# SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND GROWING OLD WELL

## A Study from the Perspective of Older People in a Medium Sized City Located in East Netherlands

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[1] Image accessed  28 May 2019: https://www.intercom.com/blog/celebrating-our-diversity-intercom/

# Acknowledgement

Sparing a couple words does not do justice to how grateful I am for the opportunity and support I have received in the writing of my master's thesis. I recognise it as a great privilege. On a personal level, to my boyfriend, family and friends, thank you. Both personally and professionally to the many inspiring experts and professionals I have met throughout my seven year education and various internships, thank you. I hope to apply what I have already learnt with passion in the coming years, and continue to learn wherever this journey brings me next.

# Abstract

**Background:**

Dutch municipal polices more and more aim to support older people to live as independently as possible in their own homes and to retain ability as much as possible to contribute and socially participate in their own community. Promoting Social Participation (SP) of older people is widely expressed in terms of empowerment. It is additionally recognised that views from policy service users are essential in successful policy making, however the opinion of the older person themselves on SP in terms of 'Growing Old Well' (GOW) is sparse in academic literature.

**Research Question:**

Based on the importance but lack of contribution from older people themselves, this research asks, *"How are the concepts of 'social participation' and of 'growing old wel' perceived by older people?"*

**Methods:**

This research uses ethnographic methods of participant observation (PO) and semi-structured interviews at home in the field of anthropology.

**Results:**

SP was most recognised by participants as an opportunity to participate in different activities, with a common objective to connect, feel part of a community and to exercise feelings of social responsibility or to simply get out of the house. However, despite the general assumption, that SP benefits the wellbeing and health of people, a sub-section of participants recognised it as having minimal importance in terms of 'GOW' in their own homes.

**Conclusion:**

This study urges caution around blanket promotion of SP benefits to older people as one homogeneous group as part of GOW in their own home. Additionally this study showcases a methodology of bottom up research accounting for heterogeneity amongst older people while also identifying overlapping patterns in order to make broad and diverse data of use in policy making.

# Introduction

It is recommended that the perspective of policy target groups are essential in effective policy making (McKenzie, 2017). This should therefore be the case in designing policies to support 'growing old well' in one's own home. The opinion of the older person themselves however is present (De Donder et al., 2012; De Jong, B.M., 2016) but sparse (Andersson et al., 2008) in academic literature. Based on the importance but lack of information from the perspective of older people themselves this research leans on an ethnographic approach, making the voice of older people themselves central in looking into the concepts of 'Social Participation' (SP) and what it means in terms of 'Growing Old Well' (GOW) with the goal of achieving an 'emic' (from the inside out) perspective (Neuman, 2016).

**Context**

This study is set in the Netherlands which has a long history of being amongst the European Welfare States with the highest percentages of older people living in care homes and nursing homes (De Vries, 1992; De Donder et al, 2012; Den Draak et al, 2016). Dutch municipal policies however are aiming more and more to support older people to live as independently as possible in their own homes and to retain the ability as much as possible to contribute and socially participate in their own community. This is due to policy changes in the Dutch Social Support Act since 2007 (Scholte, M. & Sprinkhuizen, A., 2015; SCP, 2017).

**Key Concepts**

It is recognised that SP is a broad concept that can be defined in multiple ways (Vossen et al., 2010). SP is therefore broadly defined in this study as "a person's involvement in activities that provide interaction with others in society or the community" (Piškur et al, 2014). This definition offers a base understanding of SP which encompasses many sub-categories, for example consumptive activities (taking part in organised activities/ visiting a restaurant or museum, sporting events, parks) informal care, volunteering, religious activities, paid work, involvement in a political organisation, or network participation (contact with family, friends and neighbours) (Van der Pas & Galenkamp, 2015).

The concept of 'GOW', is also key in this research. When looking into literature on GOW, there are numerous theories available, especially in connection to what makes a 'good

life' in old age, (e.g. Bryant et al., 2001; Andersson et al., 2008, Ehni et al., 2018). These frameworks support the detailing of factors in an individual's life that are important/not important in terms of growing old happily in one's own home. To understand what 'GOW' means to participants and where SP fits into the picture, this research uses the framework proposed by Ehni et al. (2018) as a tool, wherein the capabilities approach of Amartya Sen as explained in Robeyns (2005, 2006) is linked to a structure for the question of a good life by German philosopher Ursula Wolf (Wolf, 1999).

The following sub-sections elaborate on the theoretical framework of this study, research question and relevance and expectations. Sections thereafter bring the reader through the methodological choices made during the research in terms of data collection, management and analysis, leading into the results section. The results demonstrate what SP means to participants in terms of GOW as well as how participants define SP themselves. The thesis ends on a discussion about the most significant findings in the research, a comparison between the definition of SP from interview participants with the base understanding of SP taken at the beginning of this study, strengths and weaknesses of the research and the concluding statement with recommendations.

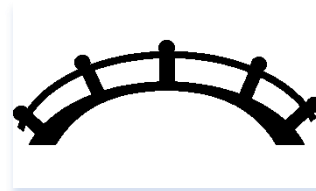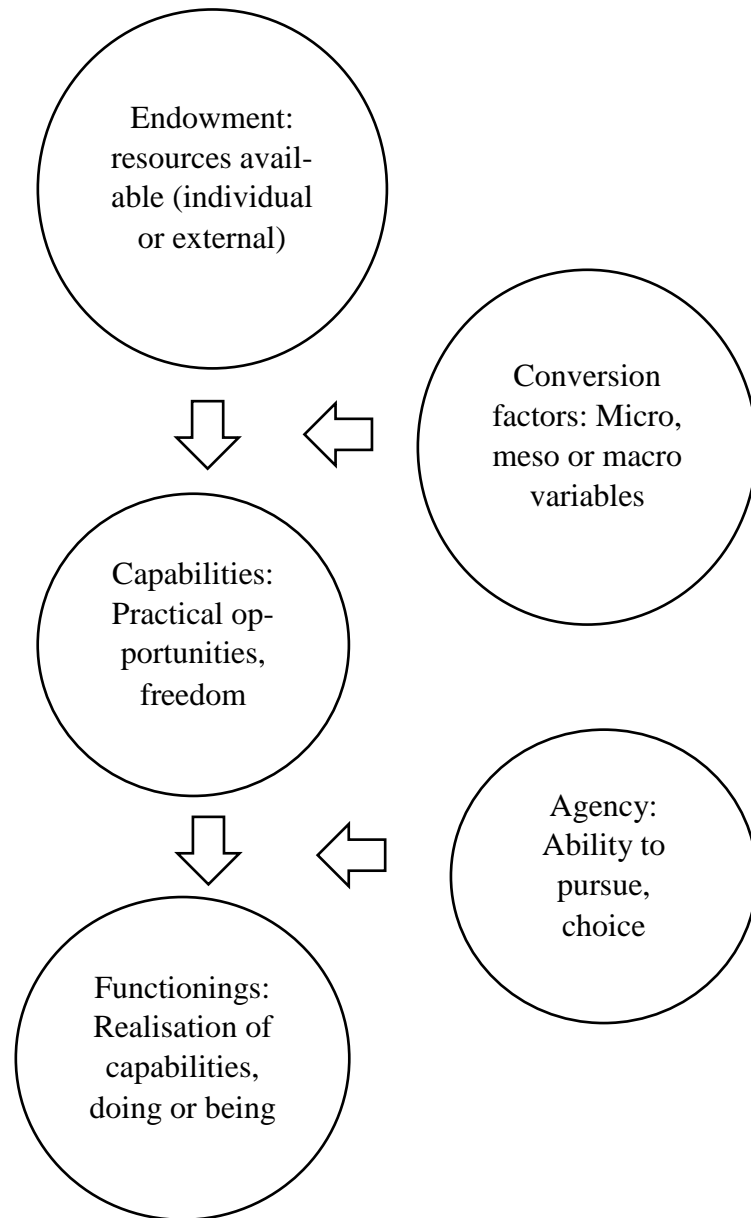**Theoretical Framework [2] (Ehni et al., 2018)**

Firstly, the capabilities approach focuses on five key factors of a person's life; endowments (quality or resources available, internal or external), conversion factors (different personal/environmental characteristics which affect ability to convert endowments to effective capabilities), capability itself (practical possibilities/ opportunities and freedom), agency (ability to pursue goals that one has reason to value) and functionings (realisation of capabilities, achieved beings and doings) (Robeyns, 2005, 2006; Ehni et al., 2018). Secondly, the theory on the philosophical question of a good life from Wolf (1999) includes five levels. The first asks the simple question, how should I live? This involves desires, abilities, culture and context. The second level explores conflict between preferences of different goals (e.g. feeling the need to socially participate but desiring to stay in bed). The third level examines virtues, values, ideas and culture. This involves how to justify choices made in the second level. The fourth level involves putting all of this into perspective, taking life in its completeness, possibilities and desires based on one's own biography. The final, and according to Wolf (1999), the deepest level involves

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[2] Visual aid in Figure 1

existential crises, contingency and death. How does one live a good life facing these challenges? (Ehni et al., 2018)

This model is extensive, however as highlighted by Ehni et al., (2018), to oversimplify research on 'ageing well' is dangerous in that needs of certain social or cultural groups may be overlooked and inadequately addressed. The combination of these models allows for a detailed illustration of personal/situational characteristics (via capabilities approach) and philosophical outlook on living a good life (vial Wolf's model). The comprehensiveness of such an approach is novel and attractive for this research in order to transform broad qualitative data into a structured illustration on participants and how they connect SP with GOW while maintaining emphasis on heterogeneity amongst participants.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework (Ehni et al., 2018)

**Research question**

As mentioned, the concepts of SP and 'GOW are linked in policy on supporting older people to age well in their own homes (Scholte, M. & Sprinkhuizen, A., 2015; SCP, 2017). Drawing on the above, this study further investigates 'these concepts and their connection from the perspective of older people themselves with the following research question:

How are the concepts of 'social participation' and of 'GOW' perceived by older people?

**Relevance and Expectations**

This study expects to be of scientific and social relevance in its aim to strengthen the voice of older people in academic literature. This research furthermore expects to provide insights into the application of the theoretical model from Ehni et al. (2018) in practice as it is to the knowledge of this research, the first time that the theoretical model of Ehni et al. (2018) has been applied to this emic take on social participation and GOW. Additionally, this study is deliberately interdisciplinary in nature. Through ethnographic tools the researcher aims to gain a rich, bottom up 'perspective from within' and connect it with the world of social policy, to inform policy makers working to support 'ageing well in one's own home'. It is an expectation of the researcher that these fields have great potential to work hand in hand in this research.

This aim is of social relevance as promotion of social participation is becoming of greater importance in policy on caring for an ageing population in the Netherlands (Grootegoed & Tonkens, 2017; Scholte, M. & Sprinkhuizen, A., 2015; SCP, 2017). It is therefore important to hear what older people, as the policy target group, have to say themselves on how this fits with their own needs and wishes (McKenzie, 2017; Vossen et al., 2010). Additionally, it was expected that participants will have interest in sharing their stories and opinions with the researcher based on experiences of other studies (De Donder et al., 2012; De Jong, B.M., 2016). Heterogeneity is expected in results as literature emphasises that older people should not be treated as one homogeneous group (De Donder, et al., 2012).

# Methods

**Methodological Roots**

This research is inspired by ethnographic methods to answer the research question from an 'emic' perspective (Neuman, 2016). Ethnography as broadly defined by O'Reilly (2012), involves an iterative-inductive approach. This approach evolves throughout a study and focuses on direct contact with participants in the context of their daily lives and culture, observing things happening/being said, and asking questions with the ultimate goal of producing rich results that respect the wholeness of human experience while acknowledging the role of theory and research (O'Reilly, 2012). Ethnographic research draws upon multiple methods including those used in this research i.e. semi-structured interviews and participant observation (PO).

**Beginning of Research and First Steps**

This research took place in Y, a medium sized city in East Netherlands, where the researcher resides (anonymised to prevent tracing of information to research participants). The idea of carrying out ethnographic research in one's own locality is a topic of debate (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011) due to lack of an 'outsiders' perspective, and the possibility to oversee environmental factors that seem 'normal' to inhabitants of the area. However with rigorous tracking of methodological decisions as supported by Greenhouse (1985), and due to the fact that the researcher is not a native of the Netherlands, has resided in Y for a short period of time (one year) and was not familiar with life in Y through the eyes of an older person, the risk of biased research in this regard was mitigated.

At the beginning of this research, government documents, blogs, books and, photos and videos from Y were identified via web searches and visits to various organisations working with older people. This is regarded as a typical part of determining background information on a research setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and was used to build an image of social participation (SP) possibilities for older people in Y. Using these findings, several types of organisations working with older people in Y were contacted and informed about the research. Many organisations expressed interest in collaborating with the research as potential sites for Participant Observation (PO). These organisations included one residential care home, and several organisations that run various day time activities for older people, led by professionals and/or volunteers.

Various organisations were visited to probe feasibility of collaboration with the research. It was decided to limit the number of PO sites to three allowing for consistent Participant Observations (PO's) which aided 'rapport building'. Rapport, as defined by DeWalt & De Walt (2011) is '*a state of interaction achieved when the participants and researcher, at least to some extent come to share the same goals, i.e. the informant participates to provide information for the research while the researcher approaches this interaction respectfully and thoughtfully allowing informants to tell their story'.* Jorgensen (1989) highlights how the trust and cooperation built between researcher and participant are entrenched influences on the accuracy and dependability of data gathered in PO. During the first month of research only PO's were carried out in the chosen sites and no interviews were conducted in order to focus on building rapport.

Note: the chosen PO organisations are not named to protect the identities of participants. They were all local level organisations that provide daytime activities (professional & volunteer led) in community centres for older people.

**Data Collection and Study Sample**

Before the three key PO sites were confirmed, PO's were also conducted amongst a group of older women from a non-Dutch community, and amongst inhabitants of a residential care home. Through reflection on these PO's, it became evident that inclusion of these groups would result in broad but thin data. It was therefore decided to exclude these groups and focus data gathering on Dutch residents of retirement age (can vary per person) living in Y, in their own homes. For the same reason, and additional issues around obtaining informed consent, individuals expressing symptoms of dementia, memory loss or poor mental health, were excluded from this research.

The issue of representation however remains key in understanding a range of experiences and perspectives and producing information that goes beyond broad generalisations about a setting. Therefore a wide variety of variables were included as recommended by DeWalt & DeWalt (2011) e.g. age and gender, retirement age (can vary per person), order of birth, health status, family situation, life experiences, temperaments, religious orientations, relationship status, degrees of social participation, isolation and loneliness. The study sample does not include participants with a very high degree of loneliness/isolation (due to informed consent concerns).

Note: The variable 'sexuality' was not deliberately left out in this study, and is recognised as an oversight by the researcher. It is recommended that this is given due attention in further research, as literature demonstrates how within the health and wellbeing sector, little attention has been given to LGBT individuals amongst older populations (Messelis, E. et al., 2019).

During participant observations, tools of observation, asking questions and taking notes were used (O'Reilly, 2005). These tools allow the researcher to engage in informal conversations while still being able to ask questions on the research topic (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Directly after each PO a list of key words was written based on the observations to aid memory on day to day conversations and behaviour observed for the writing of extended field notes later that day. Expanded field notes covered what was observed, the degree of 'participation' or 'observation' role taken by the researcher as well as any methodological decisions made based on new data gathered. A separate notebook was used to record all analytical and personal reflections which created space to process experiences encountered through the research (DeWalt &DeWalt, 2011).

PO's in this research included for example, taking part in bingo games, drinking coffee with various discussion groups, participating in 'sitting gyms', watching a film with a group of participants, eating together with participants or playing games, to name a few. As recommended by O'Reilly (2005), all participants included in the research during POs were informed of the researchers position and about the study as well as being given the opportunity to remain excluded from the research. The anonymisation of these organisations protects the privacy of these participants as well as those not directly engaged with the researcher.

During week five, POs continued, and the researcher began planning for interviews. In combination with PO data, fifteen interviews was estimated as sufficient to reach data saturation. If not, this number would be revisited at a later stage. Eleven of the fifteen interview participants were selected via judgemental sampling on the chosen PO sites. Judgement sampling as defined by Neuman (2016) is based on criteria drawn from literature and a degree of expertise on the area of research. Inclusion of these eleven participants was therefore based on recommended criteria from DeWalt & DeWalt (2011) to ensure a wide range of variables as previously described and further elaborated on in the discussion section of this thesis. Getting to know those attending the organisations and building rapport during the first four weeks facilitated judgemental sampling and supporting participants to feel comfortable in the sharing of information with the researcher in the interviews (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

Outside of these key PO sites, a meeting with an individual in the researcher's internship network resulted in an opportunistic link to five older people living in Y as potential interview participants. This opportunity was used to obtain more male interview participants, and interview participants over 80 years old as within the PO organisations participants were largely under 80 and female. This is regarded as opportunistic sampling as it is less structured than judgement sampling, relying on connections outside of the PO sites (Neuman, 2016). However, to move beyond simple opportunistic sampling and still maintain representativeness, four of these potential participants were visited for an informal coffee to discuss desire and eligibility for participation in the research and build an element of rapport before scheduling an interview. This resulted in connection with the final four interview participants. The fifth potential participant was not contacted as information came to light that revealed this individual to be in a vulnerable mental state, falling into excluded populations of this study.

The final sample of interview participants was made up of nine Dutch women and six Dutch men, living in their own homes in Y. Amongst this group were two married couples. The average of this sample is 78.13 years. Participants range across two different generations, (1928-1940'and 1940-1955) according to the work of Penninx, K. & Kerstens, P. (2015).

Interviews were carried out during months two to four alongside POs and made use of a semi structure interview technique guided by a topic list, see appendix 1. The interview topic list regarding data on participants and how they see SP as part of 'GOW' was based on the theoretical model from Ehni et al. (2018), as demonstrated in appendix 1. Interview questions on understanding of SP itself, while loosely connected to the model, used no theoretical framework or model of social participation to structure data. In retrospect, this decision caused some challenges regarding strength of results and analysis on understanding of SP itself as elaborated on in data analysis and discussion.

Use of a topic list and semi-structured technique was chosen over using a list of questions as to allow participants to take more lead during interviews with the researcher only offering input and questions where necessary to keep the interview focus on topic. Interview techniques as described by DeWalt & DeWalt (2011) were used, such as active listening, non-intrusive prompts (e.g. uh-huh/tell me more), repetition feedback, asking for clarification and naïve questions. All interviews were recorded on the researchers iPhone consensually. Audio files were later saved in a secure location and deleted from the researchers phone.

**Data Analysis**

Two months into the research, an interim report was completed in order to focus data gathered until that point from the field notes and first six interviews to the research question. Emerging patterns were labelled, listed in a table and linked to a page number and a code in the field notes to aid finding information back at later stages of data management and analysis. First attempts to code these tables were carried out via NVivo qualitative analysis software (version 12). This revealed a preliminary code tree wherein all codes were given individual descriptions to aid future coding decisions (Neuman, 2016). This preliminary code tree can be found in appendix 2.

The data on the concept of 'SP' itself, as mentioned, was not structured in a way that coding could be developed from a definition or model of SP. Coding for SP was developed based on emerging patterns in the data. These patterns were grouped and labelled enabling development of codes and a thematic analysis based on the research question and theoretical framework. Regarding development of codes for gaining an understanding of the participant themselves and how SP fits into idea of 'GOW', the theoretical model from Ehni et al (2018) was foundational in the code tree, and data was slotted into the model itself. Furthermore, similarities between participants were already identified at this point of analysis indicating that participants could be split into an SP 'not for me' grouping, or an SP 'for me' grouping' (described in results), which was also reflected in the code tree.

Two weeks were set aside at the end of month four for the sole purpose of transcription. All transcription was aided by transcribing software Express Scribe. A plan was made about how to hand deliver all the transcripts to participants as not everyone had email access. Upon delivery of transcripts, it was clarified how the participants should contact the researcher with any requests/queries on their interview. It was ensured that all participants had the researchers contact details.

The end of month four involved delivering the final transcripts and moving the focus to solely looking at the coding of PO and interview data and analysis of the data. A second interim report was written up at the end of this time period following the same procedure as the first one in order to link field notes and interviews to the emerging patterns that were placed into the coding tree on NVivo. This second report resulted in some adaptations to the code tree due to new data from interviews and observations made since the first interim report. An important adaptation was the addition of a third grouping within which participants could be placed, i.e.

the 'SP as a way of life grouping' (described in results). These adaptations resulted in the final code tree on NVivo as seen in appendix 3. Coding with NVivo allowed for the breaking up of the data and interpretation linked to research question and theoretical framework which enabled a critical analysis instead of a descriptive text.

In addition to the use of NVivo and due to researcher's personal preference for visual aids, all transcripts were printed out and colour coded based on the NVivo coding with coloured highlighters. This made it clear to the researcher where there were overlaps within the model of Ehni et al. (2018) per participant as well as similarities between research participants. Each individual's story was also mapped out by hand using the theoretical framework to highlight where exactly their stories diverge or align with other participants. These individual maps were key in recognising patterns that resulted in the formation of the three groupings that interview participants could be divided into.

**A Note on Data Presentation**

A decision was made to use vignettes as a tool to bring data presented in the results section to life in a relatable and tangible way for the reader. Vignettes are according to DeWalt & DeWalt (2011) a less direct, more abstracted way of presenting data that emphasises an emic perspective. The aim of using this tool is to draw the reader in, and invite them to experience a real life, typical morning for one participant from each grouping based upon data drawn directly from descriptions in field notes and interviews.

In terms of validity of such an approach, Spalding & Phillips (2007) warn that vignettes (like any form of data representation) present a *"mediated form account of the truth"*. Validity increases however when vignettes are presented transparently as such, with clear information on where the data used to compose them is drawn from. When used in such a manner (which is the case in this study through detailed explanation of methodological decisions and data sources) vignettes reveal the researcher behind the writing, openly displaying that selection and interpretation has taken place and how this was done, therefore actively encourage the reader to critically dive into the narration.

**Additional Note on Methodological Choices**

Figure 2 illustrates key factors of inductive research. Namely, making observations, identifying patterns and producing theory. Key to this research, was the ***observation*** that the opinion of older people themselves is present (De Donder et al., 2012; De Jong, B.M., 2016) but sparse in academic literature (Andersson et al., 2008) which this study recognised as a barrier to effective policy making (McKenzie, 2017). This study therefore sought to take an inductive approach to gain an 'emic' perspective in the data. ***Patterns*** in data were recognised and analysed using the model from Ehni et al. (2018) as a tool. The use of such a structured model is not typical to inductive research, however as this research aimed to translate ***rich 'emic' data*** into academic literature, to information/***theory*** usable to policy makers, this study argues that the use of such a tool was justified.

[3]



Figure 2: Inductive research

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[3] Image retrieved from: https://research-methodology.net/research-methodology/research-approach/inductive-approach-2/

# Results

As touched upon in methods, findings from this research revealed three groupings of participants. The following sub sections detail these three groupings, trough using vignettes and insights uncovered through based on similarities between participants in terms of where SP fits into their idea of GOW via the model from Ehni et al. (2018).

Note, not all elements of the theoretical model are addressed in these descriptions as only the strongest overlaps between participants within each group are highlighted. Additionally, all quotes and vignettes are anonymised with the use of fake names to protect participant privacy.

Note: gender of names do not pertain to gender of participant.

**Vignette One: A Morning in the Life of Mary (Participant from SP 'for me')**

Mary wakes up in the morning, *stands* up and slowly dresses. She takes time to do her hair and makeup, just as she likes. She is always prepared to look her best in case of surprise visitors! She walks to her kitchen and makes a coffee before opening the front door of her apartment. She steps outside and stands on her balcony while sipping on her coffee admiring the view. She lives at the top floor of a large apartment complex. She notices that her next-door neighbour's blinds are open also, 'She must also be awake, good!' she thinks, making a mental note to call in there after breakfast. She wants to invite the old lady living there to come and see her choir practice later, she knows she would like that. Mary is looking forward to meeting her friends at choir and hopes her neighbour will be up for joining. She also ponders on what she will pick up in the supermarket after practice. She needs to prepare for a meeting with some friends in the common area of the apartment block tomorrow. She promised to bring some food for the social gathering. She walks back inside and into her kitchen. 'Now that I am retired, I am busier than ever before' she thinks and sings a song they will practice later at choir while making some toast for breakfast.

**Group One: SP 'for me'**

This group identified early in the research, and includes six interview participants. Results demonstrated how this group of people actively push the boundaries of SP in their life, creating opportunities for themselves and for others to engage with society/community. This 'active' effort involves the searching for and seizing of opportunities to engage with their community. These participants expressed a strong desire or need to have SP in their life for various reasons

and life satisfaction seems to be closely connected to the level of SP in their lives. One participant from this group describes a need to be connected to people to feel alive *"I need to have a lot of people, yes, i don't know, you just then, have the idea that you are alive!"*[4]

What the theoretical framework helped to reveal is that in terms of capabilities, participants in this group tended towards a strong sense of agency in choosing to get out of the house and to energetically make SP happen in their lives and/or additionally create SP opportunities for others as it is something they place much value in. They all on a micro level, have a drive to find something in the community that *'needs to be done'* and/or sounds like something *'nice to do'* and they readily seize opportunity to make the most of it. They communicate easily with and enjoy the company of others. All of these participants are in relatively good health and while their drive to engage with SP in this way varies, e.g. due to a feeling of social responsibility and/or coping with the death of a partner, they all actively make the extra effort to maintain a high level of SP in their lives.

In terms of Wolf's theory of a good life, (see figure 2 for guidance), these participants all have diverse life stories (level 5), for example some experienced their lives to be '*challenging*' while others experienced their lives as *'easy'* or *'simple'*. However, alignment was identified on the view of SP being an important part of life and beneficial to actively engage with (level 1). They justify this for varying reasons (level 3) as mentioned above regarding 'drive' to engage with SP. The thought of slowing down however, and reducing levels of SP in the future is difficult for the majority of participants in this group, as is the thought of getting older and becoming physically more restricted (level 5). Lisa describes these difficulties as follows *"Now they (family) are saying already, well, let's just go for a shorter period (on annual trip to Berlin), that we can go two days, but well, you have something built up together, that is cosy, and now I need to take distance from it, and that 'for me' that is, well, I have difficulty with that".*[5]

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[4] (18/04/2019) interview
[5] (01/04/2019) interview

| Level | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Level 1 | How should I live? Desires, abilities, culture, context |
| Level 2 | Conflict between preferences |
| Level 3 | Justifications through virtues, values, ideas, culture |
| Level 4 | Into perspective of individuals own life story |
| Level 5 | Existential crisis, contingency, death |

Figure 3: Wolfs theory of a 'good life' (Wolf, 1999)

**Vignette Two: A Morning in the Life of Michael (Participant from SP 'not for me')**

Michael wakes up in the morning and decides to lay in bed a bit longer. Now that he is over eighty, he feels justified to take more rest and live life at a slow pace. After another hour of snoozing, he stands up and takes some time to shower, get dressed and tidy up his room. He likes to make sure his bedroom is always clean and tidy before beginning the day and enjoys being able to maintain this standard himself. Once this is done, he opens the curtains around his home, feeds his little dog and gets the newspaper from the letterbox. He makes breakfast and sits at the kitchen table. 'Hm, what is new in the world today' he ponders aloud to his dog as he opens the paper. He looks to the empty chair next to him and reflects on how he misses his wife, Margaret, whom passed away two years ago. Maybe his daughter, Melanie, will be dropping by, maybe not, he is not sure. He is proud that she is busy finding her own path in the world. He thinks to himself 'I might visit Melanie in a couple days for dinner anyway, that always helps when I miss Margaret ... but for today it will be nice to sit outside with my newspaper and maybe even do a little gardening if I have the energy for it'.

**Group Two: SP 'not for me'**

Another grouping identified early in the research was the SP 'not for me' group, which includes five interview participants. This group of participants did not energetically search for SP opportunities in their lives, and if they did engage with SP it was to a minimal level. They expressed peace with the idea of being alone and while some do see the benefit of engaging with SP, they are all quite selective about how to engage with it. One participant from this group for example describes a feeling of no obligation to go look for SP opportunities and will only engage once a certain degree of 'enthusiasm' is reached *"I don't feel obliged to do anything, that time period, that is over, that I feel obligated, if I am not enthusiastic myself then I think, well,*

*I won't do it!"*[6] Another participant expresses having no interest in SP unless someone explicitly asks for a favour "*I am much more focused on, on the core, you know? I find the coffee and the tea and doing the groceries for someone, yeah, sorry, a waste of my time!*"

What the theoretical framework helped to uncover was that in terms of capabilities, what participants in this group all had in common was that they show a strong sense of agency in choosing how to engage with SP i.e. minimally, as they place little value in it, only engaging with it on their own terms and for specific, thought out reasons. They did not express feelings of need or a strong desire to partake in SP activities unless it had something extra in it for them e.g. connected to a strong interest in an '*activity*', or a recognition that if it was up to them they would just stay at home, but that it is always good to '*get out*' of the house. They can all be comfortable and enjoy presence of others when they choose to and do recognise the importance of SP in terms of health and wellbeing in general, but commonly express an ease with their own company and not being afraid to spend time home alone. Lucy describes the feeling of wanting to engage in SP activities less and being okay with that idea "*When you get older, you don't' feel like it (activities) anymore, and furthermore, it's going fine! I am enjoying myself! I am never bored in my own company!*"[7] Luke, recognises part of SP as being engaged with family, but is also okay when that doesn't happen *"I like being on my own, it is also nice when the kids come, but if they don't come, then I won't complain, they have their own lives also!*"[8]

In terms of Wolf's model, what stood out amongst this group is their life stories (level 3). Apart from one participant, the others in this group have experienced their life story to be somewhat challenging and influential on their outlook on life e.g. taking on responsible roles for the family during the second world war or early death of parents. These participants expressed how due to these influential times, they learnt to be '*independent*' and want to '*stay that way*' (level 3). They express this independence as a reason why they do not feel the need to search for SP opportunities as they are '*okay on their own*'. Recounting these challenges and connecting it to how they stand in relation to SP was emotional for some of these participants. What furthermore stood out in this group, was that they were the only group in which all participants expressed peace with being alone and with the thought of growing older and death. As Liam described *"Increasing restrictions are normal, life ends, it just has to do with age, and that is 'for me', easier to accept"*. Three of these participants highlighted how if they become

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[6] (12/04/2019) interview
[7] (10/04/2019) interview
[8] (02/04/2019) interview

very ill or have a heart attack, that they have signed documents claiming they do not want to be resuscitated if their heart stops, and one participant would like to die by euthanasia in the case of severe illness. Even though they all have different reasoning (level 3) and life stories (level 5) this group align on a peace with being alone, a peace with engaging with SP only when convenient and/or strongly desired, and a peace with the future and death.

**Vignette Three: A morning in the life of Mia (Participant from SP as 'a way of life')**

Mia wakes up in the morning. her husband is heading out already to help fix up the flowerbeds and hedges at the community center. It had been a rough winter for the garden! She is grateful that he shares with her the interest to help out there. The voluntary work involved feels so rewarding and they have built up a real family feeling with the other volunteers! She wishes him goodbye and finds herself worrying about a time when they won't be able to help there anymore, it is such a big part of their life. She frets about how the work these days is more tiring than what it used to be. Despite these worries, Mia continues her day as normal, having breakfast before her three-year-old grandchild, Mike, is dropped over. She babysits from 11.40-17.00 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Mike goes to his other grandmother on Wednesdays and Fridays. Mike arrives and they chat for a little while after saying goodbye to her daughter, wishing her a good day's work. Mia asks Mike what he would like to do that day. They decide to do what they usually do on Tuesdays and pop in next door to her neighbour. Mike is happy, because this means he usually gets some cake! Mia, appreciating her routine soon forgets her worries from the morning as she buttons up Mike's little jacket.

**Group Three: SP as 'a way of life'**

This grouping was identified later in the research and includes four interview participants. This group of people, like the SP 'for me' grouping, create SP opportunities for themselves and for others however are not actively pushing boundaries in their efforts to do so. Their engagement with SP appears to come naturally, and not something they need to 'seize', as is the case with the SP 'for me' grouping. These participants view SP to be an automatic part of life. The level of SP in their life remains of high importance as they see it as part of their lifestyle or social class. Leah describes for example how SP is normal to her, a learned behaviour from youth *"I have that from home, that you must think about others, not just yourself. Yes. From home. It was just so!"*[9]. Lucas emphasises how SP is a normal occurrence in his place of residence; *"Look, this is the poor side, but further up is the richer side ... The man that just called me, lives*

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[9] (03/04/2019) interview

*in the richer side… Well, there, they have contact with one another, just like here, but it is very different, it is to a lesser extent. Actually, it is quite a lot less, everyone there is a bit focused on themselves"*[10].

What became clear through the theoretical framework was that in terms of capabilities, this group expressed having the most debilitating circumstances with three of the four participants experiencing restricting illness/disability. However, all of this group align on the value they place in their family, friends and social network in general. In terms of agency, all the participants in this group choose to engage with SP to the best of their ability, especially in regard to helping others but do so in a natural manner, a manner that does not require expression of need/desire to seize opportunities for SP in their lives. As emphasised by Leo *"You must, you must not flatten the door! (of neighbours' homes), ehm, because then the enjoyment is gone"*[8] All of these participants can talk with others easily, and while they all express that they like time alone, they also emphasise that it shouldn't last too long as Lilian highlights *"I have it sometimes, that I think, hey, some rest, that there is no one here or coming here … And I want to do nothing, a moment without listening to people complaining, I can read what I want, or do a puzzle if I like. Yeah, but that must not last two days! After one midday, it is enough!"*.

Regarding the model from Wolf, this group aligns on level 1 and 3. Even though they may have different life stories (level 4) e.g. different roles or responsibilities in family, growing up in Y, spending their whole life on a boat, the result of natural engagement with community, helping those around them (level 1) and justification in doing so (level 3) align throughout the group. Loretta for example emphasises the normality of SP in life *"I find that it is the most normal business in the world"*[11]. When looking ahead however the group are mixed about slowing down. Some find it a pity to 'do less' and worry about who will take over tasks when they can't handle them all anymore. Others express a certain degree of ease with growing older. The discrepancy can be seen in the following two quotes. Lydia expresses the struggle of her physical capabilities falling behind her minds desires *"And that (doing less), I find a pity, I cannot anymore, my head thinks a lot, but my legs do not want it any more"*. While alternatively, Leonie, another participant from this group describes with acceptance, the normality of growing old and things ending *"Well, there is a time for beginning, and a time for stopping. It is very difficult, but also okay, you must stop ... it is a pity, but it is as it is"*[12].

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[10] (09/04/2019) interview
[11] (01/04/2019) interview
[12] (09/04/2019) interview

**Additional Findings**

Data also revealed that across all participants there was a lack of initial understanding of the term 'social participation'. At the beginning of the interview, all participants needed extra prompts to help them to recognise SP in their lives, regardless of what grouping they were in. These prompts were based upon the base understanding of SP taken at the beginning of this research from Piškur et al. (2014) & Van der Pas & Galenkamp, (2015) however were emphasised as suggestions that the participant could agree/disagree with.

What was furthermore common across all participants in all groups was a desire to spend their final years in their own homes. The SP 'not for me' group slightly deviated from this trend, with a pragmatism typical to those participants. Participants in this group commonly expressed that they would stay home, until a point when it is just not possible. One participant for example describes if he develops dementia and deteriorates cognitively with obvious consequences that he shouldn't be left living in his own home *"I have told my family, if you see me peeing outside there in the flowerpot, then you can bring me away because then you are just not good anymore!"[13]*

Note: The 'SP for me' group, and the 'SP' as a 'way of life' group overlap in the value they place in SP and the end result of engagement. The distinguishing factor lay in drive and motivation of the engagement, hence the division into separate groups. For members of SP 'for me' members spoke of SP as something to be searched for and seized. For the SP 'way of life', members spoke of SP as an inherent part of how they life.

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[13] (02/04/2019) interview

## Participants Understanding of SP

Despite being in different groupings, a convergence of opinion between participants from all groups in an understanding of what the concept of SP means was identified. Table 1 demonstrates where opinions converge amongst members from all three groupings. At some points in the data on SP there was convergence between opinions from groupings SP 'for me', and SP as 'a way of life' but not SP 'not for me' as demonstrated in table 2.

| *Members from Groups* | *Convergence of Opinion* | *Description (drawn from PO, interview data)* |
|---|---|---|
| SP 'for me'<br><br>SP 'not for me'<br><br>SP as a 'way of life' | SP involves engagement with community/society through various **activities.** | Activities encountered include: such as: drinking coffee with neighbours, biljarten, handwork club, painting, fishing, yoga, cooking for a club, bingo, sitting at a terrace, and singing to name a few. |
| | SP provides opportunity to create a feeling of **connection and community.** | For example, SP was identified as a means to maintain a *social network*, a means to experience *trust and safety* in a group of 'known' people, and a way to keep connected and enjoy time with *family*. |
| | SP provides opportunity to exercise feelings of **social responsibility** | For example, due to a feeling of reciprocity, responsibility. |
| | SP provides opportunity to simply **get out** of the house. | For example, to avoid sitting at home all day, doing nothing and becoming lonely. |

Table 1: Convergence across three groups

| Members from groups: | Convergence of opinion | Description (drawn from PO, interview data) |
|---|---|---|
| SP 'for me'<br><br>SP as a 'way of life' | SP brings *joy* to people's lives | For example, bringing laughter, joking around, and having fun into people's lives. |
| | SP can be used as a ***coping*** mechanism. | For example, SP supporting participants in coping with a *feeling of 'becoming invisible'* in old age by providing opportunity to *feel seen/heard*, or to *cope with restrictions* by being able to fall on others for help, |
| | SP provides opportunity to ***share and learn*** from one another. | For example, sharing stories/thoughts/experiences with one another and learning from listening to one another |
| | SP provides opportunity to benefit from ***life enriching experiences***. | For example, often described as making the most of opportunities to live a richer life. |

Table 2: Convergence across two out of three groups

## Additional Findings

Outlying data from interviews indicated how SP was recognised by participants as a support in coping with the death of a loved one. All five participants whom lost a spouse contributed to this data (three from the SP 'for me' group and two from the 'SP not 'for me' group'). Furthermore, all three participants whom expressed a struggle with severe illness of a family member (two from the 'SP 'for me' group' and one from the 'SP not 'for me' group') provided data on how SP supports them in this. And finally, SP was recognised as a way to function 'well' in society by two participants, both from the SP 'not for me' group.

# Discussion

**Summary and Significant Findings**

Results reveal categorisation of participants into three groupings, i.e. those who are driven to create opportunity for SP in their lives/lives of others by searching for and seizing opportunities to do so, those who choose for limited interaction with SP and those who engage with it naturally, creating SP in their lives and the lives of others as part of their everyday lifestyle. Opinions of participants from all groupings converge with the basic understanding of SP from Piškur et al, (2014) and Van der Pas & Galenkamp (2015) (see introduction) on how SP involves engagement with the community/society through various ***activities***. Adding to this definition, results indicate convergence in opinion from across participants on how SP offers the opportunity to create a feeling of ***connection and community***, to exercise feelings of ***social responsibility*** or to simply ***get out*** of the house. Results furthermore highlight a weaker convergence of opinion amongst participants on how SP creates ***joy,*** can be used as a ***coping mechanism,*** provides opportunity to ***share and learn*** from others or ***enriches life.***

What is significant about the results of this research is that even though participants indicate an general assumption that SP is a 'good thing' in terms of 'GOW' at home, with a degree of common understanding on what SP means, a sub section of these participants still recognise it to be of little value in their own lives. The theoretical model of Ehni et al. (2018) was key in this study in simultaneously helping to demonstrate heterogeneity amongst individual participants while also aiding recognition of similarities, resulting in the three aforementioned groupings. Results indicate how the SP 'not for me' group may benefit minimally or not at all from promotion of SP and may even miss out on recognition and support of other needs. While SP 'for me' and SP as 'a way of life' are similar in the value they place in SP and the end result of engagement, they differ in their drive and motivation to engage. As mentioned in introduction, accounting for such differences amongst target populations in policy can make the difference between policy success and policy failure (McKenzie, 2017).

**Expectations, Strengths and Limitations**

This study succeeded in meeting its expectation of gaining an emic, heterogeneous perspective on SP and what this means to participants in terms of GOW. As emphasised throughout the methods section however, the structuring of results on SP was entirely based on patterns identified in the data from participants, without the use of a theoretical framework. While this data could be compared to the base understanding of SP taken at the beginning of the research, this

approach lacked the finesse of using a theoretical model or framework to provide structure to the data collection and analysis. As demonstrated by the application of the theoretical model from Ehni et al. (2018) on understanding what SP means in terms of GOW, the emic, heterogeneous focus can remain central even with use of a structured theoretical framework. This study therefore recommends a more structured approach to SP when entering the field in further research to aid analysis of results. The findings on SP in this research, in combination with other literature, can inform the choice of a theoretical framework or model for SP in such further research. For example, a more stringent use of the basic SP definition of this research can be applied as a foundation upon which topic lists/codes can be developed, or see for example Vossen et al. (2010) 'Handboek Participatie voor ouderen in zorg - en welzijnsprojecten' for further inspiration.

As mentioned, despite the unstructured approach taken in defining SP, the use of the extensive model from Ehni et al, (2018) succeeded in maintaining the richness and nuance in the wide-ranging data gathered while focusing it to the research question in a structured manner. This provided insight into application of the model in practice and delivered important results for the research. A rich and nuanced insight into what SP means in relation to GOW for older people themselves was achieved. As expected, this provided insight into the diversity of opinions from older people themselves (De Donder et al., 2012), bringing their voices into scientific literature in a structured, theory-based manner while simultaneously revealing patterns that are usable for policy makers.. The inclusion of 'agency' in the theoretical framework Robeyns, 2005, 2006; Ehni et al., 2018)  was insightful in this regard as it highlighted differences and similarities regarding how participants 'value' SP in their lives, and their 'ability' to pursue/ not pursue it.

**Reliability and Validity**

The validity and reliability of the study's results comes down to the rigor with which taking field notes is carried out in order to reduce potential bias and to enhance reliability and validity. (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010).

As the ultimate goal of research is to retain objectivity (staying as close as possible to accurate descriptions and understanding of observable phenomena) (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011), the researcher took responsibility in understanding how to handle observations and presentation of data carefully. While events observed by the researcher during PO's for example, are highly

unlikely to repeat themselves the exact same way in the future all observations and methodological/analytical choices made were thoroughly recorded in field notes (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). This opens the opportunity to trace back all choices and allows for possibility of replication.

In terms of validity, it is said often in ethnographic field work, personal validity is the aim (i.e. accurate description of phenomena as objective as possible), however it is also emphasised that the stringent documentation and presentation of study design elements increase the validity of observation and therefore the objectivity of the research (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). These elements include a clear outline of research aim, theoretical framework, methodological choices, management of data, strategy of data analysis and expectations. These precautions were taken to reduce potential biases and to enhance validity of results.

**Representativeness**

The results of this research saw a group of fifteen interview participants being divided into three groupings (one group of six, one of five and one of four). These groups are too small to say anything about variable distributions beyond the sample tested. However, this does not mean that this is an example of poor or inadequate sampling. The validity of such qualitative research sampling depends less on the number of participants than it does on inclusion of a wide number of variables (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Therefore, instead of asking *how many* participants fit into each of the three groupings and how are variables distributed across these groups, this study was more interested in and focused on *how* certain patterns appear in data from participants with such a wide range of variables (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

Sampling decisions began with the choice of three PO sites that resulted in confining the sample of this research to Dutch residents of retirement age (can vary per person), living in Y, in their own homes. As recommended by DeWalt & DeWalt (2011), this research included a wide variety of variables (see methods) within this sample. The study excluded however older people from non-Dutch communities, inhabitants of residential care homes, people with poor mental health, memory loss or symptoms of dementia. It is also noted that the study sample does not include participants with a high degree of loneliness/isolation. As mentioned, this limited the scope of this study, however it also opens doors for opportunities of further research.

**Concluding Remarks**

These findings have implications for the policy shift towards supporting older people to age in their own homes and remain engaged with SP. This research uncovered that SP does have much to offer for many of the participants however that does not mean it will bring benefits to all of them in terms of GOW or can be stimulated in the same way. The oversight of heterogeneity amongst older people in terms of what SP actually means in terms of growing old can result in a dangerous and flat understanding of SP which can create a risk of missing out on other needs that older people may have that can be of much more benefit to them if supported. Therefore, this study urges caution around blanket encouragement of older people, as one homogeneous group to engage with SP in order to grow old happily in their own home.

This research brought hand in hand the fields of anthropology and social policy to work together in this research with the goal of informing policy makers on figuring out how to tackle caring for growing ageing populations. In doing so, this research showcases a methodology of research that simultaneously accounts for heterogeneity amongst older people while also identifying overlapping patterns in order to make broad and diverse data of use in policy making. Based on the successful application of this methodology, the researcher recognises potential to apply it to other target groups, strengthening the emic perspective in making policies on how best to care for different groups of older people growing old in their own homes.



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[14] Image accessed 21 June 2019 : https://mcf-intersection.com/article/aging-out

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Topic List for Semi-Structured Interviews

| Interview stages | Topic list | Link to theoretical framework |
|---|---|---|
| A. Introductions | Life story. <br> Learning about participant. | Perspective of individuals own life story. |
| | Identifying understanding of social participation. <br> Linking social participation to context of individuals life. | Functionings from capability approach. <br> Level 4 of Wolf's model. |
| B. Connecting deeper to Sen's capabilities approach | Facilitators and barriers to social participation. <br> Micro e.g. individual factors - physical and mental health, wealth. | Endowment factors. |
| | Facilitators and barriers to social participation. <br> Meso factors e.g. Family and friends e.g. support network. | Conversion factors. |

| | Facilitators and barriers to social participation. Macro factors e.g. wider community/ freedom. | Practical opportunities/freedom. |
|---|---|---|
| | Facilitators and barriers to social participation. Micro + Meso + Macro considerations. | Agency/choice. |
| **C. Relating to Wolf's theory of a good life** | Social participation's role in life. Desires, abilities, culture, context. | Level 1 of Wolf's model. |
| | Conflict between preferences. | Level 2 of Wolf's model. |
| | Justifying choices via virtues, values, ideas, culture. | Level 3 of Wolf's model. |
| | Living with choices. Existential crisis, contingency, death. | Level 5 of Wolf's model. |

## Appendix 2: Preliminary Code Tree[15]

| Name | Description |
|---|---|
| **Capabilities** | **Based on theoretical framework drawn from Ehni et al. (2018).** |
| *SP 'for me'* | *Participants whom are pushing the boundaries to include SP as an important part of life (drawn from this research)* |
| *Endowment* | *Quality or resources available, internal or external"* |
| *Conversion factors[16]* | *Different personal/environmental characteristics which affect ability to convert endowments to effective capabilities"* |
| *Macro* | *Relating to social structures and institutions.* |
| *Meso* | *Relating to groups that the participant is a part of, e.g. social networks, family, various small organisational communities.* |
| *Micro* | *Relating to the individual themselves (characteristics/ personality, opinions)* |
| *Capability (agency)* | *Practical possibilities/ opportunities and freedom"* |
| *Agency* | *"Ability to pursue goals"* |
| *Functionings* | *"Realisation of capabilities, achieved beings and doings"* |
| *SP 'not for me'* | *Participants whom are not pushing boundaries to have SP in life, claim to be happy with and without SP (drawn from results of this research)* |
| *Divided as under 'interim reports'* | *See above.* |
| **Social Participation** | **Open to be led by data. What does SP mean to participants themselves?** |
| *Freedom* | *Having the freedoms to choose. (drawn from this research).* |

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[15] page 66 of field notes
[16]       https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_principles-of-sociological-inquiry-qualitative-and-quantitative-methods/s05-01-micro-meso-and-macro-approache.html

| Name | Description |
|---|---|
| **SP not 'for me'** | *Participants whom are not pushing boundaries to have SP in life, claim to be happy with and without SP (drawn from results of this research)* |
| **Connection & community** | *SP bringing moments of connection to others (drawn from this research).* |
| **Coping** | *SP supporting those, coping with various life challenges, usually age related (drawn from this research).* |
| **Eating** | *SP as opportunity to sit and eat together (drawn from this research).* |
| **Joy** | *SP bringing joy to life, a way to feel good, supporting of happiness and wellbeing (drawn from this research).* |
| **Opportunities & Learning** | *SP bringing various opportunities to people's lives (drawn from this research) and to share stories/thoughts/experiences, learn from one another* |
| **Pass time** | *SP as a way to participate in various activities (drawn from this research).* |
| **Wolf good life** | **From Ehni et al. (2018) framework** |
| **SP 'not for me'** | **Participants whom are not pushing boundaries to have SP in life, claim to be happy with and without SP (drawn from results of this research)** |
| Level 1; How should I live | This involves desires, abilities, culture, context. |
| Level 2; Conflict preference | Conflict between preferences of different goals (e.g. feeling need to socially participate but desiring to stay in bed) |
| Level 3; Justification | How to justify choices made in the second level. (Values/virtues, ideas, culture, |
| Level 4; Life story | Taking life of participant in its completeness, possibilities and desires based on own biography. |
| Level 5; Existential crisis | Contingency, death. How does one live a good life facing these challenges? (future orientated) |

| Name | Description |
|------|-------------|
| ***SP 'for me'*** | ***Participants whom are pushing the boundaries to include SP as an important part of life (drawn from this research)*** |
| *Divided as under 'Wolf good life -> interim reports'* | *See above* |

## Appendix 3: Outline of Final Structured Code Tree (Nodes and Descriptions)

| Name | Description |
|---|---|
| **Capabilities** | **Based on theoretical framework drawn from Ehni et al. (2018).** |
| *Interim reports* | *From March and April* |
| *Endowment* | *Quality or resources available, internal or external"* |
| *Conversion factors[17]* | *Different personal/environmental characteristics which affect ability to convert endowments to effective capabilities"* |
| *Macro* | *Relating to social structures and institutions.* |
| *Meso* | *Relating to groups that the participant is a part of, e.g. social networks, family, various small organisational communities.* |
| *Micro* | *Relating to the individual themselves (characteristics/ personality, opinions)* |
| *Capability (agency)* | *Practical possibilities/ opportunities and freedom"* |
| *Agency* | *"Ability to pursue goals"* |
| *Functionings* | *"Realisation of capabilities, achieved beings and doings"* |
| *SP as a way of life* | *Participants whom are active in SP, but are not pushing boundaries to have it included, it is just seen as a part of life (drawn from this research)* |
| *Divided as under 'Capabilities -> interim reports'* | *See above.* |
| *SP 'for me'* | *Participants whom are pushing the boundaries to include SP as an important part of life (drawn from this research)* |

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[17]       https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_principles-of-sociological-inquiry-qualitative-and-quantitative-methods/s05-01-micro-meso-and-macro-approache.html

| Name | Description |
|---|---|
| *Divided as under 'interim reports'* | *See above.* |
| **SP 'not for me'** | **Participants whom are not pushing boundaries to have SP in life, claim to be happy with and without SP (drawn from results of this research)** |
| *Divided as under 'interim reports'* | *See above.* |
| **Social Participation** | **Open to be led by data. What does SP mean to participants themselves?** |
| ***Choice*** | ***Choosing to engage with SP in a certain way (drawn from this research).*** |
| *Freedom* | *Having the freedoms to choose. (drawn from this research).* |
| *SP 'for me'* | *Participants whom are pushing the boundaries to include SP as an important part of life (drawn from this research)* |
| *SP not 'for me'* | *Participants whom are not pushing boundaries to have SP in life, claim to be happy with and without SP (drawn from results of this research)* |
| *Way of life* | *Participants whom are active in SP, but are not pushing boundaries to have it included, it is just seen as a part of life (drawn from this research)* |
| ***Connection & community*** | ***SP bringing moments of connection to others (drawn from this research).*** |
| *Family* | *SP as a way to connect, maintain and strengthen family relationships (drawn from this research).* |
| *Social Network* | *SP as a way to connect with and maintain social contacts (drawn from this research).* |
| *Trust and Safety* | *SP as a way to experience trust in others and feeling safe in their company (drawn from this research).* |
| ***Coping*** | ***SP supporting those, coping with various life challenges, usually age related (drawn from this research).*** |

| Name | Description |
|---|---|
| *Age, remain seen and or heard* | *SP as a way to remain 'seen and heard' in old age (drawn from this research).* |
| *Death of loved one* | *SP as a support in dealing with death of loved one (drawn from this research).* |
| *Illness in family* | *SP as a way to cope with illness in family (drawn from this research).* |
| *Restrictions* | *SP as support in coping with various restrictions, physical or otherwise (drawn from this research).* |
| ***Function well in society*** | ***SP as a way to function in society (drawn from this research).*** |
| ***Joy*** | ***SP bringing joy to life, a way to feel good, supporting of happiness and wellbeing (drawn from this research).*** |
| ***Opportunities*** | ***SP bringing various opportunities to people's lives (drawn from this research).*** |
| *Activities* | *SP as a way to participate in various activities (drawn from this research).* |
| *Life enriching experiences* | *SP as something that enriches one's life (drawn from this research).* |
| *Sharing and learning* | *SP as a way to share stories/thoughts/experiences with one another and learn from one another (drawn from this research).* |
| *Social responsibility* | *SP as a way to express a feeling of social responsibility (drawn from this research).* |
| *To get out* | *SP as a way to get out of the house (drawn from this research).* |
| **Wolf good life** | **From Ehni et al. (2018) framework** |
| ***Interim reports*** | ***From April and March*** |
| Level 1; How should I live | This involves desires, abilities, culture, context. |
| Level 2; Conflict preference | Conflict between preferences of different goals (e.g. feeling need to socially participate but desiring to stay in bed) |

| Name | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Level 3; Justification | How to justify choices made in the second level. (Values/virtues, ideas, culture, |
| Level 4; Life story | Taking life of participant in its completeness, possibilities and desires based on own biography. |
| Level 5; Existential crisis | Contingency, death. How does one live a good life facing these challenges? (future orientated) |
| *SP 'for me'* | *Participants whom are pushing the boundaries to include SP as an important part of life (drawn from this research)* |
| *Divided as under 'Wolf good life -> interim reports'* | *See above* |
| *SP 'not for me'* | *Participants whom are not pushing boundaries to have SP in life, claim to be happy with and without SP (drawn from results of this research)* |
| *Divided as under 'Wolf good life -> interim reports'* | *See above* |
| *SP as a way of life* | *Participants whom are active in SP, but are not pushing boundaries to have it included, it is just seen as a part of life (drawn from this research)* |
| *Divided as under 'Wolf good life -> interim reports'* | *See above* |