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## Sociology, Social Gerontology, Social Policy, Gender Studies

### Overview

Social exclusion is a multifaceted social problem with substantial disruptive consequences for individuals and society. One aspect of social exclusion is the exclusion from social relations. Being socially connected is a universal basic human need, but a substantial number of people lack the essential social resources necessary for a healthy and happy life. GENPATH focusses on post-retirement age; a life phase where social inclusion becomes a crucial factor for health and wellbeing. Men and in particular women have an increased risk to be socially excluded after retirement. Women are more often frail, more often widowed, have lower levels of education, have more often disrupted working careers, lower pensions, and less economic resources. The large variation in social exclusion and the varying impact of gender across welfare states indicates a key role of the macro-social context. However, little is known about how precise the welfare state context influences the construction and outcomes of social exclusion. The project aims at analysing the origin of gender differences in the prevalence and generation of exclusion from social relations across European countries, and consequences of this exclusion for health and wellbeing. Findings will inform the scientific debate about gender differences in social exclusion and instruct policies towards a reduction in social exclusion among older men and women.

### Project Outcomes

The results are expected to cover both scientific papers and applied science outcomes, such as pilot lectures on early interventions to prevent the later life exclusion from social relationships, and various forms of policy debates with relevant stakeholder across EU states involved in the project.

Expected outcomes:

- integrated report with policy annex to provide an overview of the objectives and results of the project, including a compilation of best practice examples to combat gender-based exclusion in different countries;
- seven national policy workshops organised to engage in discussions with the relevant stakeholders and the bilateral ad hoc consultations with relevant stakeholders at national and regional administrations;
- seven national policy briefs (in national languages), which will feed into the policies application annex of the synthesis report;
- six peer-reviewed scientific journal articles;
- scientific and users conferences presentations to engage with academia and policy experts;
- pilot design and test of model lecture for the secondary schools curricula;

We expect to influence the policy debates by opening the social exclusion from social relationships as an interdisciplinary topic to be addressed by various bodies and stakeholders. We aim to engage in scholarly debates on antecedents and results of this phenomena in life course perspective and help to build a stronger, more cohesive and healthy societies, recognising the need for mitigation of a lifetime gender-based disparities.

### Team members

	Woman	Man	Other
<b>Gender balance in the whole consortium</b>	21 (70%)	9 (30%)	0 (0%)
<b>Presence of women as lead researchers/PIs</b>	3 (37%)	5 (63%)	0 (0%)
<b>Gender Experts in the team</b>	2 (66%)	1 (33%)	0 (0%)
<b>Team members trained on Gender equality</b>	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)

## Contribution to the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The research aims at identifying routes of the health and social outcomes of life circumstances for later life quality. As such it will engage with various policy levels, respecting the cultural and welfare specificities, to help to mitigate the effects of social exclusion. The project aims at developing scientific evidence to strengthen the policy making to reach selected goals within the UN SDG programme, mainly goals set in SDG3 Good health and wellbeing, SDG5 Gender equity, and SDG10 Reduced Inequalities. The results underline the necessity to further address the gendered inequalities in health and (healthy) life expectancy, while recognising the lifelong roots of the health disparities as well as the social exclusion from social relationships. Other two very influential indicators are “trust” and “personal satisfaction with the quantity and quality of the relationships” pointing at the need to address both structural (societal) and individual sources of the social exclusion from the social relationships.

## Differences/inequalities between women and men highlighted by the project

The gender differences are one of the key routes to scrutinize the social exclusion from social relationships in our project. Interestingly, there are cultural variations on how gender influences some of the key elements of our inquiry (e.g. loneliness in later life).

When describing the micro- and macro-level patterns and correlations of ESR (exclusion from social relations) in later life from a European perspective, findings revealed a northwest to southeast gradient, with the lowest rates of ESR in the stronger welfare states of Northwest Europe. The high rates of ESR in the southeast are especially pronounced among women.

Next explored the effects of childhood circumstances and conditions on the risk of exclusion from social relations in old age, using a life-course perspective and examining gender influence. No impacts on the structure of the family of origin were found. For men, we found a small, but significant effect of physical aspects of childhood living, whereas for women, the cultural capital of family of origin and the quality of relations with parents seem to have a greater effect.

Another study addressed the much-discussed paradox that although aging is associated with multiple physical and social losses, subjective well-being (SWB) is stable or increasing in later life. The study found a general pattern of stability well into older age, but there are some negative changes in advanced age across well-being measures. Health decline, a partner, and friends are robust predictors of declining SWB. Women report both more negative affect and engagement than men, and these differences increase with age.

## Positive impact of the project on gender equality/scientific evidence on gender in the field

The results, for example, underline the need to address in an interdisciplinary manner the health disparities (eg. sex differences in the life expectancy) as related to / driven by / resulting from the social exclusion from social relationships (eg. the issue of widowhood and loneliness). We will engage in bridging the "health - social divide" experienced in many welfare states contexts. The impact will be achieved by an increase in scholarly knowledge on the differences and similarities in social exclusion from social relations across different dimensions and for different genders, highlighting the key drivers, by pointing out the transitional life course events and drawing the policy roadmap to produce healthier and more content later lives.

The project had profound social impact by great variability of communication and dissemination towards various types of stakeholders. Notable is also deliverable in the form of lectures on social exclusion for students aged 12 and up, usable also more widely for different types of learners, including the lifelong learning and older adults' education. These model lectures are available in all GENPATH languages and available for free download. Such approaches may have important societal effects on younger generations in rising their sensitivity to issues related to gender, age, social inclusion and (mental) health.

## Socio-economic impact; involvement of policy makers/civil society

There are several intensive cooperation's and synergies within the research teams and civil society in all countries represented in the consortium. The Life 90 (Život 90) a senior and diversity advocacy and lobby organization is a partner within the consortium. Others serve as gatekeepers and connect the research teams with the older men and women to carry out the research interventions (Hlifswerk, Samariterbund, Rotes Kreuz etc.). The policy seminars were held in all GENPATH countries to engage with various policy stakeholder to help to raise awareness about gendered nature of social exclusion from social relationships, its causes and effects.