Age-Friendly Cities in 12 Walloon cities (Belgium): similarities and distance with WHO framework

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Structure

- A travel to the country of surrealism
  - The methodological perspective
  - A two-level analysis
Belgium, country of surrealism
Guide mondial
des villes-amies des aînés
Key message: In Wallonia, it’s not an AFC framework or program...

Is it a problem?

Or is it because AFC does not exist itself in reality but should be considered as a representation?

LIKE EVERYWHERE in the world, the Walloon case shows actors using AFC as a tool and producing ‘participative episods’ (Bacqué, Gautier, 2011) for a time, in a place

Target: understand the context of such episods
Research methodology
Question: How Walloon cities use and translate the WHO framework? How do they put ‘social participation of older people’ in practice?

Method: Selection of 12 cities out of 60 financed by Minister of Health AFC plan (out of 168 demands... From a total of 262 cities) with:

- Urban / rural criteria
- Diversity of actors implied

Sample: In each city, semi-structured interviews with 3 different actors: policy officer (elected), older people representative, municipal employee
A total of 43 interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Urban level</th>
<th>Project from</th>
<th>Elected politician</th>
<th>Munic. employee</th>
<th>Older people</th>
<th>‘CPAS’</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brabant Wallon</td>
<td>Orp-Jauche</td>
<td>D3</td>
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<td>Ottignies-LLN</td>
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<td>Hainaut</td>
<td>Beaumont</td>
<td>D3</td>
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<td>Amay</td>
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<td>Com (CCCA)</td>
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<td>Lux.</td>
<td>Durbuy (BARVAUX)</td>
<td>D3</td>
<td>CCCA</td>
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<td>Marche-en-Famenne</td>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Com</td>
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<td>Namur</td>
<td>Ciney</td>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Com (CCCA)</td>
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|          |              |             |              | 10                 | 14              | 12           | 6      | 1     |
Analysis 1: the Walloon context of a ‘participative episod’
Capturing the picture

• The legal and historical walloon context

2 ‘Circulars’ in 2006/2012 to encourage municipal councils to have Consultative Municipal Council for Older people (CCCA)

An orientation note on Older people policy in 2010: 1st priority of 1st objective: ‘To encourage and support active participation of older people into our society’

2012: European Year on ‘active ageing and solidarity between generations’

⇒ 2012: The Minister of Health call for AFC finances (3.3 M CAD ; 2.5 M€, 1 year)

⇒ Activities supporting social relations according to needs / wishes of older people

⇒ Urban adaptation (benches, fitness kit, etc.)

⇒ Improvement of information

• The financed Cities

57 selected cities, average of 15.000 people

3 ‘bigger cities’: 110.000 to 204.000 people

⇒ urbain, rural and peri-urbain

Average funding/city: 53.000 CAD (40.000 €), double for bigger city

• The scientific context: a poor knowledge of AFC in Walloon Region
Analysis 2: Walloon experiences of a ‘participative episod’
The case of the bench

Perfect illustration of a ‘participative episod’...

- Measuring the collaboration between the 3 actors
  - Political actors agree with the ‘visibility’ of the object
  - Municipal employee deals with its ‘reality’
  - Older people gives (or not) its ‘legitimacy’
What actors say

1) Older people representative from Consultative Municipal Council for Older people

- The meanings of ‘activities’: playing cards as a citizenship experience? Rural realities
- Who are they talking for? Are they being heard? Are they closely selected by the Community Council?
- Being ‘actors’ or being ‘consumers’?

➡ Such councils represent long-term social participation of older people
What actors say

2) Policy officers (elected politicians)

- AFC as a flagship: an object of local marketing, a good or a bad thing for local democracy?
- Very little knowledge of AFC program and WHO framework
- Tensions between ‘CPAS’ (Local Public Assistance Offices or +/- CSSS in Quebec) supporting ‘dependent older people’ Versus ‘active & healthy seniors’ ➔ Avoiding reproduction of 3nd / 4th ages segmentation and building a complex vision of older people
- Being ‘actors’ or being ‘consumers’?

14
What actors say

3) Municipal employees

- Central actors in terms of ‘connecting people’ (older people, policy officers, other community organizations)
- Already employed by existing funding schemes (in particular the ‘PCS’ = Plan de Cohésion Sociale)
- Being ‘actors’ (used to project conception) or being ‘consumers’ (or defender of its territory)?
- Ignoring the VADA/WHO framework and do not see its potential use: ‘Too far from our realities’
- While not ignoring the ‘need/resources analysis’, rarely well understood in the name of the professional legitimacy: ‘We know the local field’
Conclusion:
Behind ‘participative episods’,
The importance of research support
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<th>Wallonie</th>
<th>Québec</th>
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<tr>
<td>Compétence politique</td>
<td>Ministre de la Santé, de l’Action sociale et de l’Égalité des Chances</td>
<td>Ministre des Ainés ; puis Ministre de la Santé &amp; Ainés</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compétence administrative</td>
<td>Direction Générale Opérationnelle des Pouvoirs locaux, de l'Action sociale et de la Santé (DG05) Là : Dpt. des Ainés et de la famille</td>
<td>Secrétariat aux ainés ; puis Secrétariat aux ainés DANS le Ministère de la Santé</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place de la recherche</td>
<td><strong>Inexistent (0,1%) until now</strong></td>
<td><strong>Central (18%, 2008-2013)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rapport OMS (2007)</td>
<td>Un cadre très général pour le politique; quasi pas identifié par les acteurs</td>
<td>La base de départ ; réapproprié et dépassé par les chercheurs/acteurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing du début du projet</td>
<td>Peu idéal (élections communales)</td>
<td>Idéal (consultation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traduction de « la participation sociale des ainés »</td>
<td>Lien social dans les activités ainés Poursuite des CCCA (« parlement »)</td>
<td>Comité de pilotage</td>
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Thank you for your attention

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