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Theme 5: Ageing and intergenerational relations

Title: Norms of filial obligations and actual support in Europe

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Abstract:

Country differences in intergenerational relationships are not only attributable to economic, policy, housing contexts but also to a cultural tendency towards closer intergenerational ties. This study is a cross-national comparison regarding the relationship between norms of filial obligation and actual giving of financial support and care. We will examine to what extent norms of filial obligation are consistent with helping behavior, and whether the responsiveness to norms varies by country context. The data used in this study come from the Generation and Gender Project .

Introduction

Family support can be defined as social, emotional, instrumental, and economic exchanges (Treas and Cohen, 2007) but shared housing is an important part of these exchanges. Albertini, Kohli and Vogel (2007, p. 326) consider co-residence as "*the Southern European way of transferring resources from parents to children and vice versa*" (italic in orig.) but for the purpose of this study we will limit the definition of caring to practical help (or personal care), emotional assistance and financial support.

Different concepts can be used to describe the scope of the study, like the "intergenerational exchange" (Eggebeen, 2002), a concept more encompassing as it include routine exchanges (besides support and care) but such activities are difficult to measure due to their episodic frequency. In a similar way, for the purpose of this study we will not insist on exchanges in the context of families living together since the direction of flows is unclear and difficult to assess (are the housing services more important? are there any services delivered that complement co-residence, like meals, laundry? are there financial transfers, routine services or other services exchanged for housing services?).

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Attitudes, Values or Norms?

The conceptual apparatus used to study the cultural factors involved in the explanation of intergenerational exchanges is diverse. Many studies use attitudes as a central concept (Daatland, Veenstra, Herlofson, 2012), coupled with concepts like values (van Bavel et al. 2010) or norms (Gans and Silverstein, 2006). All these concepts circle around the idea of familism (Daatland & Herlofson, 2003) or familialism (Gans, 2007) a broad term that describes "attitudes about the centrality and importance of the family and values surrounding the enactment of help and support norms between family members" (Parrot and Bengston, 1999, p. 76). While attitudes are seen as the individual orientation toward a specific situation - in our case intergenerational exchanges (using the language of Rokeach, 1973), values are principles that transcend the particular. Attitudes and values are internal (the later higher in hierarchy) but they are not norms, they do not represent standards of behavior, external thus social. Social norms are general (pertaining to the general relationship between individuals and their parents, for example) and they are different from expectations (what a specific parent is expecting from his own children) but many studies measure only the social (general or universal) expectations and not the individual, specific expectations (Lee, Netzer and Coward, 1994). The relation between normative solidarity and personal or individual orientation is important, as Jappens & van Bavel (2012) shown that in explaining functional solidarity the normative climate has a significant impact while the individual attitudes do not.

A robust perspective is the approach of intergenerational solidarity, a multidimensional concept (Parrott and Bengston, 1999) that includes different construct of solidarity (associational, affectual, consensual, functional, normative and structural). Functional solidarity refers to the extent to which help and support is given, normative solidarity can be equalized to familism (normative expectations) and structural solidarity (opportunity structures) represents the structures that inhibit or provide opportunities for intergenerational exchanges. Using these concepts, this study is a test of the relation between the normative solidarity and the functional solidarity while controlling for the structural solidarity.

Using the delimitation of Rossi and Rossi (1990, apud. van Bavel et al. 2010) we will distinguish between filial norms (the normative obligations towards parents) and parental norms (the normative obligations towards children), and also general kinship norms (obligations towards kin in general). Our intention is to focus on filial norms and the .

Comparative studies proved that filial norms are supported in Europe, but with a different intensity between countries (Daatland and Herlofson, 2003; Lowenstein and Daatland, 2006). It has been shown that in Southern and Central European countries care is perceived as a responsibility of the family, whereas in Northern European countries weaker obligation to care are prevalent (Haber Kern and Szyldik, 2010). Filial and parental obligation tend to be weaker in Western than in Eastern European countries (van Bavel et al., 2010).

Factors or structural solidarity

We will use the theoretical model of intergenerational solidarity described by Albertini, Kohli, Vogel (2007) that differentiate between a micro (individual and family factors) and a macro

(anything of higher order) level and between three categories of conditions: structural, institutional and cultural.

1. Structural factors - Macro level

In cross-national comparison the demographic, labor force structure and income distribution must be taken into account. The demographic structure of families has a direct effect on the total (aggregate) help towards the parents: the reduction of the number of (adult) children means lower level of help; in low-level income countries direct help from the children might be more common.

2. Institutional factors - Macro level: legal obligations of intergenerational support and Welfare state

Intergenerational care is more prevalent in southern and central European countries, where children are legally obligated to support parents in need (Haberkern and Szydlik, 2010). Twigg & Grand (1998) shows that legal obligation of filial responsibility toward aged parents are linked in French legislation (and thus in many country that follow the Napoleonic Code, including Romania) to determined patterns of inheritance while in countries that follow the common law (e.g. England) there are no legal obligation to support the elderly and testamentary freedom is the legal principle. But it is not clear if the legal obligations are enforced (does the jurisprudence shows cases concerning the legal obligations of elderly parents?) or if there are largely ignored in different societies.

Saraceno and Keck (2010) consider that the welfare state influence on intergenerational exchanges is profound: obligations regarding the care or the financial support (whether upward or downward) can be conceptualize different models of intergenerational policy regimes. The resulting typology is threefold: the familism by default type (or unsupported familism), the supported familism type and the de-familialisation regime (that reduce family responsibilities and dependencies). Similar typologies that stem from Leitner (2003) (but focused on parents with small children) were used on Eastern European countries, being argued that re-familialisation is a common phenomenon Eastern-Europe (Szelewa and Polakowski, 2008; Szikra and Tomka (2009))

3. Cultural factors - macro level: religious traditions.

Religion is one of the main sources of expressed moral obligations, since the religious doctrines prescribe the appropriate behavior between parents and children, emphasizes helping behavior and inculcate collectivistic values that insist on helping those in need (Gans, Silverstein, Lowerstein, 2009). Still most study are trying to assess the effect of religiosity on an individual level on helping behavior.

We can see more women (than men) rejecting the societal expectations of filial obligation. This phenomenon was documented for Netherlands by van Bavel et al. (2010) and Dykstra and

Fokkema (2012) but the reverse is true for Eastern Europe. This could be a indicator of a cultural change: the sexist distribution of intergenerational solidarity between daughters and sons is challenged by women in some societies but in other the pace of change is slower.

4. Structural factors - Micro level: gender, age, distance, life-course, need.

The levels of help appear low in Europe because routine assistance tend to be episodic rather than in continuous form, because it takes the form of a response to a specific need. Specific services are used, like in case of health related need (Brandt, Haberkern, Szydlik, 2009). In the same way Silverstein, Gans and Yang (2006) shows that filial norms are activated in case of need (deteriorated health) and this calls for a dynamic perspective on the intergenerational solidarity.

Gender differences are also documented in the literature: men give financial help and women are more likely to give face-to-face assistance. In the same time women are greatly involved in activities that structure family events. Silverstein, Gans and Yang (2006) have shown that daughters are more likely to offer help (in time of need) and more toward mothers than fathers. It is possible that quality of the relation can explain this, since the mother-daughter tie is stronger than other parent-child relationship (Eggebeen, 2002).

Daatland , Veenstra and Herlofson (2012) study shows that with age the intergenerational exchanges are diminished and family responsibilities are strongly structured by age (expectations on children tend to decrease with age and expectations on parents tend to increase with age). Altruism theory can explain this, but also the theories of adult development (with age the relationship between parents and children improves).

The effects of life course is also important. It has been shown that normative transitions (living home and establishing separate households, marriage, becoming parents etc.) improves the relationships between parents and children (possible explanations: a normative transition is seen as a sign of adulthood). Non-normative transitions of children (i.e. divorce) usually has a negative effect on the quality of the relations in the US (Shapiro, 2012). Studies from Europe (Schienk and Dykstra, 2012) showed that children non-normative transitions do not predict changes in intergenerational solidarity (while parent divorce can lead to fewer contacts and exchanges). In Eastern Europe family solidarity is resilient despite disruption or other family changes (Moor and Komter, 2012).

Data and method.

To fulfil our intention we used the data from a comparative study conducted around 2005, the Generations and Gender Project (GGP)³, wave 1, for several eastern-European countries (Bulgaria, Georgia, Lithuania, Poland⁴, Romania and Russia) and western European countries

³ More on the GGP project: <http://www.ggp-i.org/>

⁴ Data was collected in nov. 2010-feb. 2011

(Austria, France, Germany, Norway). From the total respondents we have selected only those who still have a living parent (see table 1 for the total sample).

Dependent variables.

Our focus will be on the actual support given to parents, considering three types of help offered in the last 12 months:

1. regular practical help (or personal care) or the help given toward day-to-day activities (like eating, getting up from the bed, clothing, washing or using the toilet).
2. regular emotional support (listening to the problems of the parent)
3. financial support (giving large amount of money or assets to parents)

On the other hand, we will focus on the normative solidarity. At this stage we will concentrate on filial obligation, captured by a constructed index, where we recoded (0 total disagreement, 4 total agreement) the following questions:

- Children should take responsibility for care parents if parents in need.
- Children should adjust working lives to the needs of their parents.
- Children should provide financial help if parents financial difficulty.
- Children should live with parents when no longer look after themselves.

Independent variables.

We will control the relation between filial obligation and support to parents by controlling for several micro-level structural factors.

We expect that the daughters will offer more help to their parents; co-residence with parents provides more opportunities for help; the presence of siblings will dilute the concentration on the respondent; the need of the parent (a disability of a parent) will constitute a powerful incentive to provide help; older generations have elder parents in need of help, so group age is important for our topic; education of the respondent is a proxy for social status, and we expect that higher educated respondents will have more resources at their disposal and thus will exhibit higher level of support; if the respondent have children, a partner, health problems or are employed we would expect higher role strains and lower time-availability and thus lower support given.

Method of analysis.

We will model the three types of support by means of logistic regression. Although the filial obligation index is introduced as a factor in the analysis we will consider it a "covariate" and we will refrain from implying any causality relations.

Descriptive results

Table 1. Descriptive results

	Aut	Bg	Fra	Geo	Ger	Lit	Nor	Pol	Rou	Rus
% offering Regular practical help	2,8	3,8	2,6	4,9	3,1	3,7	3,6	5,4	3,3	5,7
% offering Regular emotional help	33,4	20	24,4	19,5	9,9	21,9	31,5	19,9	11,3	26,4
% offering financial help	1,7	0,4	2,3	1,1	0,8	-	0,7	1,6	1,1	4,1
[National] mean of filial obligation index	-	2,81	2,24	3,25	2,42	2,5	2,55	2,44	2,7	3,03
stdev	-	0,55	0,92	0,49	0,74	0,54	1,14	0,58	0,51	0,52
Working sample (N):	4809	9110	6794	6365	6383	5975	10061	11518	6672	6464

As suspected the proportion of those offering financial help to parents is the smallest between the three types of support (between 0,4% in Bulgaria and 4,1% in Russia). Regular practical help is also less common (2,6% in France and 5,7% in Russia offer personal care to their parents) in the countries we studied. Regular emotional help offered to parents shows larger variations: between 9,9% in Germany and 33,4% in Austria.

There is a strong sense of filial obligation in the general population (the score varies from 2,24 in France to 3,25 in Georgia), without visible differences between generations or between situations of intergenerational co-residence and non co-residence.

It appears that western European countries show smaller level of support for filial obligation but also a higher variance of the score, thus a possible indicator of the presence of different populations.

We can interpret the national mean of filial obligation as an indicator of normative solidarity in a specific country and as such it can impose on individuals. But it is more appropriate to look at the values of filial obligation index of the individuals who actually provided help to their parents (Annex 1, Figure 1, 2 and 3). Figure 1 will show us that we can identify a group of countries where the support is low and the mean of filial obligation is also low (Fr, Ger, Lit, Nor, Ro, Bg) and countries where support is provided by a larger proportion and the score is also higher (Rus, Geo). Only in the case of Poland we can see a mismatch - higher level of practical help and lower level of support for filial obligation. If we look at the individuals providing regular practical help the situation and the mean calculated only for those who provided help we can see that the situation remains largely the same.

Figure 2 shows the situation of emotional help (lowest proportion of those who provide regular emotional help in Germany and Romania) and the stability between those who provide and those who don't provide support. Figure 3, analyzing the financial help shows that the

population who provide such support differ from the larger population , especially in Norway, Germany, France or Romania (and less so in Russia, Georgia or Poland).

Multivariate analysis.

Norms of filial obligation play an important role in all forms of support tested in this study. When modeling for practical help in 5 countries out of 8 stronger filial obligations are consistent with higher level of help provided. In the case of emotional help in 4 countries we found the same consistence, while for financial help in 5 situation (out of 7) the relationship holds.

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Annex 1.

Figure 1. Regular practical help (personal care) and norms of filial obligation: national climate (left) vs. specific group orientation (right)

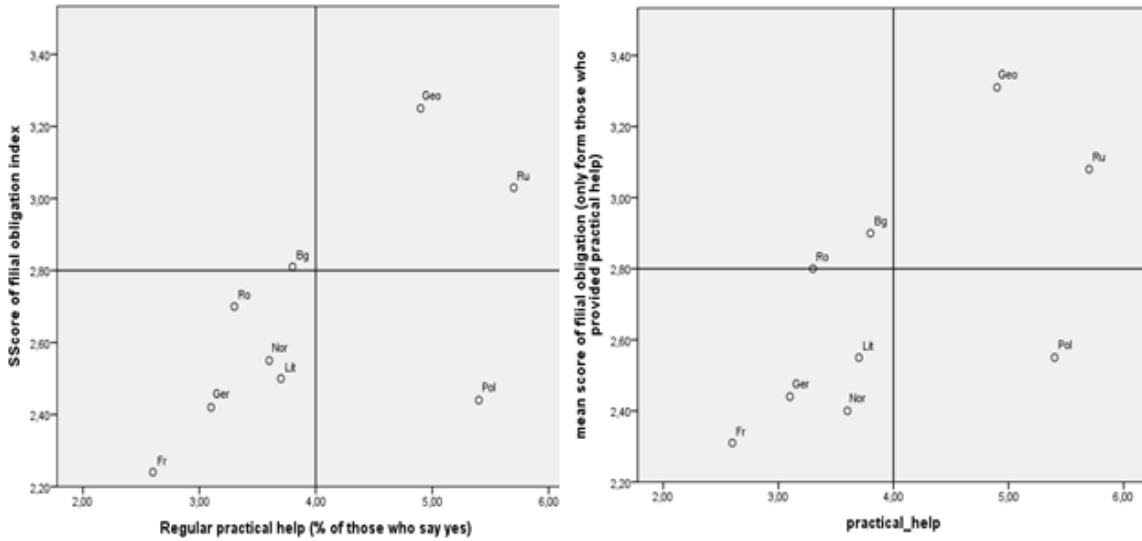


Figure 2. Emotional help and norms of filial obligation: national climate (left) vs. specific group orientation (right)

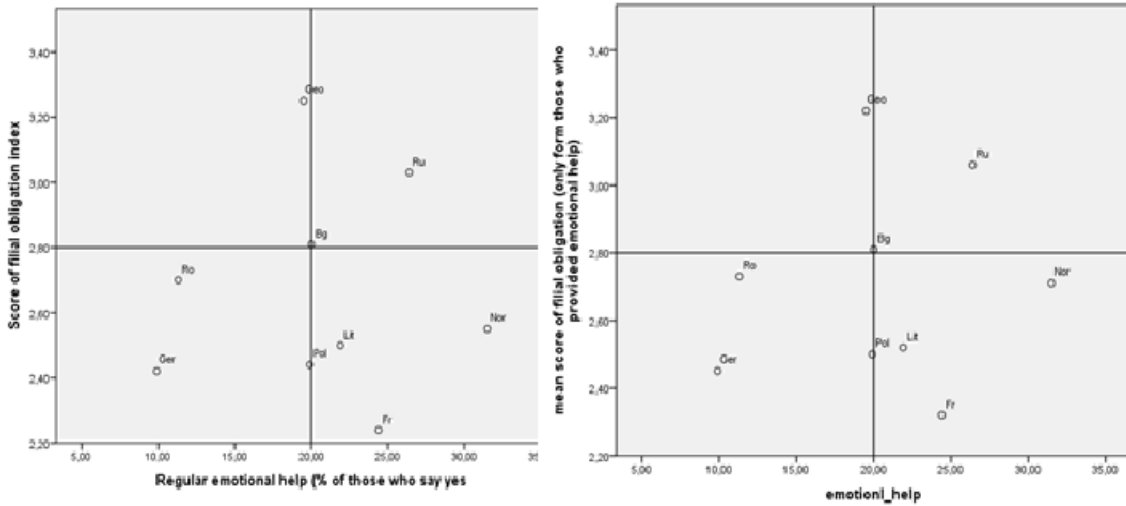
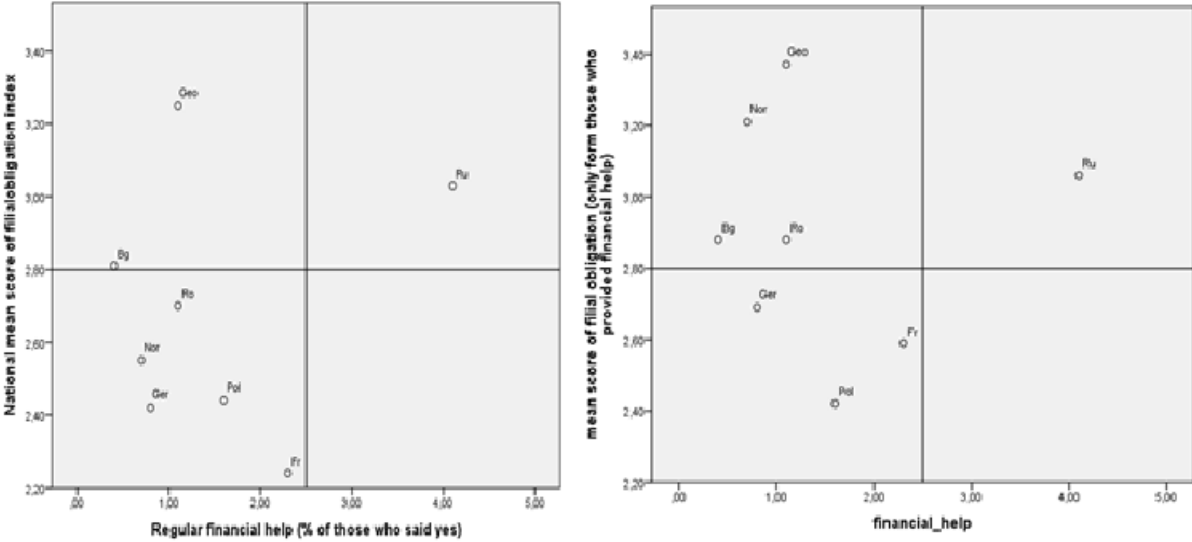


Figure 3. Financial help and norms of filial obligation: national climate (left) vs. specific group orientation (right)



Annex 2. Multilevel analysis

Table 2. Logistic regression results for practical help (personal care)

	Bulgaria		Georgia		Germany		Lithuania		Norway		Poland		Romania		Russia	
	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)
Filial obligation index	,003	1,380	,023	1,334	,224	1,143	,720	1,049	,184	1,067	,000	1,390	,009	1,435	,041	1,273
Co-residence	,000	2,174	,000	2,606	,000	7,297	,000	8,721	,000	8,516	,000	2,884	,000	2,107	,000	5,374
age group	,000		,000		,000		,000		,000		,000		,000		,000	
30-54	,000	3,209	,000	2,559	,000	6,203	,000	9,177	,000	3,699	,000	4,686	,001	2,428	,000	5,134
55-65	,000	10,348	,000	3,171	,000	15,204	,000	24,156	,000	7,962	,000	10,994	,000	6,526	,000	7,457
over 65	,000	11,401	,000	9,294	,000	21,077	,000	24,696	,000	8,816	,000	13,388	,000	18,239	,000	8,435
education	,123		,165		,012		,600		,310		,438		,539		,762	
low	,737	,773	-	-	,230	,467	-	-	,168	2,774	,997	-			,364	1,390
medium educ.	,832	1,174	,060	1,714	,315	1,683	,337	,807	,279	2,216	,997	-	,739	1,059	,639	1,144
Higher educ.	,811	1,201	,073	1,717	,313	1,716	,359	,785	,256	2,304	,997	-	,280	1,299	,461	1,234
health problem	,471	1,111	,153	1,228	,078	1,372	,118	1,327	,223	,229	,358	1,097	,855	1,034	,007	1,406
employed	,037	,746	,394	,892	,545	1,111	,401	,859	,327	,862	,453	1,082	,685	,932	,210	1,200
partner present	,752	1,057	,228	1,244	,671	,928	,450	1,145	,330	1,157	,034	1,268	,729	1,072	,578	1,080
siblings	,555	,911	,063	,695	,779	1,057	,469	1,152	,281	,830	,225	,843	,780	1,057	,763	,956
has children	,564	1,130	,747	,943	,713	,929	,666	,910	,000	2,403	,005	,743	,889	1,031	,171	1,341
parent has disability	,000	11,156	,000	7,944	,000	5,897	,000	7,228	,000	2,974	,000	7,303	,000	4,625	,000	11,296
woman	,000	1,989	,000	2,555	,000	1,840	,000	1,757	,000	2,036	,000	2,330	,000	1,850	,000	2,392
Constant	,000	,001	,000	,001	,000	,001	,000	,001	,000	,003	,996	,000	,000	,001	,000	,001
Nagelkerke R Square	0,224		,192		0,204		0,249		0,117		,272		0,148		0,065	

Table 3. Logistic regression results for emotional support

	Bulgaria		Georgia		Germany		Lithuania		Norway		Poland		Romania		Russia	
	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)
Filial obligation index	,003	1,380	,018	,855	,769	1,018	,904	1,007	,184	1,067	,000	1,238	,117	1,126	,041	1,273
Co-residence	,000	2,174	,000	1,867	,344	1,166	,000	1,449	,000	8,516	,922	1,006	,000	1,610	,000	5,374
age group	,000		,000		,000		,000		,000		,000		,004		,000	
30-54	,000	3,209	,000	,639	,000	,609	,000	,672	,000	3,699	,000	,771	,007	,746	,000	5,134
55-65	,000	10,348	,000	,462	,001	,515	,000	,467	,000	7,962	,000	,517	,003	,551	,000	7,457
over 65	,000	11,401	,003	,114	,001	,147	,071	,530	,000	8,816	,001	,407	,582	1,211	,000	8,435
education	,123		,000		,000		,000		,310		,000		,000		,762	
low	,737	,773	-	-	,046	,647	-	-	,168	2,774	,080	,534	-	-	,364	1,390
medium educ.	,832	1,174	,001	1,610	,741	1,059	,073	1,222	,279	2,216	,425	,756	,000	1,587	,639	1,144
Higher educ.	,811	1,201	,000	1,963	,002	1,785	,000	1,779	,256	2,304	,624	1,189	,000	1,787	,461	1,234
health problem	,471	1,111	,013	1,246	,000	1,529	,000	1,433	,223	,229	,404	1,053	,486	1,090	,007	1,406
employed	,037	,746	,002	,799	,439	1,079	,113	,881	,327	,862	,011	,867	,402	,925	,210	1,200
partner present	,752	1,057	,085	1,201	,023	,794	,686	,967	,330	1,157	,038	,877	,554	,930	,578	1,080
siblings	,555	,911	,023	,782	,912	,988	,002	,774	,281	,830	,085	,883	,829	,977	,763	,956
has children	,564	1,130	,685	,957	,105	,831	,889	1,014	,000	2,403	,022	,868	,607	1,065	,171	1,341

parent has disability	,000	11,156	,649	1,048	,102	1,237	,197	,878	,000	2,974	,798	,982	,043	1,196	,000	11,296
woman	,000	1,989	,000	1,858	,000	2,088	,000	2,032	,000	2,036	,000	1,830	,000	1,432	,000	2,392
Constant	,000	,001	,000	,210	,000	,094	,000	,210	,000	,003	,000	,211	,000	,058	,000	,001
Nagelkerke R Square	0,05		,054		,054		0,067		0,117		,058		0,031		0,328	

Table 4. Logistic regression results for financial help

	Bulgaria		Georgia		Germany		Norway		Poland		Romania		Russia	
	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)
Filial obligation index	,213	1,494	,020	1,776	,009	1,814	,000	1,518	,000	1,238	,001	2,037	,131	1,203
Co-residence	,004	,163	,000	,091	,594	1,412	,181	,503	,922	1,006	,986	,000	,000	,179
age group	,986		,665		,003		,062		,000		,185		,146	
30-54	,705	1,211	,550	1,247	,001	11,194	,046	,541	,000	,771	,296	1,671	,020	,688
55-65	,993	,000	,481	,621	,688	1,645	,024	,094	,000	,517	,041	3,366	,471	,774
over 65	,997	,000	,998	,000	,079	9,178	,997	,000	,001	,407	,997	,000	,997	,000
education	,010		,001		,002		,093		,000		,000		,000	
low	,998	-	-	-	,095	,275	,043	,368	,080	,534	-	-	,017	,292
medium educ.	,997	-	,598	1,477	,004	,157	,013	,310	,425	,756	,206	1,619	,139	,674
Higher educ.	,997	-	,076	3,713	,200	,441	,023	,351	,624	1,189	,001	4,033	,502	1,189
health problem	,213	1,726	,358	1,320	,880	,937	,999	-	,404	1,053	,695	1,149	,194	1,200
employed	,888	,940	,007	,477	,360	,690	,419	,772	,011	,867	,028	,458	,006	,645
partner present	,491	,687	,761	,893	,254	1,517	,193	,685	,038	,877	,787	,903	,074	,765
siblings	,945	,969	,885	,934	,932	1,033	,000	,259	,085	,883	,089	2,100	,479	,892
has children	,612	,746	,154	,591	,022	,459	,882	1,049	,022	,868	,877	,946	,863	1,035
parent has disability	,345	1,598	,726	,879	,023	2,225	,021	1,766	,798	,982	,025	1,758	,971	1,007
woman	,033	,460	,864	1,047	,183	,668	,019	,554	,000	1,830	,769	,930	,214	1,190
Constant	,996	,000	,000	,003	,000	,001	,999	,000	,000	,211	,000	,000	,000	,055
Nagelkerke R Square	0,089		,116		,106		,105		,058		,121		0,065	