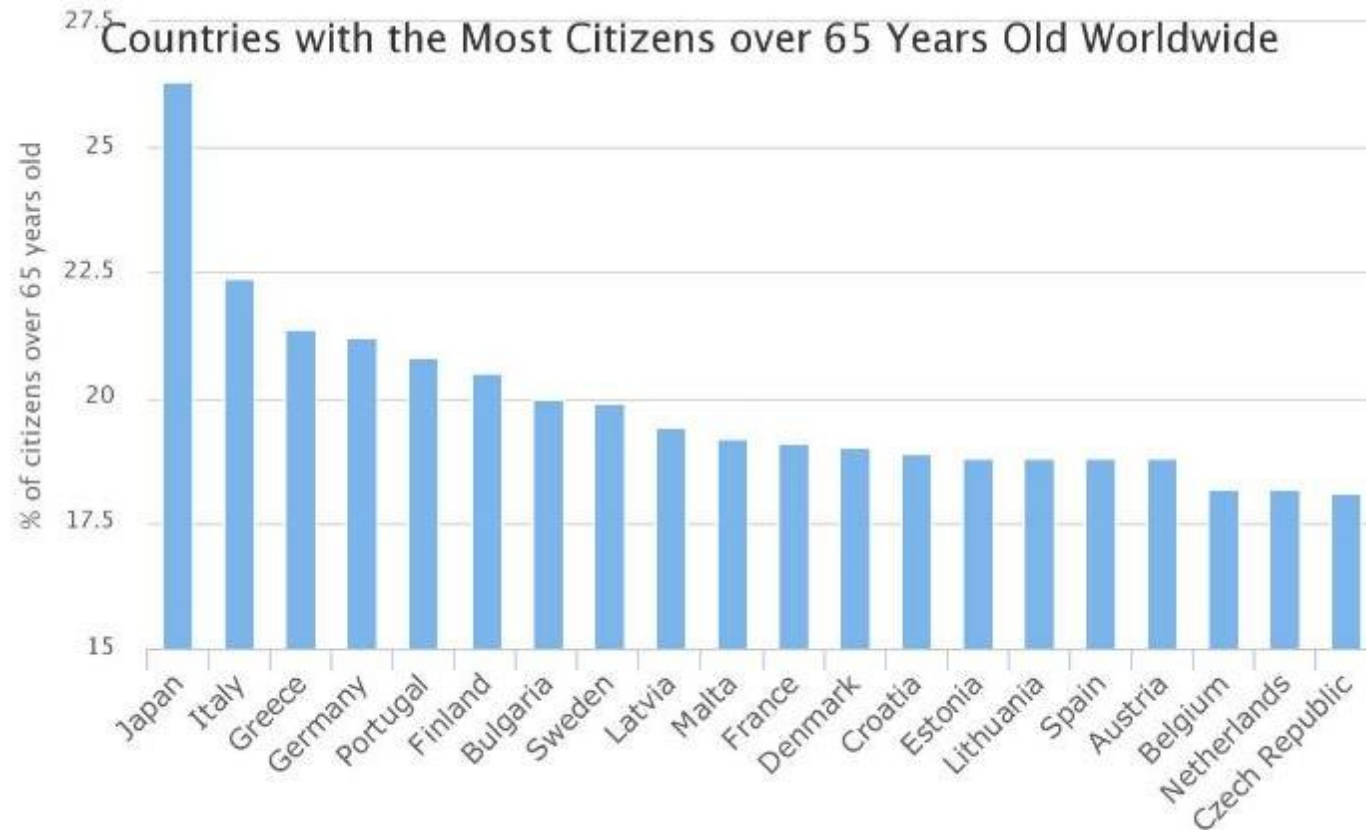
Belgium - 2015

Female



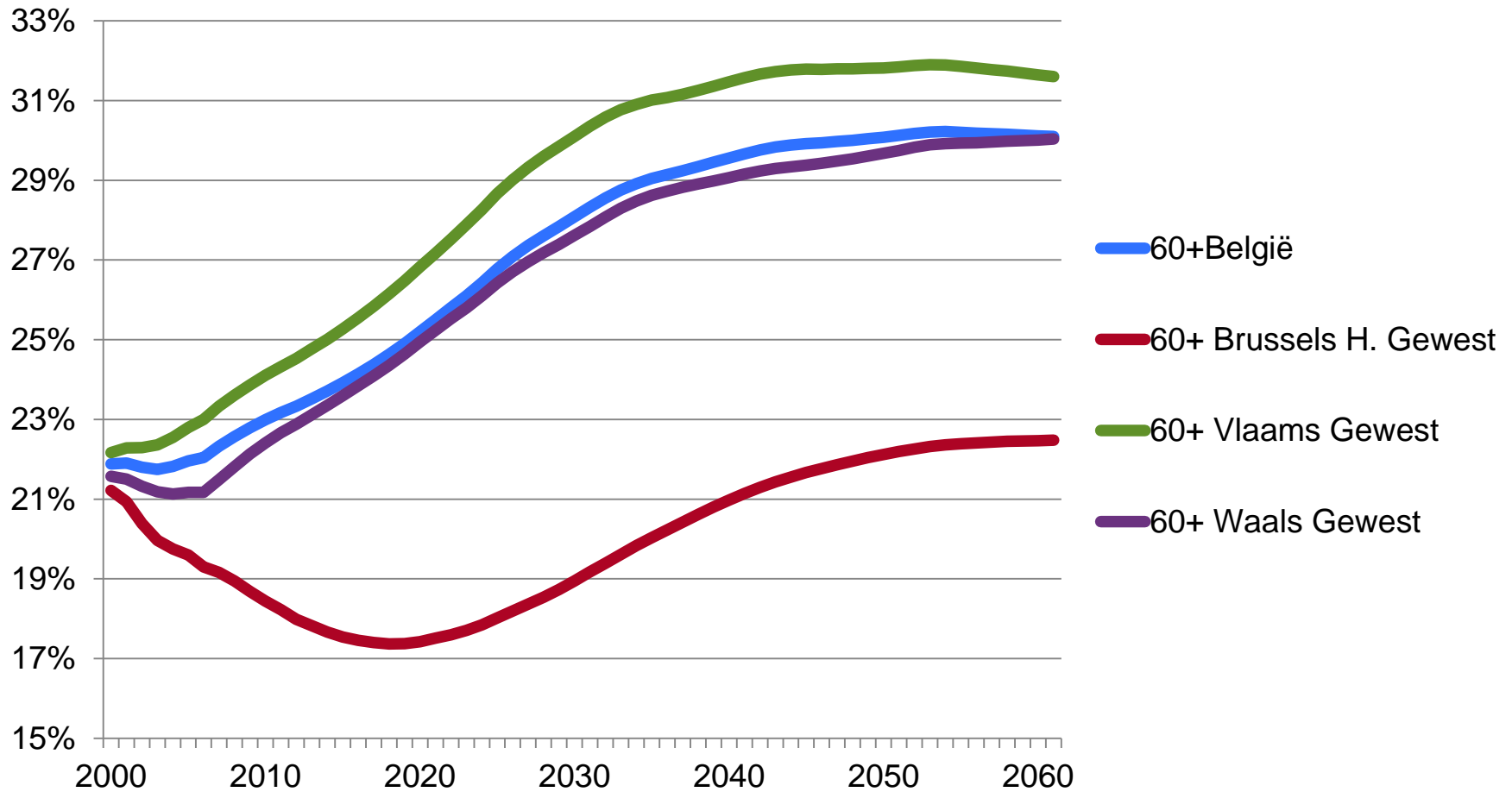
Greying of population in Belgium

- 23,8% of people aged 60+
- 18th oldest country in the world (in 2017)



www.worldatlas.com

Expectancy of greying of Belgian population



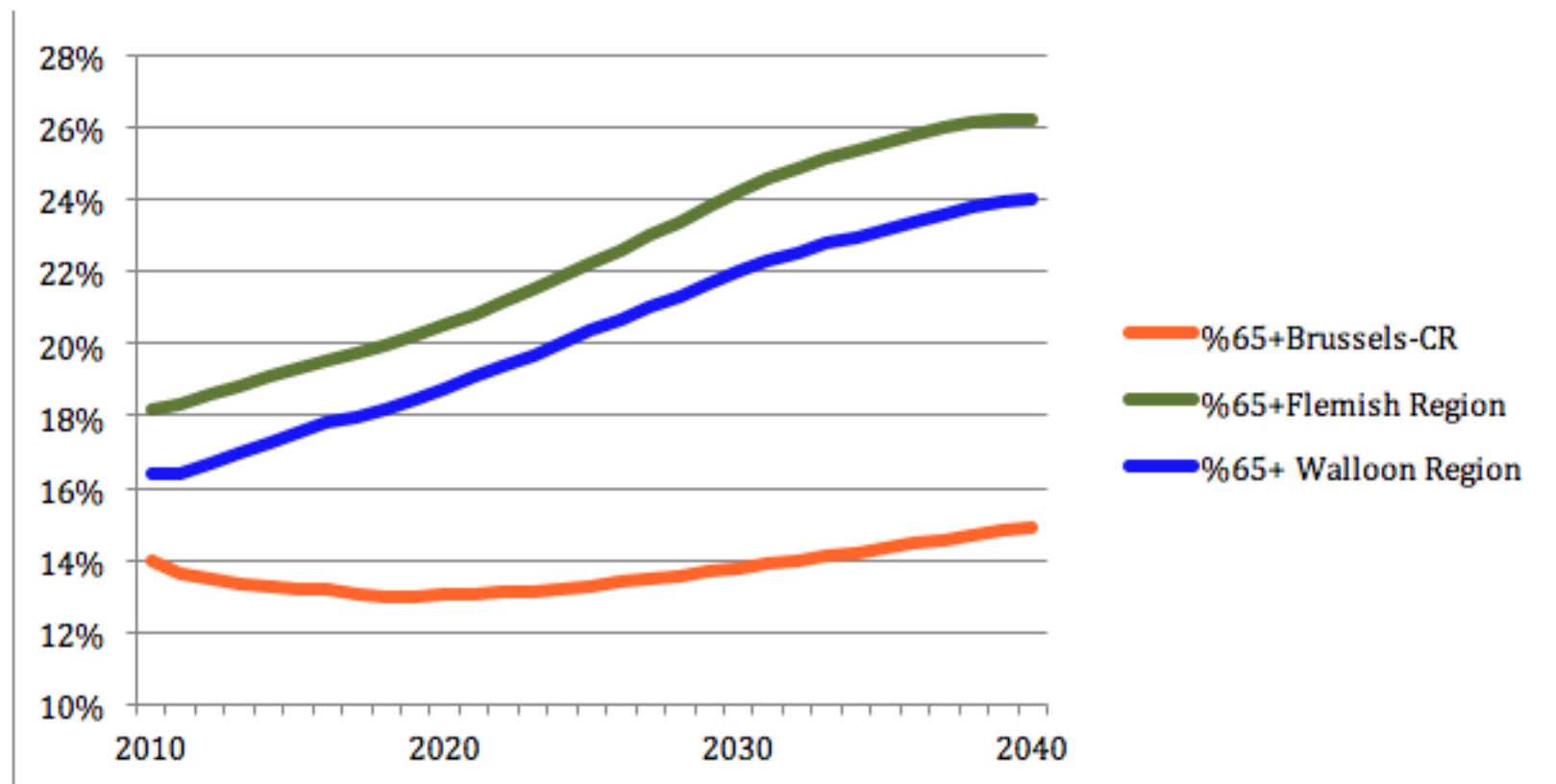
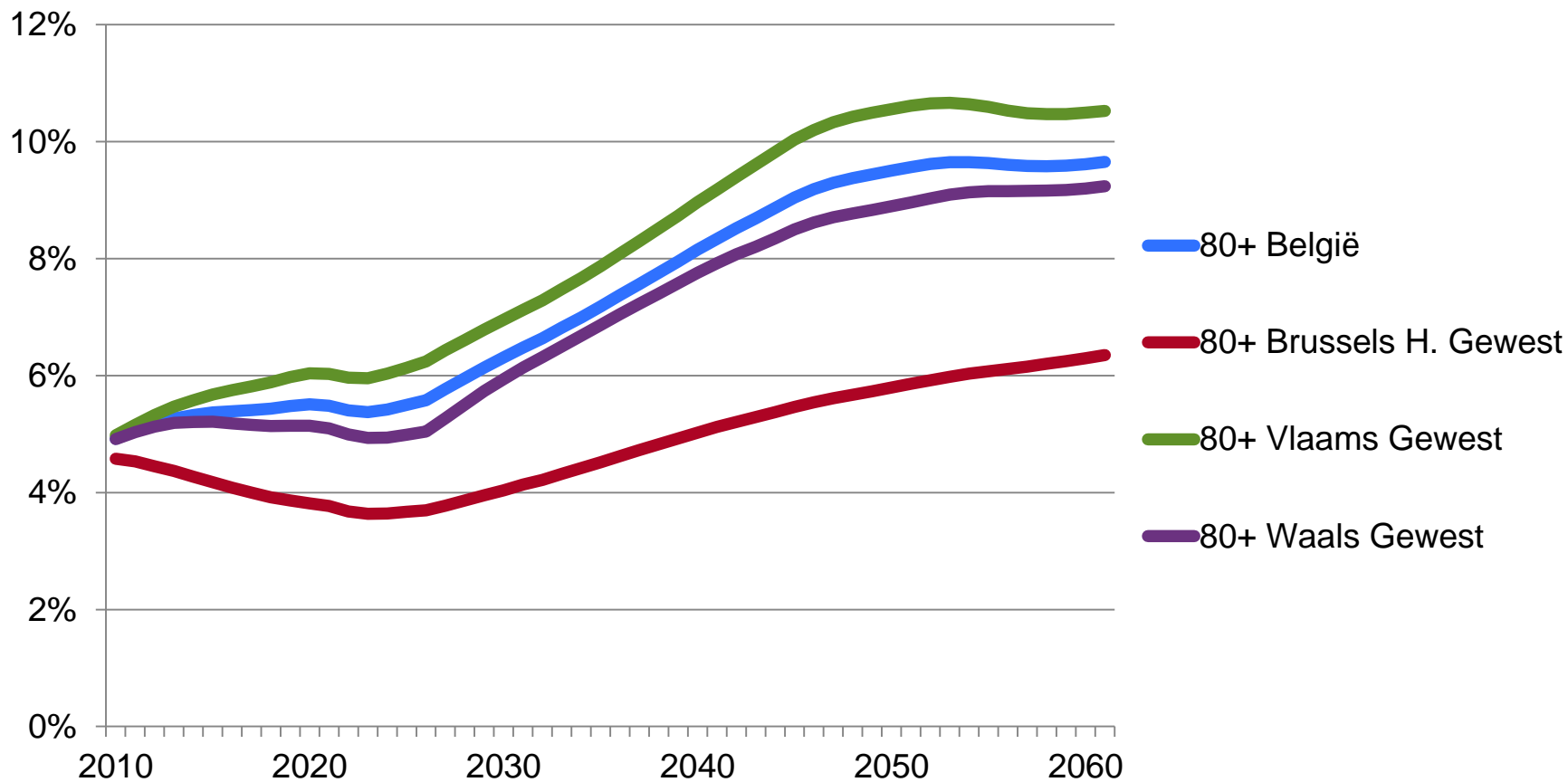


Figure 1. Demographic prognoses older population, in the three Belgian regions (source: FPBS, 2016)



Diversity of (future generations of) older people



Need for innovation in housing design



- Zeeman et al., 2016:

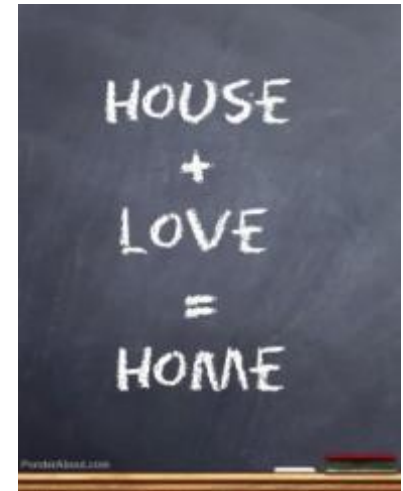
'current housing design practice is shaped by solution-focused approaches rather than guided by sound theoretical frameworks and research-based principles'

- Need for architectural design concepts that can have an impact on the subjective wellbeing of older people

Home:

architecture, interior architecture, objects

- ➔ Importance of other people
- ➔ Importance of wider context



People want **'to feel good'**

- ➔ Space needs to offer opportunities for meaningful activities
- ➔ When we grow older, the importance of a 'good' living environment increases

- Importance of attention for objective architectural parameters, but also growing request to consider issues regarding people's subjective wellbeing
- Home = primary setting for growing old



Ageing in place?

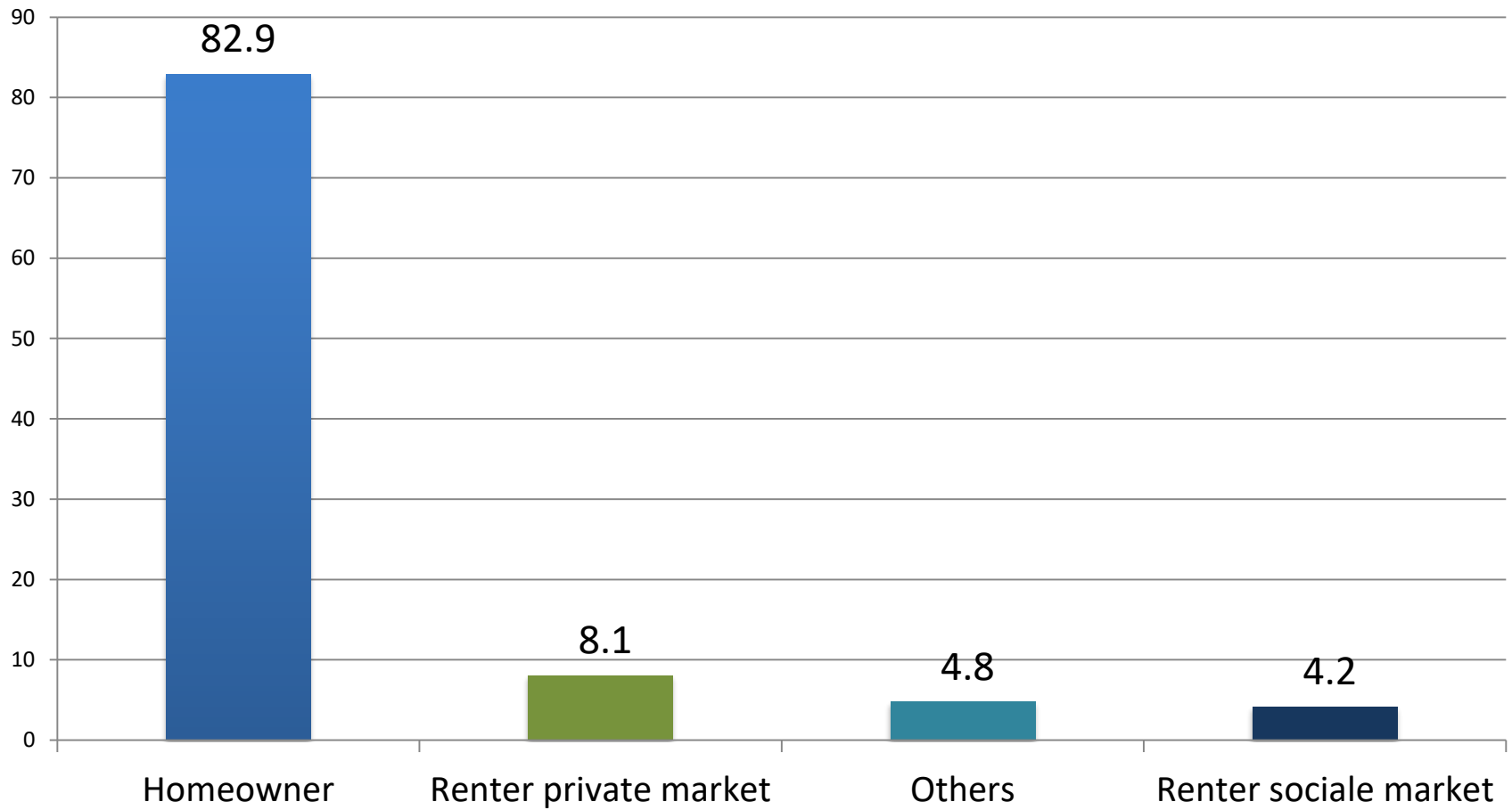
- What can we understand by this concept?
 - *'The ability to live in one's **own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.**'* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013)
- How older people reflect on this concept?
 - **Desire** expressed by many older people, even when care is needed, economic difficulties are experienced or when older people live in inadequate houses or deprived areas (Gilleard et al., 2007; Löfqvist et al., 2013; Peace et al., 2011; Wagner et al., 2010; Weeks, et al., 2013; Wiles et al., 2012)
- How policy could contribute to this desire?
 - *'Meeting the desire and ability of people, through **the provision of appropriate services and assistance, to remain living relatively independently in the community in his or her current home or an appropriate level of housing.**'*
(WHO, 2009, p.4)

Housing situation of older people in Belgium?

- Belgians are born with a 'brick' in their stomach
 - **High homeownership rate**: 72.4% of all households in Belgium own their residence, but this increases to 82.7% among Flemish people aged 60 and over
 - Belgian government has stimulated and subsidized homeownership since World War II
 - Having a home of its own is considered to be a determined step in our housing career
 - Belgium is recognized to have a **static housing system**, which refers to a low level of household mobility (van der Heijden, Dol, & Oxley, 2011)



Ownership (De Witte et al., 2012)

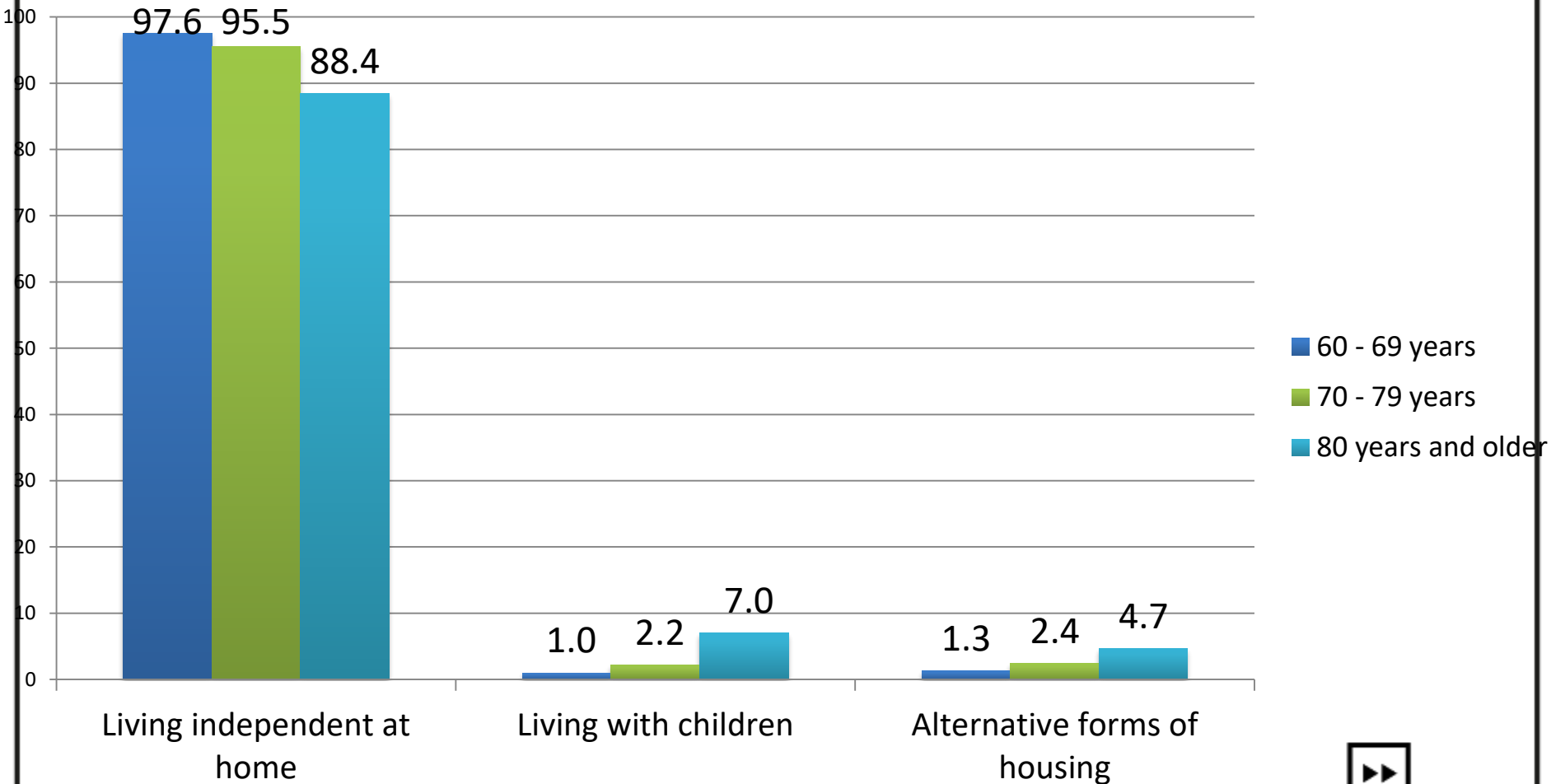


Housing situation of older people in Belgium?

- Some of these 'bricks' have seen better days
 - The Belgian housing stock '*is rather old, with many elderly households concentrated in badly-equipped and badly-isolated houses, which are often too large for their needs*' (De Decker & Dewilde, 2010)
 - Results indicated that 37% of the housing stock in Flanders is of insufficient quality (Winters et al., 2015)
- Inadequate and inaccessible homes form a risk for the health, wellbeing, and the independence of older people (Iwarsson & Isacson, 1998; Oswald et al., 2007; Sixsmith & Sixsmith, 2008 etc.)
- Alternative forms of housing are not a generalized solution, but they can be an addition to the current range of housing that is available for older people (Bamford, 2005; Glass, 2013, Lawton, 1981, Smetcoren et al., 2014)



Housing conditions older people in Belgium (De Witte et al., 2012)



Innovative housing projects for older people



“She’ll come round to the idea of
a Granny Flat eventually.”

Abbeyfield, Etterbeek (Brussels)





Housing facility for older people, South London, design door Witherford Watson Mann Arch. Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2016/01/23/Loneliness-old-people-elderly-home-southwark-witherford-watson-mann_n_9058786.html

Maison Biloba Huis (Brussels)



Conclusion

- Designers can be inspired to stimulate the creation of a built environment with the potential to contribute to the SWB of current and future generations of older people
- Huge challenge and opportunity!
 - Self management of older people
 - Keep control over own life & own choices: mastery
 - Involve older people **during the** process
 - Stimulate pro-active behaviour and anticipation, create awareness about housing possibilities and options

Wellbeing elements should carry at least as much weight as technical, rational and economic considerations in the [(interior) architectural design] process
(Knudstrup, 2011)

THANK YOU!

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