



## Resenhas, Teses e Dissertações

*PARTICIPATION IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE  
BY ETHNIC MINORITY USERS:  
Case studies from the Netherlands and Brazil*

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Despite evidence that ethnic minorities are under-represented in health participatory spaces across the world, few studies have been done on the factors promoting minority user participation. This thesis aims to fill this gap by investigating why minority users get involved, how they benefit from participation and which barriers impede them from realising their full participatory potential. Employing a qualitative case study approach it investigates two exemplary cases: Cape Verdean migrants' participation in a mental health advocacy project in Rotterdam; and minority Northeasterners' participation in a mental healthcare service in Rio de Janeiro.

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Results reveal that the involvement of these user groups is driven by various motivations which, put together, indicate an aspiration to promote not just their own social inclusion but also the welfare of their communities. Motivations do not suffice to facilitate their engagement, however. Direct recruitment, capacity-building and empowering participatory spaces are also essential enablers of participation.

This thesis also shows that participation generates numerous benefits for users themselves, including broader social networks, empowerment, increased sense of citizenship, enhanced health literacy and improved access to mental healthcare. Finally, it identifies several barriers that hold back participation by minority groups, including unawareness of, self-exclusion from, and exclusionary dynamics within mental health participatory spaces. These hindrances diminish the potential of these spaces to foster the development of diversity-competent healthcare.

**Keywords:** participation, user involvement, mental health care, ethnic minorities, participatory spaces.