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Title: Learning Participation in Activation Programmes

Stream: Fit for Work in Europe? Health, Employability and Challenges for Activation in an Era of Crisis

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Recently the Dutch welfare state gradually acquired more and more characteristics of an 'active' or 'activating' welfare state. The main objective underpinning social policy interventions shifted from protection to participation. The recently introduced Social Support Act (WMO) fits in with this shift towards a 'participation paradigm'. In short, the WMO reflects governmental ambitions of promoting 'active citizenship'. Local governments are encouraged to realize these ambitions through activating unemployed citizens in employment programmes by involving them in volunteer work. Volunteering is seen as a way of offering them opportunities to extend their networks and develop skills. Local policies differ regarding their focus on identifying health problems, social inclusion and increasing employability.

This research builds on the assumption that participation is strongly influenced by the norms that are set by society and the feelings these norms generate. By applying Hochschild's 'emotion management' perspective, I aim to provide deeper insight into the meaning of participation in the active welfare state and the associated feelings. The research focuses on how welfare clients' framing rules (Hochschild 1979: 566) are influenced by the activating welfare state and how this in turn affects their 'feeling rules' (Hochschild 1979: 567). To trace their framing rules I focus on the interaction between welfare clients, volunteers and social workers.

I hypothesize that citizens are often not consciously aware of their framing rules, because of a lack of historical and bureaucratic awareness. They mix up framing rules from different 'regimes' (Van Daalen and Tonkens, forthcoming) or 'welfare cultures' (Pfau-Effinger 2005) and consequently claim rights that are legitimate in the one, but illegitimate in the other. These discrepancies may arouse feelings that are experienced as appropriate by the one and inappropriate by the other actor.

Hochschild's concepts enable me to use qualitative research to map complex matters like emotions, expectations and references.