

**Mapping civic engagement in later life: A scoping review of gerontological definitions
and typology proposal**

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MAPPING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

Research on older people's civic engagement has increased significantly in the last two decades, as have policy and practice initiatives aimed at promoting civic engagement among older adults. However, the growing interest of researchers and policy-makers in older people's civic engagement has not been mirrored by a parallel effort to define what civic engagement means in later life. To contribute to ongoing debates regarding the definition of civic engagement, this paper aims to examine the extent to which the concept has been defined in the ageing literature (RQ1), the ways in which it has been defined (RQ2), and the activities that have typically been associated with the concept (RQ3). We conducted a scoping review and content analysis of gerontological definitions of the concept of civic engagement and related concepts, such as volunteering and political participation. Our study reveals the diversity of ways in which older people are engaged, with some forms of activity, such as volunteering, more commonly featuring than others, such as informally helping others. A typology of civic activities among older people arose from the analysis of definitions, which permits their hierarchical differentiation and ordering, and thus contributes to a more nuanced and complex understanding of what we mean by being civically engaged in later life.

Keywords: civic engagement, civic participation, volunteering, political participation, community participation, ageing, scoping review

Civic engagement as a key component of active and successful ageing

Accompanying global population ageing is a growing concern to keep older people active and engaged. International organisations, such as the United Nations (UN 2002) and the World Health Organization (WHO 2002), have placed the understanding and promotion of older people's engagement in productive activities at the heart of their policies to promote successful and active forms of ageing. Within these frameworks, civic engagement has been regarded as a gold standard for achieving a good old age (UN 2002; WHO 2002), due to its capacity to benefit both older people and their communities (e.g. Morrow-Howell et al. 2019). The WHO definition of active ageing, for instance, highlights older people's active involvement in social, economic, cultural, and civic affairs as one of the three pillars of the concept, along with health and security (WHO 2002).

While civic engagement of older adults underpins ideas about age-friendly cities and communities (Buffel et al. 2012), which implies involving older people in shaping the social and physical environments in which they live, as well as engaging them in political decision-making processes, lack of engagement in civic activities often features as a key dimension in conceptualisations of social exclusion in later life (e.g. Walsh et al. 2017), a period of life in which accumulation of risks can increase and pathways to avoid risk diminish (Jehoel-Gijsbers and Vrooman 2008; Warburton et al. 2013). Civic engagement has the potential to tackle social exclusion by providing older people with the opportunity to express agency, become meaningfully involved in the lives of their communities, and have their voices heard in collective decision-making processes (Serrat et al. 2018).

Research on older people's civic engagement has increased significantly in the last two decades (Serrat et al. 2020), as have policy and practice initiatives aimed at promoting civic engagement among older adults (e.g. MetLife Foundation 2004; Scharf et al. 2016).

However, the growing interest of researchers and policy-makers in older people's civic engagement has not been mirrored by a parallel effort to define what civic engagement and other related concepts, such as volunteering or political participation, mean in later life. Rather, the tendency has been towards a lack of consensus among gerontology researchers on their definition (see Greenfield 2010). The underlying absence of conceptual clarity has hampered both the advancement of research and the development of public policy to promote civic engagement among older people (Berger 2009; Ekman and Amnå 2012).

To contribute to ongoing debates regarding the definition of civic engagement, this paper aims to examine the extent to which the concept has been defined in the ageing literature (RQ1), the ways in which it has been defined (RQ2), and the activities that have typically been associated with the concept (RQ3). Arising from a scoping review and analysis of gerontological definitions, we propose a typology of civic activities among older people which permits their hierarchical differentiation and ordering, and thus contributes to a more nuanced and complex understanding of what we mean by being civically engaged in later life.

Civic engagement: The evolution of a contested and elusive concept

Over the last 50 years, the field of civic engagement has witnessed an intensive academic debate regarding the activities that should be included under the umbrella of civic engagement, and the possible criteria for classifying them. Crucially, such scholarly discussions are not neutral but have a direct impact on social policy and practice initiatives (Evers and von Essen 2019). As noted by Greenfield (2010), definitions "... serve to identify not only the *what is*, but also the *what could be* and the *what should be*" (p. 6). Accordingly, such definitions not only affect our understanding of what civic engagement is, but also the

scope of activities that are considered (and the ones that are not considered) when it comes to promoting this activity.

Civic engagement should be considered as an inherently multidimensional rather than as an undifferentiated phenomenon (Hustinx and Denk 2009). Indeed, the repertoire of activities scholars consider to be *civic* has expanded rapidly in recent decades (van Deth 2001). In the 1940s, academic definitions of participation were largely limited to the act of voting. However, Verba and Nie (1972) and Barnes and Kaase (1979), among others, noted in the 1970s that the rising levels of education and prosperity experienced in Western liberal democracies since the 1950s, which were popularising non-electoral forms of participation, called for an expansion of the repertoire of civic activities. An early consequence of such arguments saw the repertoire extended to incorporate these dimensions of participation. This encompassed both what were termed conventional forms of participation, such as working on campaigns, contacting political representatives, or participating in political organisations or forums, and what were referred to as non-conventional activities, such as participating in protest activities or new social movements (e.g. Offe 1985).

The early 2000s marked the starting point of two further developments in defining civic engagement. First, publication of Putnam's (2000) *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community* substantially broadened the scholarly domain of civic activities to incorporate virtually any activity with the potential of creating social capital, from bowling in leagues to helping a friend with the grocery shopping. Thus, altruistic behaviours which are not primarily linked to the sphere of politics, such as informal helping or participation in volunteering, community, or charitable organisations, were also drawn into the academic repertoire of civic activities. This development mirrored the distinction between the terms 'civic', which traditionally referred to the role of the individual within the state, and 'civil', which concerned activities outwith the state (e.g. Ekman and Amnå 2012; van Deth

2014). Importantly, publication of Putnam's seminal work also initiated the widespread use of the term *civic engagement*, which had previously barely been used either in scholarly or media discourse (Berger 2009).

Second, the emerging transition to postmodern societies led to new modes of participation which called into question traditional academic understandings of civic engagement. Some authors even refer to a "second stage of re-conceptualisation" (Hustinx and Denk 2009) or a "reinvention" (Norris 2002) of the concept. In this vein, civic activities that were once considered unconventional or even illegal in academic discourse, such as participation in protest activities, have become progressively normalised (Norris 2002). For this reason, some commentators now prefer to distinguish between institutionalised and non-institutionalised political activities, rather than conventional and unconventional activities (e.g. Goerres 2009). Moreover, processes of individualisation and globalisation typical of postmodernism have generated new forms of involvement that are more lifestyle-related and less hierarchically and formally networked than conventional forms of participation (Stolle and Hooghe 2005). According to Hustinx and Denk (2009), such changes call for a more qualitative understanding of the concept of civic engagement rather than for a continuous quantitative expansion of participatory repertoires. From this perspective, the key is to understand how citizens "...perform and give meaning to these activities, irrespective of whether these activities represent more traditional or unconventional participation repertoires" (Hustinx and Denk 2009, p. 210).

Extending these two key developments, the latest twist in the academic conceptualisation of civic engagement incorporates *digitally networked* forms of participation (Theocharis 2015). Most definitions of civic engagement were coined during the pre-internet years, disregarding therefore the many channels for participation that information and communication technologies have opened up. Although some scholars have called into

question the equivalence between online and offline forms of participation, due to the former's expressive rather than instrumentally-oriented nature (e.g. Sander and Putnam 2010), there are powerful arguments to suggest not only that new forms of online participation mirror in many ways offline forms (Gibson and Cantijoch 2013), but also that online forms of participation can be considered as new types of civic engagement in their own right (Theocharis 2015).

In short, in the last 50 years there has been a continuous expansion in both the domain and repertoire of civic activities. According to Berger (2009), this evolution provides an excellent example of what the political scientist Giovanni Sartori called conceptual stretching, which refers to "...the distortion that occurs when a concept, applied to new cases, does not fit the new case" (Sartori, 1970, p. 1024; cited in Berger 2009, p. 335). The continuous expansion of the term's meaning has transformed the study of civic engagement into the *study of everything* (van Deth 2001), raising questions about the concept's relevance for understanding individuals' social and political engagement.

Against this background, some researchers have advocated for the use of narrow definitions of what it means to be civically engaged, limiting therefore the concept's meaning to specific activities, such as volunteering (e.g. O'Neill et al. 2011) or political participation (e.g. Burr et al. 2002). However, others have adopted a broader understanding of the term, defining it in more general and less specific ways. Adler and Goggin (2005), for instance, state that civic engagement comprises "... how an active citizen participates in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future" (p. 16). This broader approach to civic engagement, however, runs the risk of accepting that the concept has endless variations, diluting its clarity and limiting the possibilities for comparing civic activities across empirical studies (Theocharis 2015). To avoid such imprecision, there have been numerous attempts to provide systematic criteria

enabling researchers, in the terms of van Deth (2014), to “... recognise a mode of participation if you see one” (p. 361).

Among the many criteria proposed (cf. Cnaan and Park 2016), the general consensus among scholars is to differentiate between what is termed social (e.g. Berger 2009), civic (e.g. Barrett and Brunton-Smith 2014; Ekman and Amnå 2012), community (e.g. Adler and Goggin 2005), pre-political or latent political participation (e.g. Ekman and Amnå 2012), that is, activities that are aimed at helping others or producing common good, with no explicit political intention, and what is referred to as political participation (e.g. Adler and Goggin 2005; Barrett and Brunton-Smith 2014; Berger 2009) or manifest political participation (e.g. Ekman and Amnå 2012), which groups activities that are explicitly aimed at influencing political outcomes. However, it is also important to note that this distinction has been subject to critique (e.g. Evers and von Essen 2019; Henriksen and Svedberg 2010), since the boundaries between the activities included under such labels are not always easy to establish.

Historically, the study of social (especially volunteering) and political forms of civic engagement has developed independently (Musick and Wilson 2008), and in both cases has also led to intensive debates around conceptual definitions. Regarding volunteering, Cnaan, Handy, and Wadsworth (1996) highlighted that most definitions revolved around four dimensions: 1) the *voluntary* nature of the act; 2) the availability of *rewards*; 3) the *proximity* of recipients of the voluntary action; and 4) the degree of *formality* of the activity. However, these axes are not exempt from criticism (see Hustinx et al. 2010) and therefore remain a topic for debate. In regard to political participation, van Deth (2014) has proposed that a minimal definition of the concept should include at least four features. It should be 1) understood as an *activity*; 2) carried out *voluntarily*; 3) undertaken by *ordinary citizens*; and 4) related to *government, politics, or the state*. However, a consensus on what political participation means is also still far from being reached (see Fox 2014). Even less consensus

exists regarding the activities that should be included under these two forms of civic engagement. When it comes to social participation, for instance, most researchers agree that participation in volunteering, community, or charitable organisations forms part of the repertoire. However, whether activities such as informal caregiving should be included or not remains contested (e.g. Herd and Meyer 2002).

To sum up, the concept of civic engagement has been the subject of intense and ongoing academic debate. However, this debate has largely occurred in the fields of sociology and political science and outside the gerontological research agenda. To the best of our knowledge, the only attempt to review existing definitions of civic engagement in the ageing literature was undertaken by Greenfield (2010). However, Greenfield's review was more of a comment on the most popular definitions of civic engagement than a systematic review. Moreover, it was published 10 years ago and consequently pre-dates the period when most gerontological research on the topic of civic engagement has been published (Serrat et al. 2020). As we understand gerontology to be a discipline concerned with integrating the fields of research, policy and practice around ageing (Alkema and Alley 2006; Hulko et al. 2020), our specific focus in this study is on gerontological definitions of civic engagement. Thus, we would like to understand to what extent and how civic engagement has been defined within the discipline of gerontology as a way of shedding light also on the practices and policies that seek to promote civic engagement among this specific age group.

Our study, therefore, aims to answer the three following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent has civic participation been defined in the ageing literature?

RQ2: How has civic participation been defined in the ageing literature?

RQ3: What activities have been usually included in the ageing literature under the concept of civic participation?

Methods:*Search strategy*

We carried out a scoping review of the ageing literature in 2018 by searching four databases (Psycinfo, Sociological Abstracts, Web of Science, and Scopus) using the following keywords: (*Ageing* OR *Aging* OR *Aged* OR *Old age* OR *older people* OR *older persons* OR *older adults* OR *seniors* OR *senior citizens* OR *elder** OR *later life* OR *third age*) AND (all the combinations between *civic* OR *civil* OR *citizen** OR *political* OR *social* OR *community* AND *participation* OR *engagement* OR *involvement*, OR *volunteering*). We limited our searches to empirical papers, reviews, or conceptual/theoretical papers written in English. No year of publication limits were applied.

Screening and eligibility of papers

We extracted data in two phases. In Phase One, we screened titles and abstracts and applied a first set of inclusion criteria: A) the main focus of the paper was on civic participation or narrower concepts (e.g. volunteering, voting, engagement in political organisations); B) the main focus of the paper was on older people (defined as those aged 50 and over) or on comparisons between older and younger people. Papers addressing broader concepts (e.g. productive ageing, successful ageing) or not focused on older people were therefore excluded.

In Phase Two, we scanned the full-text of the remaining papers and applied the following criterion: C) the paper provides a conceptual definition of civic participation or narrower concepts (e.g. volunteering, political participation). Operational definitions and references to broader concepts (e.g. social capital, productive ageing) were not considered. In the interest of parsimony, we identified and removed duplicate definitions, both secondary definitions (citations) which were also included as primary (original) definitions or secondary

definitions which referred to the same original source (in this case, we kept the oldest definition). Marginal concepts, whose frequency of appearance in the ageing literature was low (less than two mentions), were also excluded from the analyses.

Data analyses

The definitions of civic participation and related concepts were classified according to whether they were primary (original) or secondary (citations). In the latter case, they were further categorised taking into account if they proceeded or not from the ageing literature. Then, a content analysis of the definitions was carried out to identify their core characteristics (Drisko and Maschi 2016). This analysis implied five steps (Krippendorff 2018). First, the research team became familiar with the data by a close reading of the definitions. This enabled identification of ideas (or units of meanings) in each definition. Second, using ATLAS.ti 7 qualitative analysis software, these ideas were grouped into categories according to the similarity of their meaning. Authors 1 and 3 carried out this analysis independently in order to increase the results' reliability. Third, authors' category systems were contrasted and differences discussed until consensus was reached. The final category system included four first-order categories, each including a number of subcategories. First-order categories represented key questions that definitions tried to answer: a) Why do older people participate?; b) How do older people participate?; c) In which activities do older people participate?; and d) How intense is older people's participation? Subcategories were specific answers to each of these four questions. Fourth, the agreed category system was independently applied to the definitions by Authors 1 and 3. Disagreements about categorisation were resolved to finalise the results of the content analysis. Fifth, a researcher who was not involved in the analysis received one-third of definitions, selected at random, and categorised them using the agreed category system. A kappa reliability index of .93 was

obtained from the comparison of the independent researcher's categorisation with the original categorisation, which indicates an excellent reliability (Fleiss 1981).

Finally, the results from the content analysis were used to create of a typology of civic activities which not only establishes a hierarchy between them but also identifies their common and differential features. This typology was elaborated taking into account the four first-order categories identified through the content analysis and their related subcategories, which were all included in the typology unless they were in direct contradiction with more frequent or overarching categories.

Results

Following the initial search, 1,178 papers were screened, with title and abstract screening resulting in the exclusion of 749 papers. Of the excluded papers, 436 were not focused on civic engagement or had a broader focus, and 313 were not focused on older adults or included older adults and younger people but did not analyse results as a function of age. Assessment of eligibility resulted in the exclusion of 377 papers, which failed to provide a conceptual definition of civic participation or narrower concepts ($n = 330$) or provided duplicated definitions ($n = 39$). Finally, papers using marginal concepts (i.e. with a frequency of appearance below two), such as civic service ($n = 2$; Bronstein and Mason 2013; Morrow-Howell 2006), advocacy ($n = 1$; Boggs 1992), environmental volunteering ($n = 1$; Bushway et al. 2011), gray power ($n = 1$; Yelaja 1989), helping behaviours ($n = 1$; Burr et al. 2018), social activism ($n = 1$; Fox and Quinn 2012), and virtual volunteering ($n = 1$; Mukherjee 2010), were also excluded from the analysis (see Figure 1).

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Of the 52 papers included, 16 provided definitions of civic engagement, five of political participation, and 31 of volunteering (see Supplementary Tables 1, 2, and 3 for a full

list of definitions). These definitions were mostly secondary (80.8%), although there were important differences according to the term defined (see Table 1). Importantly, the term “civic engagement” was preferred over its variants “civic participation” and “civic involvement”, which were used in only one definition each. Civic engagement was conceived as a more inclusive concept which is not only behavioural in nature (that is, refers to actions) but also includes a sense of psychological connection (that is, civic engagement is part of individuals’ life interests and goals). As argued by McBride (2006) “... using the word engagement, rather than referring to civic participation, for example, implies that one is connected (engaged) through the behaviour with people and structures” (p. 66).

In regard to the origin of secondary definitions, most (61.5%) came from the non-gerontological literature. This was more evident in definitions of political participation (80%) than in definitions of volunteering (64.5%) or of civic engagement, for which there was a 50:50 split between the ageing and non-ageing literatures.

INSERT TABLE I ABOUT HERE

The content analysis of the definitions identified four first-order categories, each including a number of subcategories. First-order categories were constructed based on key questions that definitions of civic engagement, political participation, or volunteering sought to answer: a) Why do older people participate?; b) How do older people participate?; c) In which activities do older people participate?; d) How intense is older people’s participation? (See Table 2).

INSERT TABLE II ABOUT HERE

Regarding the first first-order category (*Why do older people participate?*), 82.7% of definitions revolved around the objective of the activity. All the definitions of civic engagement and political participation, and 71% of the definitions of volunteering, included

this category. Two subcategories (or answers) to this question were identified. Some definitions stated that the reason for engagement was to seek improvements or benefits for others, the community, or society as a whole (69.2%), while others mentioned that engagement was motivated by impacting on decision-making processes (25%). While both subcategories applied to definitions of civic engagement, definitions of political participation and volunteering were labelled exclusively under the first and the second subcategory respectively.

Concerning the second first-order category (*How do older people participate?*), while 80.8% of definitions included at least one key feature of participation, this percentage varied across definitions. Four subcategories (or answers to this question) were identified. Two of these subcategories made reference to the unpaid and non-professional nature of participation (48.1%) and to its free-will basis (32.7%). These subcategories applied similarly to definitions of civic engagement, volunteering, and political participation, although they appeared less often in the definitions of the first of these concepts. The two remaining categories corresponded to axes of classification of the activities included under each of the concepts analysed. One of these categories (formal or collective activities vs. informal or individual activities; 65.4%) made reference to whether the activity was undertaken within an organisation or formally-organised group or, rather, was performed individually or informally. This category applied exclusively to definitions of volunteering (83.9%) and, to a lesser extent, to definitions of civic engagement (50%). The last category (institutionalised or conventional activities vs. non-institutionalised or non-conventional activities, 5.8%) was only found in definitions of political participation (60%). This category referred to the extent to which political activities are directly related to official or institutionalised political channels or occur mostly outside them.

In regard to the third first-order category (*In which activities do older people participate?*), 78.8% of definitions mentioned at least one specific activity as part of the concept. However, percentages varied across definitions of civic engagement (68.8%), political participation (100%), and volunteering (80.6%). There were more than 20 activities included within the definitions, ranging in terms of frequency from those which were included in just one definition (such as discussing politics or attending political rallies) to those which appeared in around half of the definitions (such as participation in volunteering organisations or prosocial behaviours outside the family).

The fourth first-order category (*How intense is older people's participation?*) was only included in 26.9% of definitions, although this percentage varied across definitions. Variation in the intensity of participation was defined in terms of time (23.1%), personal resources (15.4%), or money (3.8%).

Finally, the results from the content analysis were used to create of a typology of civic activities which not only establishes a hierarchy between activities but also identifies their common and differential features (see Figure 2). This allows us also to provide a definition of civic engagement in later life as unpaid, non-professional activities aimed at seeking improved benefits for others, the community, or wider society, or impacting on collective decision-making processes. To build the typology of civic activities, we incorporated sequentially the four first-order categories (key questions) according to their general frequency of appearance in the definitions, as well as the related subcategories, following the same criterion. There were only four sub-categories that were not included in the typology as they were in direct contradiction with more frequent ones. Thus, the sub-category paid work (3.8%) was not included as it was in contradiction with the more frequently mentioned sub-category of unpaid, non-professional activities (48.1%). The same applied to the sub-categories discussing politics (1.9%), staying up-to-date on news and public affairs (7.7%),

and learning activities (3.8%), hardly classifiable under one of the two more frequent answers (or sub-categories) to key question 1.

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Discussion

This paper was aimed at examining the extent to which the concept of civic engagement has been defined in the ageing literature (RQ1), the ways in which it has been defined (RQ2), and the activities that have typically been associated with the concept (RQ3). Results make a key contribution by, for the first time, systematically bringing together the definitions that have been used within the ageing literature. Drawing on over 50 years of research relating to civic engagement in later life, we have identified 52 non-duplicate definitions of this concept or related concepts, such as volunteering and political participation, and a number of common activities included within these definitions. This is a striking result in itself, considering that 330 of the papers published in the same period failed to provide any definition of the key concept that was being addressed.

Moreover, most definitions of civic engagement were secondary rather than primary, and originated in fields other than gerontology. This might reflect the under-theorisation of civic engagement in the study of ageing societies. This called for the creation of a typology of civic activities among older people and for a definition of late-life civic engagement, based on the gerontological literature, which could advance the disciplinary understanding of this phenomenon. Our research highlights in particular the lack of attention to defining political forms of participation in later life, with greater focus on volunteering and on civic engagement. Our results call for a more theoretically-driven approach to civic engagement in later life, which should serve not only to frame the profusion of empirical studies carried out in the last two decades (Serrat et al. 2020), but also to warrant comparability among them,

and thus allow for the advancement of our understanding of this phenomenon in later life. This is particularly important in the context of global ageing populations and in line with growing policy and practice efforts to engage older people in the lives of their communities in more meaningful ways (UN 2002; WHO 2002).

With regards to the defining features of civic engagement, our study reveals the diversity of ways in which older people are engaged, with some forms of activity more commonly featuring than others. Considering the extent to which different civic engagement activities have been defined in the ageing literature, we note a strong focus on formal contributions to others, particularly on volunteering, and much less focus on older people's informal contributions inside and outside the family, as well as on their role in political decision-making processes.

A nuanced understanding of what civic engagement means in later life should include the many helping behaviours that older people perform informally outside volunteering, community, or charitable organisations. These include both caregiving to family members (Herd and Meyer 2002) and prosocial behaviours outside the family (Kruse and Schmitt 2015). Although these activities are far more common among older people than formal volunteering activities (e.g. Kruse and Schmitt 2015; Nesteruk and Price 2011), they have tended to be invisible in definitions of civic engagement, which often reduce civic engagement to formal volunteering (Martinson and Minkler 2006). The same could be said with regards to political activities, which have featured far less frequently in gerontological definitions than formal volunteering. As argued by Serrat and colleagues (2020), we need to bring "...politics back into studies of older people's civic participation to consider not only ways in which older people may contribute to their communities but also ways in which they may support or contest prevailing social and political values and processes" (p. 9).

Broadening the scope of activities considered as civic engagement runs parallel with

acknowledging the increasing diversity of older people, and therefore the many ways in which older adults can engage civically above and beyond formal volunteering. This strategy also allows ageing societies to value equally all of these contributions and, at the same time, to highlight the power imbalances that mark later life, including differential access to decision-making processes based on individuals' social locations such as age, gender, class, ethnicity, sexual identity, health, disability, or place of residence. We think that considering both a wider range of civic activities and older people's diversity will support the efforts of researchers and policy-makers to make progress in advancing civic inclusion in later life.

Our scoping review allows us to propose a new typology which differentiates five types of civic activity. The first three types, referred to as volunteering, include activities which are orientated towards seeking improved benefits for others, the community, or wider society. Types 1 and 2 refer to informal volunteering activities, both inside (caregiving) and outside (prosocial behaviours, charitable donations) the family respectively, while Type 3 alludes to formal participation in volunteering, community, or charitable organisations. The remaining two types, labelled as political participation, refer to activities seeking to impact on political decision-making processes, using both institutionalised channels (Type 4) and non-institutionalised channels (Type 5). As a result of this scoping review, we are also able to propose a definition of civic engagement in later life as older people's unpaid, non-professional activities aimed at seeking improved benefits for others, the community, or wider society, or impacting on collective decision-making processes.

Our study reaches beyond existing work in social gerontology, in particular by allowing us to provide a hierarchical differentiation and ordering of forms of civic engagement. While much of the existing work in this area focuses more narrowly on collective forms of social engagement, we have developed a more nuanced and complex understanding of what we mean by being civically engaged in later life. This understanding

can be used by researchers seeking to operationalise civic engagement in future empirical studies. Moreover, the paper also makes a helpful contribution to gerontological debates that connect to civic engagement. This includes, for example, work that explores the multi-dimensionality of social exclusion in later life (e.g. Walsh et al. 2017). While considerable progress has been made in conceptualising the overarching concept of social exclusion in relation to older people, less attention has been paid to clarifying the conceptual basis of particular dimensions of exclusion, including the dimension of exclusion from civic activities. Our typology of civic engagement of older people provides a basis for identifying more clearly what it is that ageing adults might be excluded from in relation to civic engagement and, therefore, suggests an approach that would lend itself to a more rigorous operationalisation of exclusion from civic activities. Last but not least, the typology can also form the basis for policy interventions aimed at promoting civic engagement in later life in ways that reach beyond participation in volunteering activities. For policy-makers interested in developing age-friendly cities and communities, as well as for those who take decisions at different levels of political systems, the typology can be used to identify ways in which older people might actively be involved in shaping the social and physical environments in which they live, as well as becoming more engaged in political decision-making processes.

Results from this study should be interpreted with caution due to several limitations. The exclusion of papers written in languages other than English clearly limits the scope of literature covered. Moreover, our exclusive focus on peer-reviewed scientific papers prevents us from generalising about how civic engagement is defined outside academia, for instance in public and social policy. Notwithstanding these limitations, our study makes a key contribution by systematically bringing together the definitions that have been used within the ageing literature, by generating a new definition of civic engagement, and by developing a typology which allows a more nuanced and complex understanding of what it means to be

civically engaged in later life. We hope that these contributions will help to move forward the burgeoning field of research on civic engagement in later life.

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Figure 1. Flow chart. Review of definitions of civic participation included in the ageing literature

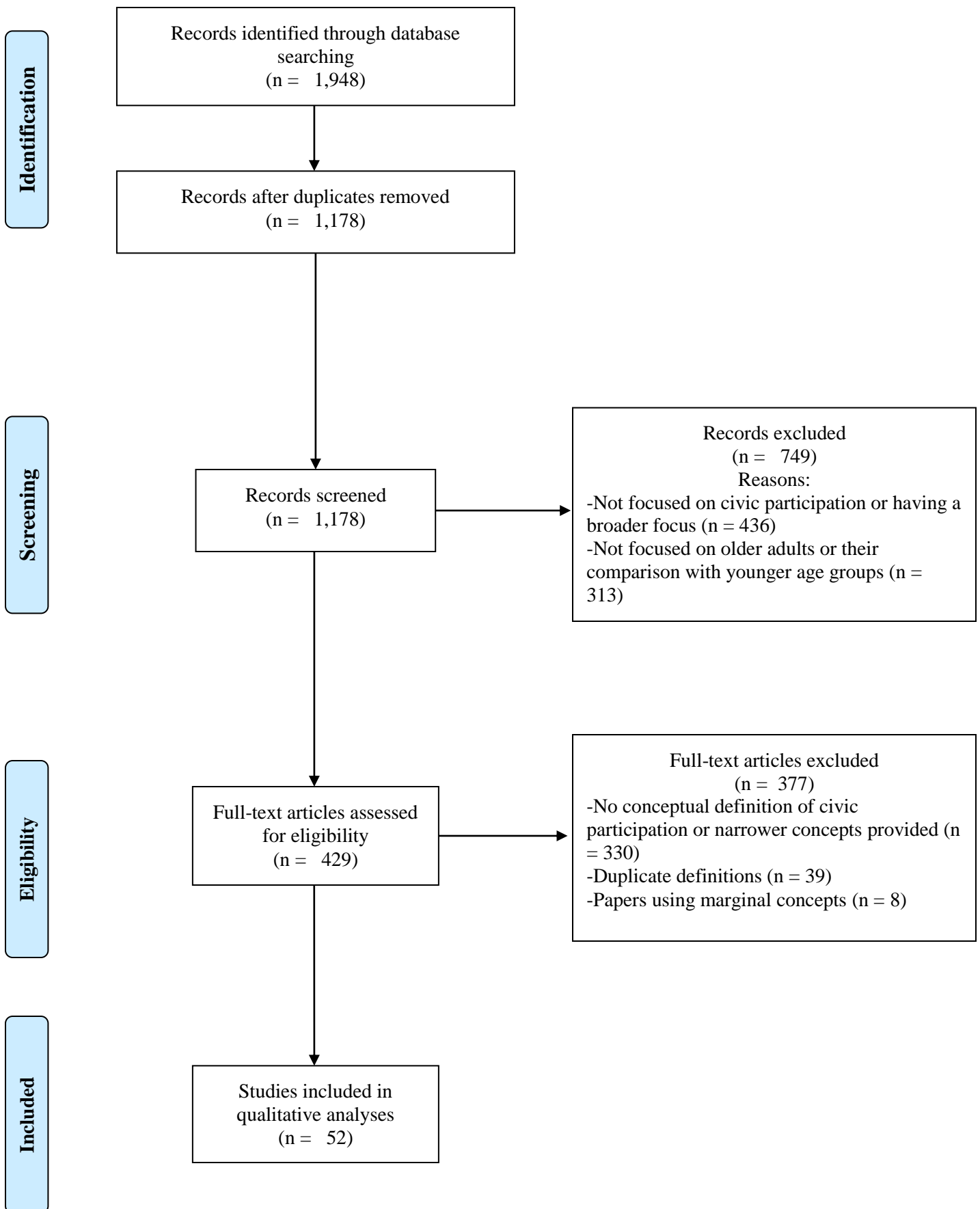


Figure 2. Proposed taxonomy of civic activities.

Key question 1: Why do older people participate?	Civic engagement <i>Unpaid, non-professional, voluntary activities aimed at seeking improvements or benefits for others, the community, or society, or impacting on decision-making processes</i>				
	Volunteering <i>Activities seeking improvements or benefits for others, the community, or society</i>			Political participation <i>Activities impacting on decision-making processes</i>	
Key question 2: How do older people participate?	Informal <i>(individual) activities</i>		Formal <i>(collective) activities</i>	Institutionalised <i>(conventional) activities</i>	Non-institutionalised <i>(non-conventional) activities</i>
	<i>Within the family</i>	<i>Outside the family</i>			
Key question 3: In which activities do older people participate?	Type 1: Caregiving	Type 2: Prosocial/helping/altruistic behaviours outside family Donation of money/in-kind supports to charities/NGOs	Type 3: Participation in volunteering, community, or charitable organisations	Type 4: Voting Contacting political representatives Donating money to political parties and organisations Running for or holding a public office Working on campaigns Participation in political organisations or forums	Type 5: Political persuasion Signing petitions Writing letters/emails/blogs/articles with political content Buycotting, boycotting and political consumption Illegal actions in support of a political cause Protest activities Participation in social movement organisations
Key question 4: How intense participation is?	All types of civic activities could show variations in intensity of engagement in terms of personal resources, time or money invested.				

Table I. Characteristics of the definitions of civic engagement, volunteering, and political participation found in the ageing literature, in frequencies and percentages (in brackets).

Categories	Civic engagement (n = 16)	Political participation (n = 5)	Volunteering (n = 31)	Total (N = 52)
Source of definition				
<i>Primary</i>	6 (37.5)	1 (20)	3 (9.7)	10 (19.2)
<i>Secondary</i>	10 (62.5)	4 (80)	28 (90.3)	42 (80.8)
From the ageing literature	5 (31.3)	0 (0)	13 (41.9)	19 (36.5)
From the non-ageing literature	8 (50.0)	4 (80)	20 (64.5)	32 (61.5)

Note: The sum of n may exceed N as the same definition could be included in more than one category.

Table II. Defining features of the concepts of civic engagement, volunteering, and political participation, in frequencies and percentages (in brackets).

Categories	Civic engagement (n = 16)	Political participation (n = 5)	Volunteering (n = 31)	Total (N = 52)
Key question 1: Why do older people participate?	16 (100)	5 (100)	22 (71)	43 (82.7)
<i>Seeking improvements or benefits for others, the community, or society</i>	16 (100)	0 (0)	22 (71)	36 (69.2)
<i>Impacting on decision-making processes</i>	8 (50)	5 (100)	0 (0)	13 (25)
Key question 2: How do older people participate?	9 (56.3)	3 (60)	30 (96.8)	42 (80.8)
<i>Unpaid or non-professional activities</i>	2 (12.5)	2 (40)	21 (67.7)	25 (48.1)
<i>Voluntary activities</i>	1 (6.3)	2 (40)	14 (45.2)	17 (32.7)
<i>Formal or collective activities vs. informal or individual activities</i>	8 (50)	0 (0)	26 (83.9)	34 (65.4)
<i>Institutionalised or conventional activities vs. non-institutionalised or non-conventional activities</i>	0 (0)	3 (60)	0 (0)	3 (5.8)
Key question 3: In which activities do older people participate?	11 (68.8)	5 (100)	25 (80.6)	41 (78.8)
<i>Discussing politics</i>	1 (6.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1.9)

<i>Political persuasion</i>	1 (6.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1.9)
<i>Staying up-to-date on news and public affairs</i>	4 (25)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (7.7)
<i>Donation of money/in-kind supports to charities/NGOs</i>	4 (25)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (7.7)
<i>Prosocial/helping/altruistic behaviours outside family</i>	5 (31.3)	0 (0)	19 (61.3)	24 (46.2)
<i>Caregiving</i>	3 (18.8)	0 (0)	6 (19.4)	9 (17.3)
<i>Participation in volunteering, community, or charitable organisations</i>	11 (68.8)	0 (0)	25 (80.6)	36 (69.2)
<i>Contacting political representatives</i>	3 (18.8)	3 (60)	0 (0)	6 (11.5)
<i>Donating money to political parties and organisations</i>	2 (12.5)	1 (20)	0 (0)	3 (5.8)
<i>Voting</i>	9 (56.3)	5 (100)	0 (0)	14 (26.9)
<i>Attending political meetings or rallies</i>	0 (0)	1 (20)	0 (0)	1 (1.9)
<i>Participation in political organisations or forums</i>	4 (25)	4 (80)	0 (0)	8 (15.4)
<i>Running for or holding a public office</i>	2 (12.5)	2 (40)	0 (0)	4 (7.7)
<i>Working on campaigns</i>	3 (18.8)	3 (60)	0 (0)	6 (11.5)
<i>Boycotting, boycotting and political consumption</i>	1 (6.3)	2 (40)	0 (0)	3 (5.8)
<i>Writing / Signing petitions</i>	1 (6.3)	3 (60)	0 (0)	4 (7.7)
<i>Writing letters/emails/blogs/articles with political content</i>	1 (6.3)	1 (20)	0 (0)	2 (3.8)

<i>Illegal actions in support of a political cause</i>	0 (0)	2 (40)	0 (0)	2 (3.8)
<i>Participation in social movement organisations</i>	0 (0)	2 (40)	0 (0)	2 (3.8)
<i>Protest activities</i>	1 (6.3)	4 (80)	0 (0)	5 (9.6)
<i>Paid work</i>	2 (12.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (3.8)
<i>Learning activities</i>	2 (12.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (3.8)
Key question 4: How intense is older people's participation?	4 (25)	1 (20)	9 (29)	14 (26.9)
<i>Money</i>	2 (12.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (3.8)
<i>Resources</i>	2 (12.5)	1 (20)	5 (16.1)	8 (15.4)
<i>Time</i>	4 (25)	0 (0)	8 (25.8)	12 (23.1)

Note: The sum of n may exceed N as a same definition could be included in more than one category.

Supplementary Table I. Definitions of civic engagement, period 1983-2018 (N = 16)

#	Concept (Reference)	Definition
1	Civic participation (Burr et al. 2002, p. 89)	Civic activism and participation take numerous forms, including voting, providing financial support to organizations, volunteering, attending meetings, and holding unelected and elected office.
2	Civic engagement (Adler and Goggin 2005, pp. 236, 240)	Civic engagement regarded as “the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community’s future.” Civic engagement is multidimensional and encompasses different features. Two key dimensions of civic engagement relate to a) the span between individual or informal activities and more formal or collective actions that involve participation in organizations; and b) the distinction between involvement in community activities (e.g., donating blood) and involvement in political activities (e.g., voting or supporting a political party).
3	Civic engagement (Martinson 2006, p. 59)	Broad definition of civic engagement includes formal volunteering, political activism, caregiving, and community organizing.
4	Civic engagement (Martinson and Minkler 2006, p. 319)	Refers to wide range of activities associated with the term civic engagement, including voting, involvement in political campaigns, participating in paid and unpaid community work, keeping abreast with news and public affairs, and assisting neighbours. The authors review different definitions of civic engagement, for example: “both political participation and civic volunteerism” (Ramakrishnan and Baldassare, 2004); “the process in which individuals are ‘actively participating in the life of their communities’ through voting, joining community groups, and volunteering (Harvard School of Public Health/MetLife Foundation Initiative on Retirement and Civic Engagement, 2004). In their critique of such definitions, Martinson and Minkler (2006) note that operationalisations of civic engagement of older adults focus mainly on volunteering activity and underrepresent other activities such as “voting, engaging in community activism, staying informed about current events, caregiving, and having informal connections.”
5	Civic engagement (McBride 2006, pp. 66–7)	Reviews pre-existing definitions, including Christiano’s (1996) view that civic engagement “refers to citizen action that has public consequence for communities and the polity.” In distinguishing between civic engagement and “civic participation”, McBride (2006) argues that engagement “connotes that the individual has actively applied her- or himself—physically or economically, through time, money, and resources.” Civic engagement typically reaches beyond individual actions alone to embrace structures such as volunteer programmes and democratic voting rights that facilitate and target action for public good. Referring to the activity of racist organisations, McBride (2006) suggests that civic engagement includes “behaviours in the realm of civil society that express the voluntary, collective spirit of the people and, thus, may include actions that many consider abhorrent.” Drawing on the

		work of McBride, Sherraden, and Pritzker (2006) and Wuthnow (1991), a distinction is made between social and political forms of civic engagement. Social engagement includes “acting as a member of, donating or contributing to, and volunteering for an individual, group, association, or nonprofit organization.” Political engagement refers to “behaviours that influence the legislative, electoral or judicial process, including decision making and resource distribution at the local, state, and national levels.”
6	Civic engagement (Kaskie et al. 2008, p. 369)	The authors review multiple definitions of civic engagement. This includes Putnam’s (1995) suggestion that civic engagement refers to “an individual’s interest with the improvement of community programs, contemplation of public affairs, and knowledge of political elections” and to “discrete activities and behaviours” linked to involvement in community and political affairs. This can include assisting neighbours, cleaning a local park, voting, writing letters to public officials, and contributing to election campaigns. In similar vein, the Pew Charitable Trust (2006) defines civic engagement as “taking an interest with issues of public concern and participating in activities such as joining a neighbourhood association or attending a community concert.” In relation to older people, the authors draw on Kaskie and Gerstner’s (2004) definition of civic engagement as a “role that involves voluntary or paid participation in an activity that occurs within an organization that has a direct impact on the local community.” In their empirical study, the authors operationalise civic engagement with reference to direct caregiving, teaching, and providing supportive services involving a commitment of at least one day per week within diverse settings (e.g. faith-based organisations, schools, health care programs, social service agencies, and other non-profit community programs). The authors’ definition of civic engagement differs from volunteering in that it also can include paid work experiences. Drawing on Cutler and Hendricks (2000), they note that engagement demands a “greater commitment than most volunteer opportunities such as those provided through voluntary associations.” The idea that civic engagement serves as a retirement role reflects the work of Boggs, Rocco, and Spangler (1995) in suggesting that “individuals pass through different stages of civic engagement as they age; by retirement, civic engagement could easily constitute a role rather than discrete attitudes or behaviours.”
7	Civic engagement (Dabelko-Schoeny et al. 2010, pp. 694–95)	Civic engagement defined as “individual and collective actions designed to identify and address community issues and needs.” Civic engagement may bring about mutual gains for both individuals and society as a result of service and connections with others.
8	Civic engagement (Hegeman et al. 2010, p. 38)	Adopts a definition from the Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership (2005): “civic engagement is acting upon a heightened sense of responsibility to one’s communities. This includes a wide range of activities, including developing civic sensitivity, participation in building civil society, and benefiting the common good”.
9	Civic engagement (Warburton 2010, p.	Draws on Ehrlich (2000) to define civic engagement as “working to make a difference in the civic life

	307)	of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference”.
10	Civic engagement (Leedahl et al. 2011, p. 713)	Draws on Henkin and Zapf (2007) to define civic engagement as “a wide variety of activities, including formal and informal volunteering, participation in community planning and political activities, relationships with neighbours, involvement in organizations, lifelong learning, and work that contributes to the public good.”
11	Civic engagement (Gele and Harsløf 2012, p. 167)	Links use of the term ‘civic engagement’ to a wide range of community activities “including voting, participating in paid and unpaid community work, staying up to date on local and national news, and helping one’s neighbours.” Draws on Martinson and Minkler (2006) to define civic engagement as the process in which individuals are “actively participating in the life of their communities” by joining community groups, and volunteering. The authors suggest that previous research operationalises civic engagement by focusing on “language acquisition, local media conceptions and the desire for social contact with the mainstream community” (see Slonim-Nevo, 2007). Their empirical project considers civic engagement in terms of formal membership of community organisations.
12	Civic involvement (Hirshorn and Settersten 2013, p. 200)	In using the term “civic involvement”, the authors address three domains: (1) civic knowledge (e.g., a basic understanding of how government works; (2) political activity (e.g., behaviour related to participation in elections, or writing to public representatives); and (3) civic activity (e.g., voluntary activity that addresses community issues, or charitable fundraising).
13	Civic engagement (Johnson and Mutchler 2014, p. 96)	Cites different definitions of civic engagement, including Adler and Goggin’s (2005) view that civic engagement represents “action on the part of an individual, taken in support of others or for the common good” and the approach used in the Older Americans Act, which defines civic engagement as “an individual or collective action designed to address a public concern or an unmet human, educational, health care, environmental, or public safety need” (U.S. Administration on Aging, 2006). Refers to activities commonly perceived as being civic in nature, including voting, volunteering, or involvement in voluntary associations (see Adler & Goggin, 2005), whilst acknowledging that empirical students tend to use the term civic engagement interchangeably with “volunteering” (see Martinson & Minkler, 2006; Morrow-Howell, 2010).
14	Civic engagement (Cheung-Ming Chan and Cao 2015, p. 56)	Draws on earlier work (e.g. Ramakrishnan & Baldassare, 2004; Martinson & Minkler, 2006) that identifies different forms of civic engagement, including political participation and civic volunteerism. The authors distinguish between civic and the political participation, emphasising “active involvement in community and neighbourhood activities as a way to encourage engagement of older adults.”
15	Civic engagement (Kruse and Schmitt 2015, p. 135)	Refers to the German Parliament’s Commission on the Future of Civic Engagement to consider civic engagement in terms of activities that “(1) are carried out voluntarily; (2) are not aimed at a personal material gain; (3) are oriented towards public welfare (i.e., involve shared responsibility for the welfare of others); (4) take place in public space, are transparent, and can be joined by other people;

		and (5) are community based and have a cooperative character” (Enquete-Kommission “Zukunft des bürgerschaftlichen Engagements”, 2002).
16	Civic engagement (Chen and Adamek 2017, p. 208)	Defines civic engagement as “a citizen’s behaviours or actions that are motivated by the fulfillment of rights and obligations, reflects his or her sense of ownership in various social units, occurring within private and public networks, and ultimately generating benefits for the individual as well as public good.” The authors consider civic engagement to refer to how “a citizen interacts with other social actors, influences the decisions related to their lives, takes corresponding actions, and promotes individual and public interests.”

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Supplementary Table II. Definitions of volunteering, period 1983-2018 (N = 31)

#	Concept (Reference)	Definition
1	Volunteering (Perry 1983, p. 107)	Draws on Smith and Freedman (1972) to define volunteering as “any unpaid work performed for or through an organization” (p. 115).
2	Volunteering (Cnaan and Cwikel 1992, p. 127)	Refers to Fischer, Mueller and Cooper’s (1991) distinction between “formal volunteer work” (i.e. activity linked to organisations that provide public, civic, or social service) and non-formal types of volunteer work (e.g. unpaid work in a family business, DIY repairs and home maintenance, mutual aid to members of a person’s social network, and self-help efforts of benefit to the individual and others). The author’s own focus is on formal volunteer work by older people.
3	Volunteering (Chappell and Prince 1997, p. 337)	Identifies limited literature on volunteering in later life and lack of consensus on definitions of volunteer work. Refers to broad definition by Fischer, Mueller and Cooper (1991) that includes volunteer work for organisations, voluntary services to individuals, and unpaid help to families, and Chambre’s (1984) narrow focus on voluntary work for organizations. The authors identify a wide range of tasks associated with both formal volunteering (for organisations) and informal volunteering (service to individuals), including stuffing envelopes, providing transportation, board membership, and decision making. Critiques research that fails to differentiate among tasks.
4	Volunteering (Warburton et al. 1998, p. 229)	Draws on a range of studies (e.g. van Til, 1988; Fischer et al., 1991; Noble, 1991) to define a volunteer as “someone who provides a service to the community, of their own free will, and without monetary reward.” In distinguishing between formal volunteer work (i.e. channelled through an organization) and informal help given to friends and neighbours, the authors focus on volunteers who give their time to formal organisations.
5	Volunteering (Van Willigen 2000, p. 308)	Refers to broad conceptualisations of Loeser (1974), Scheier (1982) and Van Til (1988) that conceptualise volunteer work as “unpaid work on the part of an individual or a group of individuals with the intent of benefitting others.” Follows Tilly and Tilly (1994) in defining volunteer work as “unpaid work on behalf of those with whom one has no contractual, familial, or friendship obligation.”
6	Volunteering (Mutchler et al. 2003, p. 1269)	Draws on existing work (e.g. Chambre 1984; Van Til 1988; Wilson & Musick 1997) to define volunteering as “work that is unpaid, that benefits other individuals or organizations, and that is taken on freely.” While formal volunteering involves “performing defined tasks for specified time periods within the context of a formal organization (e.g., an individual volunteering to staff the gift shop in a hospital for two mornings a week),” volunteering can also include work that is done to assist friends, neighbours, and family members outside the household.”
7	Volunteering (Okun and Schultz 2003, p. 231)	Follows Harootyan (1996) in defining volunteering as “any activity intended to help others that is provided without obligation for which the volunteer does not receive pay or other material

		compensation.”
8	Volunteering (Li and Ferraro 2005, p. 68)	Volunteer work seen as including both “voluntary participation in formal organisations and informal help that people contribute to others in their social networks.” Draws on Krause, Herzog and Baker (1992) to identify different types of volunteering based on levels of formality: “formal volunteer work represents the provision of assistance to a generalized other”. This contrasts with informal helping, regarded by Wilson and Musick (1997) as encompassing “private and unorganized assistance to friends, neighbours, and kin living outside the household.”
9	Volunteering (Erlinghagen and Hank 2006, p. 568)	Draws on Wilson and Musick (1997: 694) to define volunteer work as “unpaid work provided to parties to whom the worker owes no contractual, familial or friendship obligations”.
10	Volunteering (Rozario 2006, pp. 31–2)	Cites Wilson (2000) in defining volunteerism as “engagement in proactive activities that involve commitment and whose benefits extend beyond the individual volunteers.” The author’s work engages with volunteer activities undertaken both formally (i.e. within an organisation) and informally (e.g., help provided to friends and neighbours). A further distinction is made between volunteer activities sustained over time and “ad hoc efforts in response to specific needs of an organization or others”.
11	Volunteering (Warburton and McLaughlin 2006, pp. 57–8)	Extends distinction between formal volunteering and caring activities in feminist and mainstream literature on volunteering to consider unpaid work. Informal volunteering through “activities undertaken through communities, neighbourhoods or through family or friends” seen as being under-represented in the feminist literature (see Baldock, 1998; Leonard & Burns, 2003). Draws on Leonard and Burns (2003) to suggest that it is informal volunteering action undertaken in “helpful and public spirited ways outside the auspice of a formal organisation . . . [that] is perhaps the most free of social pressure and therefore high in agency”. Such activities, according to Baum et al. (1999) are linked to a “high degree of personal agency in that they emphasise the nature of choice and affect, and are less likely to be predetermined by felt obligation.”
12	Volunteering (Lee et al. 2008, p. 176)	Identifies three key characteristics in defining volunteer activities: doing an activity voluntarily (based on one’s own free will); receiving no material compensation for the activity; and doing the activity under the auspices of an organisation.
13	Volunteering (Chong 2010, p. 314)	Refers to a range of definitions, including Wilson (2000) who defines volunteering as “any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organization” and Penner (2002, cited in Boling, 2006) who considers volunteerism a “pro-social behaviour, or a behaviour that is performed to benefit another person or a group of people, e.g. providing companionship to older adults, tutoring the illiterate, providing health care to the ill, and counselling the distressed”. Author suggests volunteerism can take the form of organised activities or involve an informal act (e.g., helping a friend with grocery shopping).
14	Volunteering (Hank and Erlinghagen 2010, p. 4)	Defines formal volunteering as “voluntary activities usually performed within the context of a formal organization” and informal volunteering and caring as “unpaid productive activities within the context

		of informal [kin or nonkin] social networks.”
15	Volunteering (Misener et al. 2010, p. 268)	Uses Stebbins’ (1982) conceptualisation of serious leisure to consider “continual, organizationally-based volunteering”. This form of volunteering involves “systematic and substantial involvement where an individual can acquire and/or express particular skills, knowledge, and experience.” Draws on a range of studies (e.g., Arai, 2002; Gibson, Willming & Holdnack, 2002; Gould, Moore, McGuire, & Stebbins, 2008; Nichols & King, 1999; Orr, 2006) to define volunteering according to six distinctive qualities: (1) the occasional need to persevere, (2) the tendency for participants to find a career in the endeavour, (3) significant personal effort, (4) strong identification with their chosen pursuit, (5) durable benefits realized from participation, and (6) a unique ethos associated with the leisure pursuit. Drawing on Stebbins (2005), suggests that volunteering is marked by “continuous, substantial helping and dedication, rather than one-time exchange of services or monetary resources” and represents a “recurrent skill and knowledge-based activity that provides volunteers with a career in a special social world.” Follows Orr (2006) in noting that career volunteers are typically linked to organisation.
16	Volunteering (Morrow-Howell 2010, p. 461)	Follows Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth (1996) in defining volunteering as an “activity undertaken by an individual that is uncoerced, unpaid (or minimal compensation to offset costs), structured by an organization, and directed toward a community concern.” The author’s definition excludes informal volunteering (i.e. helping others outside of the auspices of a formal organization), caregiving, or making financial contributions.
17	Volunteering (Okun et al. 2010, p. 1)	Draws on Piliavin & Siegl (2007) to define organizational volunteering as an unpaid activity that involves “... taking actions within an organizational framework that potentially provides some service to one or more other people or to the community at large.”
18	Volunteering (Ahn et al. 2011, p. 257)	Regards volunteerism as the most common form of civic engagement. Draws on Dabelko-Schoeny (2010) and the Harvard School of Public Health (2004) to define volunteerism as “including both formal activities through structured community service as well as informal activities for family, friends or neighbours, and faith-based groups.”
19	Volunteering (Cattan et al. 2011, p. 329)	Follows Zappala (2000) in defining volunteering as “an activity that is freely chosen, does not involve remuneration and helps or benefits those beyond an individual’s immediate family.” In advanced industrial societies, “voluntary work takes place through formal organisations (in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors [...])” and informally, through community groups (see South et al., 2010; Gibson-Graham, 2006). Volunteering can also occur within the public and private sectors. The authors’ approach follows von Bonsdorff and Rantanen (2010) in focusing on formal volunteering in organisations, public agencies, religious institutions and such within the voluntary and community sector as well as informal volunteering, such as caring obligations and volunteering within the public and private sectors.

20	Volunteering (Nesteruk and Price 2011, p. 101)	Draws on Hinterlong and Williamson, (2006–2007) to define volunteering as a form of civic engagement consisting of formal and informal activities. Further distinguishes, based on Rozario (2006-2007), between formal volunteering (i.e. time assisting community agencies and organizations) and informal volunteering (i.e. time spent assisting friends and neighbours living in another household). Caregiving and/or caring for family members is viewed as an under-explored form of volunteering, typically being regarded as a method of general engagement (see Zedlewski & Schaner, 2005).
21	Volunteering (Pilkington et al. 2012, p. 249)	Refers to Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) in defining formal volunteering as “willingly giving unpaid help, in the form of time, service, or skills, through an organization or group”. Authors note benefits accruing from volunteering linked to increases in social capital and significant economic gains.
22	Volunteering (Taghian et al. 2012, pp. 102–3)	Voluntary work identified as broad-based activity ranging from “co-operation in neighbourhood and community activities to formally working with charities and assisting others in need.” As a social activity, volunteering reflects a desire to contribute to society (see Meier & Stutzer, 2004). Distinguishes between informal and formal volunteering: “Informal voluntary work is provided by volunteers to the community, relatives, and associates in the form of social and personal care. Formal voluntary work is provided by volunteers to the nonprofit sector.” The authors draw on Penner’s (2002) definition of formal volunteering as “long-term, planned, pro-social behaviours that benefit strangers and occur within an organizational setting”, which has no financial benefit to the volunteer (see Clary & Snyder, 1999; Pedicini, 2009). They note that volunteering can represent a “social investment to society or the community in which the volunteers work” (see LodiSmith & Roberts, 2007).
23	Volunteering (Gasiorek and Giles 2013, p. 2660)	Existing definitions of volunteering (e.g., Cnaan, Hardy, & Wadsworth, 1996; Handy et al., 2000; Smith, 1981; Snyder & Omoto, 2008) typically refer to the “non-obligatory nature of the act, the lack of (financial) reward for it, and the notion that the actions in question benefit others.” The authors draw attention to distinctions between formal volunteering through an organization (e.g., working at a homeless shelter) and informal volunteering that does not involve an organization (e.g., community litter picks with neighbours). They refer to other definitions, which specify that volunteering activity is “productive or accomplishes some end” (e.g., Smith, 1981; Wilson & Musick, 1998), and/or addresses some community or individual need (e.g., National Association of Counties, 1990).
24	Volunteering (Komp et al. 2013, pp. 445–6)	Distinguishes between formal volunteering, defined by Mutchler, Burr and Caron (2003) as actions by older people who do unpaid work for organisations (e.g., sports clubs or welfare associations), and informal volunteering as unpaid work by older people inside or outside of organisations. Draws on Van Tienen, Scheepers, Reitsma and Schilderman (2011) to note the wide range of contexts in which informal volunteering occurs (e.g., neighbourly help or help to other members of the community).

		Informal volunteering regarded as a widespread and diffuse phenomenon. Refers to Choi, Burr, Mutchler and Caro (2007) in suggesting that “volunteering might go unnoticed because it blends in with other everyday activities, and has fuzzy boundaries with acts of friendship and help to kin.”
25	Volunteering (Arinze-Onyia et al. 2015, p. 62)	Draws on Ehigiegba et al. (2014) to define volunteerism as the “principle of donating time and energy for the benefit of other people in the community as a social responsibility rather than for any financial reward.”
26	Volunteering (Cook 2015, p. 361)	Refers to a range of sources (Cnaan, Handy, & Wadsworth, 1996; Hall, Lasby, Ayer, & Gibbons, 2009; Haski-Leventhal, 2009) to define volunteering as “individuals choosing to use their free will in order to give their time and energy to nonprofit organizations, neighbours, friends, and family over a period of time, normally without any direct financial compensation.” The author distinguishes between formal volunteering (i.e. engaging in activities with a nonprofit organization) and informal volunteering (i.e. helping friends, family, and neighbours). In focusing on formal volunteering, the author defines volunteer work as “individuals freely giving their time, talents, and energy to nonprofit organizations without the expectation of any direct financial compensation.”
27	Volunteering (Jones and Heley 2016, pp. 182–3)	Draws on Carson’s (1999) definition of formal volunteering as encompassing “activities conducted under the auspices of formal organisations and programmes.” Informal volunteering refers to “engaging in activities without the umbrella of a prescribed organisation, and includes undertakings that benefit family and friends or support a communal structure.” While informal forms of volunteering are sometimes ignored in definitions of volunteering, this potentially undervalues the importance of activities that maintain the social glue and, following Carson (1999) “unfairly depict the volunteer behaviour of certain social groups”.
28	Volunteering (Principi et al. 2016, p. 92)	Volunteering, identified as a key domain to realise active ageing, “embraces a range of unpaid activities that benefit individuals, the wider community, or society. Volunteering may be formal (i.e. it can take place in an organisational setting) or informal (although care of immediate family members is not usually considered volunteering).”
29	Volunteering (Yamashita et al. 2017, p. 121)	Follows Reed, Carr, Rowe and Carstensen (2013) in defining formal volunteering as “any individual activities intended to help nonprofit organization(s) with no direct financial gain.”
30	Volunteering (Salt et al. 2017, p. 244)	Follows Klinedinst and Resnick (2014) in defining volunteering as “providing a service without the intent of compensation”.
31	Volunteering (Pardasani 2018, p. 314)	Draws on Ellis and Noyes (1990) who suggest that to volunteer is “to choose to act in recognition of a need, with an attitude of social responsibility and without concern for monetary profit, going beyond one’s basic obligations.” Cites Mowen and Sujana’s (2005) definition of volunteerism as a “type of unpaid activity that is intended to improve the well-being of others.” The author distinguishes between informal volunteering (e.g. occasionally helping neighbours and friends) and formal volunteering, which is “performed in the context of specific projects, religious institutions, or organizations.” Refers

		to definitions of volunteerism by Finkelstien (2009) and Penner (2002) which refer to “ongoing, planned, helping behavior that increases the well-being of others, is unpaid, and typically occurs in an organizational context.”
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Supplementary Table III. Definitions of political participation, period 1983-2018 (N = 5)

#	Concept (Reference)	Definition
1	Political participation (Iecovich 2001, pp. 89–90)	Identifies multiple forms of political participation: <i>Voting</i> “represents the minimal way to be involved with political life.” <i>Social Movements of Older People</i> aim to influence policy-makers “with regard to allocation of national resources and the setting of priorities.” <i>Organizations of Older People</i> unite “older people of varied political identities around common interests in order to exert influence on policy-makers.” <i>Advisory Bodies</i> include “committees and other formal entities at local and national levels whose functions are to advise policy-makers on issues of concern of older persons.” <i>Membership in Elected Bodies</i> refers to a) older people who may run for office, but, if elected, do not typically go on to represent older persons’ interests or b) older persons who may secure positions in political parties for representatives of their age group in similar vein to the representation of other groups, such as minority ethnic groups or women. <i>Political parties</i> may also be established by older persons in order to promote their shared interests.
2	Political participation (Xie and Jaeger 2008, p. 3)	Draws on Conover (1995) to define political participation as involving “behaviors aimed at shaping governmental policy, either by influencing the selection of government personnel or by affecting their choices,” including “instrumental political acts (e.g., voting, signing a petition, marching in a protest) as well as participation in political organizations (e.g., political parties, interest groups) that engage in lobbying efforts.” Activities considered as forms of political participation include those identified by Verba and Nie (1972) and Verba et al. (1995): voting in elections; working for political parties or candidates; attending political meetings; providing financial support to political parties or candidates; being a member of a political party or club; working with others, or organising a group, to solve local problems; being a member of community organisations; and contacting government officials at local, regional, or national level.
3	Political participation (Nygård and Jakobsson 2013, pp. 67–8)	The authors describe the concept of political participation as problematic given its different forms and changing nature. Following Barnes et al. (1979) and Kaase (1999), political participation can refer to “more official activities within the boundaries of representative democracy” as well as to “activities that are more direct, more spontaneous and not confined to formal arenas of political action.” Drawing on Verba and Nie (1972), the authors note that political participation can also relate “either to voluntary, non-professional activities or activities that are to be seen as professional or bureaucratic in accordance with the Weberian notion of “Politik als Beruf”. Different forms of political participation function differently when it comes to affecting public opinion or policy-makers, with voting seen as “an efficient way for the average citizen to exercise pressure over politicians, but as a less efficient way of conveying preferences.” By contrast, a petition or a demonstration typically work in the

		<p>opposite way. Drawing on a range of sources (e.g., Barnes et al. 1979; Verba & Nie 1972; Verba et al. 1995), the authors define political participation as “the individual, non-professional and voluntary participation in activities that aim, directly or indirectly, at influencing political outcomes, changing the institutional premises for politics or affecting the selection of personnel or their choices.” Paid political work, lobbying or running for office, activities that simply reflect attention to or interest in politics (e.g., reading a newspaper) or the wish to express oneself to make a moral statement (e.g., wearing a badge), and engagement in voluntary organisations (e.g., pensioners’ organisations) are excluded from this definition. The authors proceed to classify forms of political participation, based on the early distinction by Barnes et al. (1979) between “conventional and non-conventional types of participation.” Conventional participation refers to action in relation to representative democracy (e.g. campaigning for a candidate or voting), while non-conventional participation denotes activity outside this sphere (e.g., protest actions). More recently, drawing on Goerres (2009, 2010), a distinction is made between institutionalised and non-institutionalised forms of political participation. The former refers to “organised, formal forms of participation such as voting”, while the latter relates to “more spontaneous, informal forms of participation outside the “institutionalised” political sphere.” Other studies (e.g., Bengtsson & Chistensen 2009; Nygard & Jakobsson 2011; Stolle & Micheletti 2006; Stolle et al. 2005) suggest that non-institutionalised participation may represent too broad a category and that boycotting, for example, “partly represents another kind of political statement than for example contacting.”</p>
4	<p>Political participation (Melo and Stockemer 2014, pp. 34–5)</p>	<p>Following Kaase and Marsh (1979) political participation is defined as comprising “all voluntary activities by individual citizens intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system.” The authors distinguish between conventional and unconventional forms of political engagement. Drawing on Finkel and Opp (1991), the former includes “actions that take place through institutionalized means, such as voting, campaigning or joining a party” that are shaped by the “rules, laws and cultural repertoires of contention of specific countries.” The latter comprise “instances of political behaviour that are extra-institutional” (e.g. sit-ins, boycotts, petitions, unauthorised protests, demonstrations and marches). Further distinctions within the sphere of unconventional political participation concern peaceful and violent forms of political action. Violent forms of action, according to Roller and Weßels (1996) have given way in Western societies to more peaceful forms of protests (e.g., legal demonstrations or signing petitions). According to Norris (2002), “collective action through peaceful channels has become a generally accepted way to express political grievances, voice opposition, and challenge authorities.”</p>
5	<p>Political participation (Serrat et al. 2017, pp. 268–9)</p>	<p>Older people’s political participation is multidimensional and involves several forms of activity. Drawing on Verba et al. (1995), political activities “may be differentiated in terms of the amount of resources they require from the individual (in high or low-investment political activities). Such</p>

		<p>activities can also vary according to their degree of institutionalisation, with Kaase (1999) distinguishing between institutionalised or non-institutionalised forms of political participation and Barrett and Brunton-Smith differentiating conventional from non-conventional forms of participation. The authors refer to work by Hustinx et al. (2012) that considers young people's participation, and draws a distinction between "conventional forms of political participation, such as contacting a politician, writing a letter to the newspaper, and [...] unconventional forms such as participating in an illegal protest, or wearing a badge or t-shirt with a political message."</p>
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