

The Retirement Process from the Perspective of Meaningful Social Networks of Retirees

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Abstract: Research on retirement have traditionally been centered on the individual perspective of the phenomenon. This qualitative study aimed at understanding the relational dynamics in meaningful social networks during the retirement process, as perceived by members of retirees' networks. Nine people indicated by retirees as members of their social networks (spouses, siblings, friends, and former coworkers) participated in this study. Data collection was performed through the Focus Group technique, and field notes were recorded. Data organization and analysis were based on the Grounded Theory and aided by the Atlas.ti software - Mac version 1.6.0. Results show that retirement triggers a recursive process to break, maintain, or redevelop bonds, with repercussions on the relational issues and proposals among the network of retirees. The study data suggest that the relational dimension greatly affects the retirees' experience as well as their relational network.

Keywords: labour, retirement, social networks, social interaction, family

O Processo de Aposentadoria na Perspectiva das Redes Sociais Significativas de Aposentados

Resumo: As pesquisas sobre aposentadoria, tradicionalmente, centraram-se na ótica individual desse fenômeno. Este estudo qualitativo teve por objetivo compreender a dinâmica relacional das redes sociais significativas no processo de aposentadoria, na perspectiva de membros das redes de aposentados. Participaram 09 pessoas indicadas por aposentados como membros de suas redes (cônjuges, irmão, amigos e ex-colegas de trabalho). Para a coleta de dados utilizou-se a técnica de Grupo Focal e foram efetivados registros em diário de campo. A organização e a análise dos dados fundamentou-se na *Grounded Theory* e contou com o auxílio do *software* Atlas.ti versão 1.6.0 para Mac. Os resultados evidenciaram que a aposentadoria desencadeia um processo recursivo de ruptura, manutenção e/ou reconstrução de vínculos, produzindo repercussões nas propostas relacionais entre os membros da rede dos aposentados. Os dados deste estudo sugerem que a dimensão relacional afeta decididamente as experiências tanto do aposentado quanto da rede configurada em torno dele.

Palavras-chave: trabalho, aposentadoria, redes sociais, interação social, família

El Proceso de Jubilación en la Perspectiva de las Redes Sociales de Jubilados

Resumen: La investigación sobre la jubilación se ha centrado tradicionalmente en la perspectiva individual del fenómeno. Este estudio cualitativo tuvo como objetivo comprender la dinámica relacional de las redes sociales en el proceso de jubilación, desde la perspectiva de los miembros de las redes de jubilados. Participaron 09 personas nombradas por jubilados como miembros de sus redes. Los datos fueron recolectados usando la técnica de grupo focal y registro de diario de campo. La organización y el análisis de los datos se basaron en la teoría fundamentada y fueron respaldados por el *software* Atlas.ti versión 1.6.0 para Mac. Los resultados mostraron que la jubilación desencadena un proceso recursivo de ruptura, mantenimiento y/o reconstrucción de enlaces, produciendo repercusiones en la propuesta relacional entre los integrantes de la red. Los datos de este estudio sugieren que la dimensión relacional incide decisivamente en las vivencias tanto del jubilado como de su red social.

Palabras clave: trabajo, jubilación, redes sociales, interacción social, familia

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Retirement is one of the main events that happen, in terms of individual and family development, between the adulthood and third-age stages of life (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2016). Conceptually, retirement is understood as a longitudinal process generated in the articulation between personal, work-related, organizational, and social aspects, in which the individual reduces work commitments (Shultz & Wang, 2011). This topic has considerably expanded in the production

of knowledge due to socio-structural changes worldwide (Amorim & França, 2019; Zanelli, Silva, & Soares, 2010).

Work is considered a reference category for identity formation, organization of daily life, and gain of livelihoods (Krawulski, Boehs, Cruz, & Medina 2017; Zanelli et al., 2010). Currently, the time devoted to professional practice does not favor the reconciliation of demands linked to the different roles played in the family and social spheres (Feijó, Goulart Júnior, Nascimento, & Nascimento, 2017). Thus, there is evidence that the way the individual manages different domains of life, articulating perceptions and attitudes regarding work and family and friendship relationships, is a predictor of decision-making for retirement (Figueira, Haddad, Gvozdz, & Pissinati, 2017; Loureiro, Mendes, Camarinho, Silva, & Pedreiro, 2016; Macêdo, Bendassolli, & Torres, 2017).

According to studies, the family is usually the target of expectations and intentions for action in retirement because, after resigning from their jobs, this context becomes one of the main spaces for the integration of retirees (Macêdo et al., 2017; Melo, Aguiar, Feijão, & Cavalcante, 2018). With the intensification of the presence and participation of these actors, family bonds undergo changes in their relational dynamics (Antunes, Soares, & Moré, 2015), and, in the case of married people, spouses play an influential role in the process, encompassing from decision-making to the conditions for restructuring daily life (Figueira et al., 2017; Loureiro et al., 2016; Walsh, 2016).

Regarding friendships, there is evidence of loss and/or reduced contact between these people, especially those related to work (Boehs & Silva, 2017; Scorsolini-Comin et al., 2019; Sluzki, 2000), which tends to occur mainly at the time of transition to retirement (Kauppi et al., 2021). Therefore, studies also elucidate the significance of expanding friendly bonds beyond the work context after retiring (Melo et al., 2018), and the expansion of access to information and communication technologies seems to have a positive effect on the ways of restructuring social support in late life, as they enable to know and to develop new bonds (Castro & Camargo, 2017).

Considering these data, this study seeks to discuss elements of the relational dimension involved in the experience of retiring, based on the concept of meaningful social networks which, according to Sluzki (2003), concerns the set of relationships established by people in different spaces of their lives (family, friendships, work, study, community). According to the author, the bonds that compose these networks differ due to the relational commitment that sustains the interaction between those involved, maintaining attributes of intimacy, reliability, and regularity in the accomplished exchanges. Thus, such relationships influence identity, health care, and also provide resources when facing situations of crisis in the life cycle (Sluzki, 2003).

This perspective is anchored in the view of subjects as relational beings who are immersed in discursive structures in the systems which they access and/or participate in, whose life experiences are woven in the intersection of stories

shared with people who are part of these relational contexts (Grandesso, 2017; Sluzki, 2003). The bonds present in the network have characteristics consonant with the history of the relationship established between individuals, and the notion of relational dynamics expresses the guidelines and patterns of interaction as well as its organization and functioning at the system level (Andolfi, 2003).

Accordingly, this qualitative study aimed to understand the relational dynamics of meaningful social networks in the retirement process, from the perspective of members of retirees' networks.

The results of this study can provide new data for the understanding of the topic, as it included members of the retirees' social networks as protagonists, which have traditionally been made invisible as objects of investigation in the scientific production on retirement.

Method

Participants

This qualitative, exploratory, and cross-sectional study was conducted with nine members of meaningful social networks of retirees. For contextualization purposes, this study is part of a larger research carried out aiming to understand the relational dynamics of meaningful social networks in the retirement process, which included the participation, in its first phase, of retirees, and, in the second phase, of members of the retirees' networks. Hence, this article derives from the second phase of the aforementioned research.

The inclusion criteria for participants of the present study were: (i) to be indicated by one of the 12 retirees who participated in the first phase of the research, with whom they had established significant contact at some point in the retirement process, regardless of the relational context in which this took place; (ii) to be over 18 years of age. Thus, the definition of the set of participants, in terms of its main eligibility criteria, was based on the indication of retirees involved in the first phase of the research, based on the bond maintained between them.

Initially, the research proposal involved 12 people chosen by retirees. Although confirmation of presence concerning this number was obtained, on the day of data collection only nine participants actually attended, and this total is in accordance with the literature that specifies a contingent of up to 12 people in focus groups (Souza, 2020).

Regarding demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the participants, six of them were women and three were men, aged between 48 and 70 years. Among them, six were retired. The average monthly income was approximately BRL 3,888.89. The level of education varied between Elementary School and Specialization Degree. As for the bond with the retirees who indicated them, two were spouses, one was a brother, two were friends, and four were friends and former coworkers. The systematization of the main characteristics of the study participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Characterization of research participants

Participant	Type of bond	Age	Marital status	Education level	Retired
1	Wife	61	Married	Elementary School	Yes
2	Friend	56	Divorced	Higher Education	Yes
3	Friend and former coworker	48	Divorced	Specialization Degree	No
4	Friend	53	Married	Specialization Degree	No
5	Friend and former coworker	59	Divorced	Specialization Degree	Yes
6	Friend and former coworker	70	Married	High school	Yes
7	Husband	52	Married	Higher Education	No
8	Brother	62	Married	Elementary School	Yes
9	Friend and former coworker	57	Married	Elementary School	Yes

The investigation was carried out in a mid-sized city located in the State of Santa Catarina, Brazil. Although with different professions, all participants were municipal civil servants.

Instruments

Data collection was carried out by the Focus Group technique, whose script of questions for discussion included the following items: (i) Meanings and experiences of retirement; (ii) Perceptions regarding the retirement process of the retiree who indicated them; (iii) Aspects concerning the relational dimension in the retirement process. Complementarily, the *field diary* was used as a resource to record information and perceptions of researchers about the research field. The second instrument was configured as a supporting strategy that enhanced the integration and contextualization of the process in the survey of qualitative data.

Procedures

Data collection. The larger research from which this study derives involved, in its first phase, conducting semi-structured interviews and preparing a *Network Map* (Sluzki, 2003) with 12 retirees. At the end of this phase, retirees were asked to suggest a significant person among those included in their Map so that, if they accepted, this person would also participate in the research as a participant in the second phase. Having these suggestions, the researcher made telephone contact with these people to present the research and invite them to participate in it. Upon meeting the established criteria and accepting to participate in the study, a meeting for data collection was scheduled. The place to carry out this process was a soundproof room located in an institution in the municipality of the research.

For implementing the Focus Group technique, in addition to the main researcher there was the participation of an observer, who is also a Psychologist and researcher. Therefore, both of them were present in data collection. While the main researcher coordinated the performance of all procedures at the time, the observer's role was limited to: (i) note down

perceptions regarding the comments and attitudes of the participants; (ii) assist in the use of audio recording devices.

The group was developed as follows: after welcoming the participants, the researcher retrieved information on the research, checking, once again, the availability of people to participate. Next, the adopted ethical guidelines were mentioned, providing space for clarification of doubts as well as for the individual reading and signing of the informed consent form. Subsequently, participants were asked to make a brief presentation, seeking to integrate and prepare the group. Then, data collection was carried out, based on the aforementioned script.

The focus group lasted two hours and 20 minutes, and the information gathered during the meeting was recorded in audio files and later transcribed. The notes made in the Field Diary by the observer were passed on to the researcher after the end of the activity. Likewise, upon the conclusion of the Focus Group, the researcher wrote descriptions in his own Field Diary.

Data analysis. The research data, retrieved from the Focus Group and the Field Diary, were organized and analyzed using the Grounded Theory method, based on the principles indicated by Strauss and Corbin (2008), comprising three steps: open, axial, and selective coding. This process was carried out by using the *Atlas.ti* software, version 1.6.0 for Mac. Considering the adopted procedures, two central categories emerged: (i) Characteristics of daily life and relationships before retirement; (ii) Characteristics of daily life and relationships after retirement.

It is known that, in the contemporary context of qualitative research, the Grounded Theory method is often used both with the intention of creating a theory and generating data analysis. In the present study, this method sustained data analysis from an inductive perspective, according to which data emerged from the collected information (Cho & Lee, 2014).

Ethical Considerations

All the adopted procedures were based on the legislation in force, especially on Resolution No. 510/2016 of the National Health Council, Brazilian Ministry of Health. After evaluation, the Human Research Ethics Committee of

Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, by the Consolidated Opinion No. 2.083.315, approved conducting the research.

Results

Characteristics of daily life and relationships before retirement

In this category, the meanings attributed by members of the retirees' meaningful social networks concerning the daily life of these individuals and the bonds established before retirement are addressed. From this perspective, the participants described that retirees, while working, followed an intense and daily routine of professional obligations, whose focus was centered on these activities. According to some reports, during this period, the contact with the network was restricted to certain times of the day (e.g., at night) or the week (e.g., on weekends), as these individuals did not have spare time to engage in social and leisure activities with other people (e.g., family and/or friends) who were not associated with the work environment as well. In fact, the two spouses present in the group stated that they often felt worried about their partners due to the accumulation of tasks they had.

Participants expressed that, sometimes, retirees postponed the implementation of ideas and personal desires that they nurtured in relation to other spheres of their lives (e.g., travels and taking courses in other areas of knowledge), prioritizing the work demands. In this sense, they also emphasized that, in usual dialogues, especially in the last years of work, they perceived these individuals were dissatisfied with the disparity of time spent in professional activities compared with other activities.

Conversely, statements regarding the friendly relationships between coworkers outstood, and these people developed bonds beyond the fulfillment of professional obligations, sharing affection and experiences on a daily basis. Furthermore, according to the participants, work was important for the retirees, who were committed with and dedicated to performing their work and the contact with the public served through the provided services, expressing care and affection in their actions.

From the perspective of the participants, the burden and wear and tear resulting from work obligations were precipitating factors for the retirees' decision to resign from their jobs. In this regard, the notes in the field diary made by the observer showed that, when dealing with this topic, some participants commented among themselves on the difficulties that workers in school spaces face in their professional routine, and that the level of stress and fatigue determines the decision-making process of retiring. Another reason pointed out as influencing decision-making for retirement was the desire to be more present and take care of children and other family members.

Participants mentioned that, on the eve of retirement, they had doubts whether retirees would be able to adapt to the new reality of life, which was based on the perception that they would have, for example, more spare time in their daily

lives. Furthermore, the accounts exposed a certain surprise of the members of the retirees' network upon their decision to resign, which was mainly associated with the behavior of these individuals, considering their level of dedication and intense routine of involvement with work-related activities.

Regarding the last two data, according to the researcher's notes in his field diary, after data collection, some participants thanked him for the opportunity to talk about this topic, mentioning that, until then, they had not participated in specific activities that addressed the retirement issue. The observer's records, in turn, emphasized the participants' motivation and spontaneity in dealing with the topic, whose verbalizations highlighted that listening to other people helped them to think about themselves and their own retirement in the future.

Characteristics of daily life and relationships after retirement

In this category, the meanings attributed by members of the retirees' meaningful social networks concerning the daily life of these individuals and the bonds established after retirement are addressed. Accordingly, the participants mentioned having noticed, in the first months after resigning from their jobs, that retirees were withdrawn, performed few activities outside the family environment, and did not know what they could do. According to the reports, some of these individuals experienced, during this period, depressive episodes as a result of the difficulties in envisaging new ideals and establishing projects for their lives in addition to work. According to members of the network, these retirees sought help from mental health professionals, which contributed to the improvement of their symptoms.

Participants mentioned that one of the main changes caused by retirement concerns the reduction in contact and, consequently, the relational distance between the retiree and former coworkers. The accounts showed both the occurrence of situations in which these people had not been together for some time and the fact that their face-to-face contact decreased, maintaining dialogue mainly via communication applications or virtual social networks.

Conversely, the participants highlighted that retirement has a positive impact on the interaction with the nuclear and extended family, as these retirees had greater availability of time to invest in this daily contact. Moreover, some reports evidenced that dedication to family relationships interferes with sharing actions with other actors, considering that some subjects started emphasizing this relational context exclusively.

Regarding the marital relationship, reports showed that, although in this period companionship is strengthened in the couple, the fact that one of the partners keeps working influences the conditions of the dyad to perform daily activities together, which was reported by two participants. In cases in which both spouses were retired, the participants mentioned that different interests in the couple (e.g., future projects exclusively focused on personal motivations) compromise the implementation of shared projects in retirement.

Regarding friendships, participants stated that retirees have broadened their availability of contact via virtual applications and/or face-to-face activities. In addition, they pointed out changes in the content of the conversations, considering that, before retiring, these individuals talked mainly about concerns and anxieties related to work. On the other hand, the reports also made it explicit that the retirees' physical illnesses prevent implementing personal plans and restrict the contact with friends.

According to the participants, the spare time of retirement promotes the retirees' engagement in actions of social nature that are different from those previously carried out, as they mentioned seeing these individuals involved in new activities in groups and in the community, maintaining positions of commitment and dedication to such. The notes made by the observer in a field diary highlight this conception by emphasizing that participants indicated that retirees started choosing other ways of living life, adopting practices different from the previous moment (e.g., choosing activities to occupy their time in a pleasant way). Accordingly, the accounts evidenced that these changes enabled to establish new relationships in other contexts.

Discussion

This qualitative study aimed to understand the relational dynamics of meaningful social networks in the retirement process, from the perspective of members of retirees' networks. According to the results, the participants described that, before resigning from their jobs, retirees kept a daily routine based on professional tasks, showing commitment in performing these activities. These aspects demonstrate the salience attributed to such actions/obligations by these people throughout their careers, considering that work, in contemporary times, is a central category in the lives of individuals, both from the point of view of identity development and the structuring of everyday life (Krawulski et al., 2017; Zanelli et al., 2010).

On the one hand, this configuration of the bond maintained by retirees with work established friendly relationships between colleagues and dedication to the public served by the provided services, with which they shared experiences and affections in their routine. In terms of life cycle, adult life is demarcated by relationships in addition to the family environment and that interconnect with other spaces, such as work, which are equally meaningful for socialization and the acquisition of autonomy (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2016). Based on Sluzki (2003), it is understood that the aforementioned data allude to the existence of a relational commitment regarding the bonds developed in the work environment, outlining a network of relationships that, in this period, included affective exchanges and provided feedbacks to these individuals in their everyday actions.

On the other hand, the accounts brought to light the impacts caused by professional demands at the expense of the time spent in other spheres of life considering that, while working, retirees had restrictions on family and social

interaction and postponed the implementation of personal projects. These findings corroborate previous investigations involving retirees, showing that labor obligations interfere with the conditions to implement practices of individual interests, to participate in the family and other social groups (Boehs & Silva, 2017; Krawulski et al., 2017), which can also support the understanding of the reasons that sustained the retirees' dissatisfaction and complaints reported by members of their networks in this study. In this regard, the relevance of organizational policies that encourage the balanced distribution of time between labor and extra-labor activities is highlighted, as there is evidence that they positively impact workers' health and reduce the occurrence of conflicts between spheres such as career/work and family (Feijó et al., 2017).

The data elucidate that these aspects precipitated the decision for retirement taking into account that, from the perspective of the network, the decision-making process was based on the burden and stress resulting from work obligations as well as on the desire to prioritize the presence and care for family members. Similar results were obtained in previous research, indicating that perceptions concerning work (Amorim & França, 2019) and the time allocated to family relationships (Figueira et al., 2017; Loureiro et al., 2016) influence this definition.

In addition to these aspects, the reactions of the members of the network as for the retirement process must be analyzed. According to the field diary records, the focus group consisted in a space for reflection, to which these people had no access yet, providing opportunities for them to reflect on questions about this topic. This information points to the lack of activities aimed at preparing individuals for retirement. Although organizations are responsible for such aspect, these activities are not duly considered in the agenda of priorities in the area of personnel management (França, Leite, Simões, Garcia, & Ataliba, 2019; Zanelli et al., 2010).

Subsequently, the participants' accounts emphasized different positions on the issue, ranging from concern with the accumulation of tasks maintained by retirees while they worked, to surprise regarding the decision to resign from their jobs and doubts about the conditions for adjusting to the new reality. A certain ambivalence in the feelings of the members of this network is perceived, reporting, at the same time, concerns regarding the moment before retirement and facing challenging situations after the termination of employment. Zanelli et al. (2010) postulate that retirement reflects a complex time for reorganizing life, in such a way that the disengagement from work leads to the emergence of fear, insecurity, and anxiety in people who are experiencing this transition, and these aspects are corroborated by other studies (Melo et al., 2018; Scorsolini-Comin et al., 2019). From a systemic perspective, it is understood that life cycle events, such as retirement, generate stress and tension in relational systems. This is because, as developmental transition points, they challenge the components to restructure bonds, which can trigger multiple reactions that are supported by the interactional history between those involved, influencing the interpersonal structure in the new stage of life (Andolfi, 2003; McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2016).

Within the framework of the analyzed data, we can assume that the relational networks of retirees also experience conditions similar to the individual in the process of retirement, showing some apprehension concerning this moment. From this perspective, it is emphasized that conversations that take place within the network may or may not favor the consolidation of help flows provided by the members, influencing the resolution of stressful situations (Sluzki, 2003). Thus, it is deemed necessary to investigate these aspects in professional practices with retirees, as the positions of the network affect the meanings attributed to this phenomenon, conflict resolution strategies and, consequently, the effectiveness of support.

Regarding the period after retirement, the participants mentioned changes in the retirees' daily lives, and the first months were marked by a movement of seclusion, performing activities in the family environment, lack of plans, and even suffering expressed by depressive episodes. It is noteworthy that this period was characterized by a relative emotional vulnerability of retirees, who had not yet defined new purposes for life and had difficulties recognizing that they no longer occupy the role of worker, whose aspects exacerbate feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression (Shultz & Wang, 2011). It is understood that, to a certain extent, this scenario is associated with issues already discussed on the previously followed routine of commitments that conditioned the performance of activities beyond the labor scenario, which led to a broad review of both the identity and the *modus operandi*.

Furthermore, according to the data, the search for care by health professionals contributed to the well-being of retirees. For Sluzki (2003), the equipment, services, and professionals to which retirees have access can be considered part of their interpersonal niche, and the adopted practices configure network functions. Thus, it is worth recognizing the role of these actors, whether autonomous or members of teams in community services, with regard to welcoming this population. Traditionally, the literature has emphasized the need for technical support for professionals who develop Retirement Guidance actions, considering that this is a topic that has only recently gained relevance in Brazil (Zanelli et al., 2010). In turn, based on the findings of this study, we recommend that health specialists in general obtain training on this topic, aiming at operationalizing and qualifying their interventions considering the peculiarities of the experience of retiring.

Among the changes occurred in this process, the members of the network pointed out the decrease in contact and interaction, especially in the face-to-face modality, with former coworkers, which demonstrates a movement of distancing and weakening of these bonds, as identified by Boehs and Silva (201), Kauppi et al. (2021) and Sluzki (2000). This aspect is deemed as a loss that triggers the feeling of helplessness and experience of mourning, as it alters the relational structure of a group of people who used to regularly interact with each other, which helps to understand the initial reactions of withdrawal of retirees as a result of the interplay between individual and relational factors.

Nevertheless, considering the complexity of the phenomenon, it is interesting to note that, among the

nine participants indicated to be part of this investigation, four were denoted, by retirees themselves, as friends and former coworkers. Therefore, we can assume, in the context of this study, that retirement challenges the degree of relational commitment configured between these actors and, according to the history and density of the bond, such people, although performing less activities together, sustain the relationship in the new stage of life and reaffirm the friendship.

As for family relationships, according to the study data, this nucleus undergoes the expansion of contact between different members, including the nuclear and extended family, since the first months after retirement, while retirees still had no defined plans. These results are consistent with previous research (Amorim & França, 2019; Macêdo et al., 2017; Scorsolini-Comin et al., 2019), showing that family is one of the main locus in which retirees manifest intention and/or effectively focus time and action. According to Sluzki (2003), having a reference group that offers support and welcoming contributes to self-esteem, well-being, and identity organization through the situation of transformation of places of belonging.

In turn, it is worth noting that the intensification of coexistence in the nuclear family may have negative impacts on the maintenance and/or expansion of bonds with other actors. Especially in the case of workers who prioritized professional demands over others, creating expectations and desires to enjoy retirement with the family is common, in an attempt to improve the quality of relationships and recapture the past (Zanelli et al., 2010). However, this reparative intention is deemed capable of generating closed borders that overload family members and restrict the potential for engagement in other social spaces that help in the reconstruction of the life project.

Regarding conjugality, the accounts made explicit the strengthening of companionship in the couple and also the act of facing limitations for carrying out projects when one of the spouses remains working or when both do not share common interests. Based on previous research, it is known that conjugality is a moderating factor in decision-making and adjustment to retirement (Figueira et al., 2017; Loureiro et al., 2016), as well as that the disengagement from work generates new demands for the couple to manage at this stage of the life cycle, whether in welcoming the retiree or in formulating plans concerning what is intended to be done (Antunes et al., 2015). It is noteworthy that professionals who work with this population must analyze the overlapping of marital aspects in the preparation and implementation of personal planning for retirement, with the purpose of codeveloping strategies that address this dimension.

With regard to friendships, the participants' reports indicated an increase in the availability of retirees to participate in dialogues and shared actions, either in person or through virtual communication applications. It is distinguished that spare time from work provides the involvement and performance of activities with friends, and such actors qualify as incentive resources for the continuity of social integration (Loureiro et al., 2016). It is particularly interesting to observe that, nowadays,

the internet provides new practices of communication and social connection, enhancing accessibility to members of meaningful social networks and restructuring social support in late adulthood (Castro & Camargo, 2017; Sluzki, 2003).

In contrast, according to the study data, the physical health aspects of retirees interfere in the fulfillment of personal projects and also in the conditions of interaction with friends, which allows us to identify that illness hinders the implementation of activities shared with network members and limits the opportunities for social contact for this population. Sluzki (2003) mentions that the disease has an aversive interpersonal effect, as it increases stress and restricts the rewards generated in interactions, which can even place subjects in an “isolation bubble” or make them dependent on figures whose bond is of greater intimacy. Therefore, the centrality of preventive practices and those that promote active aging is emphasized, aiming to optimize the quality of life and conditions for maintaining bonds and social support in the late stage of life (França et al., 2019).

In addition to maintaining existing relationships, the emergence of new friendships and bonding spaces from the inclusion of retirees in activities in the community is observed, and it should be noted that these individuals were considered, by members of their networks, as committed and active in the actions developed in this context. These aspects unveil a process of reconstitution of networks over the years following retirement, produced from the engagement of retirees in alternative spaces in which they began to access people who could be included in their interpersonal niche.

Another repercussion concerns the content of conversations generated in the context of friendships, which, after retirement, began to deal with issues unrelated to work. A change in the discursive structures that accompanies the subjective transformations generated in the process of labor disengagement is visualized, comprising different narrative elements from those traditionally shared between these actors. Based on Grandesso (2017), it is through language that individuals, in relational and dialogue spaces, produce meanings about the perceived and co-constructed reality in the light of their cultural context, which enables to transform and recreate the experiences of life. Thus, associated with the data previously discussed, we consider that, through the exchanges configured in the structure of bonds, retirees, recursively, reconstitute the meaningful social networks and restructure their daily life and identity, exploring other scenarios and advancing in the confrontation and adaptation to this transition of the life cycle.

Based on the results obtained from this study, we can state that retirement triggers the reconfiguration of meaningful social networks through a process in which retirees decreased the density of interaction with people in the work context and began developing and/or intensifying affective contacts and connections with family, friends, and community groups, consolidating new flows and patterns of bonding with these actors/places. Likewise, it is worth noting that the repercussions of this process do not only affect retirees, but also the dimension of the relational dynamic produced

with the members of the networks, encompassing such people and bonds. This is because, at the same time retirees were faced with the imminence of retirement, members of the networks were also encouraged to think about it and take a stand on the issue.

Hence, we can infer that, in addition to changes in the individual sphere, retirement affects, in a bidirectional way, the configuration of meaningful social networks and, concomitantly, it is outlined in the relational dynamics that the individual constitutes with their members, based on conversations and cocreated meanings. In this sense, this study contributes to the advancement and complementation of scientific production on the topic, as it recognizes aspects that compose the set of narratives that support the retirement process in the dimension of individuals' relationships. The novelty of this study consists in the fact that different protagonists who interact with retirees were heard, favoring the analysis of the phenomenon from a multivocal and multidimensional perspective.

In terms of implications for professional practices, it is worth highlighting that: (i) health promotion and/or preventive actions should be implemented, aiming at preparing workers for transformations resulting from retirement; (ii) retirement guidance activities should include, even at specific times, the members of the retirees' networks, aiming to collect data about relational structures and establish dialogues that provide information and guidance to these individuals on the topic.

All in all, it is understood that the limitations of this study mainly refer to the specificities of the sociocultural context of the participants, considering that all members of the retirees' networks lived in the same municipality in the State of Santa Catarina. Other researches should be carried out on people from different locations and regions of the country as well as on other types of professional trajectory (e.g., self-employed and independent professionals). In addition, we recommend for new studies to include other members of the retirees' meaningful social networks, such as children and parents, to investigate the perspective of these protagonists.

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