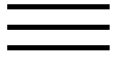


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From civil rights to civic engagement? Concerns of two older critical gerontologists about a new social movement and what it portends

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Abstract

In this essay, we draw on the political economic and humanities paths in critical gerontology, and on our own personal reflections, to further probe the notion of civic engagement in older adults. We ask why, as older women and critical gerontologists, we are so discomfited by this rallying cry. We ponder whether the status of contemporary later life as a unique time in human history necessitates the carving out of a new set of "productive" roles in order for its occupants to be valued. We also look more deeply at the calls for civic engagement (operationalized as volunteering) to fill gaping holes in the safety net and argue that this implicitly lets government off the hook in providing for

basic human needs.



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Keywords

Civil rights movement; Women's movement; Productive aging; Privatization of social welfare; Agency; Community-building; Social justice

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