

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND GENDER ROLES IN RETIREMENT: EVOLUTIONS, TENSIONS AND CURRENT ISSUES

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Context and questions

- A. Improvements of ageing conditions : the retirement as a « second life » to invent
- B. Evolution of gender relations BUT persistence of inequalities between women and men intersecting with some principles structuring the individual « choices »
- ⇒ **Investigate the social participation among the elderly in terms of gender inequalities, the possible transformation in role assignments between public and private spheres and as constituting resources for the individual well-being :**
- Do we observe a weakening of the gender differences in the last 30 years?
 - What about the relations between past life course and the way people live retirement ?
 - What about the implications of the various forms of participation in terms of individual well-being?

Theoretical framework

1. State of the art

- Studies show
 - a general **increase of social participation** (i.e. activities voluntarily undertaken by seniors outside of their home)
 - **BUT** also the **persistence of inequalities** associated with ageing, gender and social status (eg. Agahi & Parker, 2005; Bickel et Cavalli, 2008; Raymond et al., 2008)
- More and more research
 - are dealing with **health and well-being** since social participation is part of the discourse on **active ageing** seen as a « win win » combination for the elderly and the society in the new context of global ageing (van Dick, 2012)
 - **BUT** the social participation is still defined in many ways and its study generally **focuses on one type of participation** (for example the volunteer work) and **neglects the participation in the private sphere**, while crucial for a general understanding of the individual participation forms (Pennec, 2004) and the links with individual well-being (Moen et al., 1992).

Analytical framework

3. Analysis model

- Construction of « **participation profiles** » as specific sets of simultaneous participations to different social circles (Levy et al., 1997)
- Extract the logics of these configurations according to the **gender dimension but also taking into account resources, beliefs, life histories and contexts** (Dannefer, 2011)
- Inclusion of a **dynamic approach** of gender inequalities which could question their stability or variability at
 - a micro level: accumulation of (dis)advantages along the life course (Dannefer, 2003) vs. factors of their levelling (Schafer, Pylypiv Shippee et Ferraro, 2009)
 - a macro level: socio-historical persistence or change in their forms and strength
- Through the sociological models of stress (Pearlin, 1989; Pearlin et al., 1997), relate the participation profiles as **resources to the subjective well-being**

PERSPECTIVE ADOPTED

Tackle the social participation in a comprehensive perspective, considering private and public spheres and different forms of participation in parallel, within a life-course framework

2. Theoretical issues

- a. "Multiple participation":** to various « circles » with their own signification (Raymond et al., 2008) and structural issues (Bidart et al., 2011)
- ↳ What about the articulation of these circles?
 - ↳ The multiple participation as a dynamic of individualization (emancipation) or a source of tensions / contradictions (Simmel, 1908; Lahire, 1998)?
- b. Distinction "private/ public":** the boundaries between these two spheres are complex and fluctuant (Weintraub, 1998) and the meaning of the participation to each one can be ambiguous (Schwarz, 1990; de Singly, 2003)
- ↳ How has the balance between the two spheres evolved?
 - ↳ The participation to the private sphere as confinement or emancipation?
- c. Gender perspective:** persistence or weakening of gender assignment in the double dynamics of standardization / pluralization of the life course (eg. Widmer et al., 2009) ?
- ↳ ... using the concept of « master status », i.e. the idea of a gendered assignment in term of private/public (family/work) (Krüger and Levy, 2001)
 - ↳ ... but also in reference to the *care* theories emphasizing the tasks centred on other's needs and the related norms (eg. Daly and Lewis, 2000)
- d. Well-being and the capabilities approach:** to emphasize the real access to a particular form of participation that is valued by the individual (e.g. Sen, 1993)

4. Data and measures

- **Vivre / Leben / Vivere (VLV, 2011)** is a large interdisciplinary survey on the living and health conditions of individuals aged 65 and older in 5 Swiss regions (see the poster of Nicolet and Guichard)
 - It includes various questions on:
 - social activities and ties (frequency of contacts with family members, friends and acquaintances / frequency of services, help given to and received from family members, friends and acquaintances / frequency of social activities / membership in organizations / political participation / volunteer activities)
 - several individual and social characteristics
 - social activities and organizations' membership at the age of 45
 - indicators of well-being (depression / self-rated health / stress / life satisfaction)
- VLV is also the **third transversal wave** of a survey launched in 1979 and replicated in 1994, which allows a 30-years comparison of the living and health conditions of the aged population in Geneva and Valais.

AIMS

To disentangle the articulation of the various practices and roles in order to better understand the participation, its evolutions, logics and implications;

- ↳ Improving our comprehension of the dynamics between individual and structure, change and continuity
- ↳ Elucidating the conditions of self-realization in the current context highly influenced by the concept of active ageing

SOURCE
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