



ARTICLE IN THE SPECIAL SECTION

“You are Needed and You Exist”: Motivation for Social Participation of Older Activists, Rostov Oblast, Russia

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to identify the sociological approach's perspective on the reasons behind the continued social engagement of older individuals. In 2021, leaders and activists of social participation practices in the Rostov Oblast aged 65 to 90 years ($N = 18$) were interviewed. These interviews were analyzed using grounded theory to identify the central motivation for socially significant activities as the desire to attain life satisfaction through contributing positively to others. The participants share comparable socio-demographic and biographical features, including higher education, managerial positions, leadership roles, and involvement in socially significant professions or activities throughout their lives. This indicates that their engagement in social participation is a culmination of their lifetime experiences, thereby supporting the concepts presented by “life course” theories. Motives that are commonly cited include fulfilling moral obligations, establishing connections with important individuals and communities, acquiring resources, gaining social approval and recognition, preserving identity and status, prolonging social life, and ageing postponement. This enables us to discuss the social participation of older adults as a means to combat the aging process, extend social engagement, and advocate for recognition within the frameworks of social exchange theories and the struggle for recognition. Through social participation, individuals accumulate goals and expand their motivational structure, which can result in generativity, i.e., a desire to contribute to improving the lives of others and future generations. This

particular type of intrinsic motivation integrates various goals, including those for oneself, for others, with others, and for social change, leading to sustained motivation. The leaders and activists prioritize different motives for social participation. For the former, social recognition, freedom, generativity, and social participation are significant while community involvement is valued more by the latter group. The informants' motives for participation are consistent with V. Gerchikov's typological concept of labor motivation and the model of older people's motivation for social participation as an embodiment of values.

KEYWORDS

motivation, social participation, older people, seniors, Rostov Oblast, Russia

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Introduction

In both Russia and worldwide, there is a growing interest in the older generation and its social activity. Social policy in Russia is aimed at increasing life expectancy, improving the quality of life, stimulating labor productivity in old age and active longevity (Golubeva & Emelyanova, 2021). Simultaneously, older individuals desire to remain involved in their habitual and easily accessible activities for as long as possible (Grigoryeva & Kolosova, 2021, p. 919). Nevertheless, presumptions regarding the social inactivity of older individuals present a challenge in accepting them as active participants and agents of social transformation. In the field of gerontology and the sociology of aging, limited data exist on the reasons behind older individuals' involvement in socially significant activities. Researchers utilize diverse methods and classifications, reporting a range of motivations for later-life participation. Typical motivations of older activists include providing social service, helping others, interacting with peers, and earning respect and honor (Li, 2010). In addition, they desire to engage in selfless activities for the benefit of others (Kuznetsova & Kochina, 2022), to display mercy and kindness, to communicate, seek self-realization, acquire new knowledge, assume social roles, achieve meaningful leisure time, participate in social changes, apply their experiences, and seek new meanings in life (Prokhorova, 2019). In sum, the motives driving older activists are altruistic and socially-oriented (Socci et al., 2023). Some authors emphasize the preservation of self-esteem and pride (Witsø et al., 2012) noting that through participation older people experience happiness and social relevance (Li, 2010), gain skills and knowledge, get socialized (Martynova, 2023), overcome dyschronosis (Ambarova & Zborovsky, 2017). Others highlight the desire for cohesion

and social connections (Townsend et al., 2021), the desire to be part of communities (Hoyle et al., 2016), to engage with close and significant people, to feel a sense of belonging, care, support, and friendship (Dare et al., 2018; Franke et al., 2022). Some also insist that older volunteers do not pursue personal interests (Barnes et al., 2012), as they are civic-minded and caring (Lie et al., 2009).

Authors agree that participating in community activities can help older individuals realize their potential, maintain physical and mental health, promote inclusion and commitment, improve well-being and quality of life, boost self-esteem, and enhance enjoyment of time (Hoyle et al., 2016). However, the role of participation and active aging should not be absolutized. The risks and limitations of claiming activity as a successful, good, and the only correct ageing strategy need to be recognized. Timonen (2016) points out the risks of modeling “of what are good, appropriate, proper ways to age” (p. 88) offering a critique of the active and successful ageing paradigms that culminates with the theory of model ageing. Nonetheless, it remains unclear why some older individuals engage in these social activities regularly over a prolonged period, while others do so on a one-off basis or have no interest in such activities at all. Understanding the factors that promote sustainable participation and facilitate a person’s transition from non-participant or occasional participant to a regular, self-motivated actor is crucial to boosting older Russians’ involvement in socially significant activities. By doing so, we can overcome the age-based asymmetry of volunteering in the country (Ambarova & Zborovsky, 2017) and challenge negative stereotypes about aging.

Research Questions and Methodology

The article aims to determine the rationales for continued social engagement among older individuals utilizing a sociological approach. The empirical data provide insight into sustained social participation within this demographic. The investigation entails 18 semi-structured interviews with social participation advocates and leaders, aged from 65 to 90 (13 women and five men) from the Rostov Oblast. The interviews took place from April to August 2021, adhering to research ethics standards. Four interviews were conducted remotely and 14 in person, with 13 participants interviewed once and five interviewed multiple times, ranging from 32 to 206 minutes with an average of about 60 minutes. All participants had retired but had been involved in socially significant initiatives for at least five years. For more information on participant characteristics, see Appendix.

The hypotheses assume that the participants share comparable biographical and socio-demographic traits, characteristic motivations for continued involvement in socially relevant practices (with potential differences between leaders and activists), and particular motivations related to the age, status, and social roles of an aging individual. In order to test these hypotheses, the author presents a series of research questions:

1. What biographical and socio-demographic traits are common amongst senior leaders and activists involved in social participation practices?

2. What are the common motivations of older people involved in sustainable proactive socially significant activities?
3. Are there specific motivations which emerge due to an individual's age, social status, or role within the community?
4. What typological approaches to social participation motives align with those of the participants?

The research methodology utilized theoretical sampling, an inductive-deductive analysis strategy, the constant comparative method, and coding procedures for transcribed interview materials in accordance with grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 2001). Initially, the author conducted a “selective” coding procedure during the first stage. The matrix contains quotes that report on various aspects such as involvement in practices, reasons and factors for sustained involvement over several years, people and communities who realized or influenced participation in practices, significance of involvement, important values, goals, outcomes, duties, roles, functions performed during practices, connection of involvement to social and professional experiences, and the biographies of informants. Quotations with similar codes were categorized, with identifying key themes and selecting labeling statements. The theoretical sample was then analyzed comparatively, accounting for the identified key topics. Corrections were made and the author clarified relationships and reasons. In search of the main theme, the author moved from descriptive codes to theoretical codes and their corresponding groups, developing new hypotheses, making connections, and providing explanations.

Peculiarities and Approaches to Motivation of Older People's Social Participation

The term “older people” refers to individuals who are 60 years old or older, as per the guidelines of the World Health Organization (2017) and Russia's retirement age transition period. This definition includes all genders and does not consider factors such as social status, psychological conditions, family dynamics, employment, health, and living arrangements. The author selects the non-discriminatory terms “older/elder people,” “seniors,” “older/elder adults” interchangeably (Bowman & Lim, 2021). Let us define social participation among older individuals as their engagement and involvement in a wide range of public and non-public, formal and informal practices of sharing individual, group, and public resources in different activities and forms, both explicit and implicit, and through direct and mediated means (Bukov et al., 2002; Kienko, 2022, p. 230; Levasseur et al., 2022). Social participation is often conflated with volunteering, which refers to actively participating in unpaid activities that strive for public benefit and assistance (such as moral, material, domestic, socio-medical, informational, and educational). Nevertheless, gerontovolunteering is just one of many potential forms of such participation. Meanwhile, older individuals participate in socially valuable unpaid activities both directly and indirectly through various types and forms of social involvement. These include organizing educational, tourist, and sports activities within and outside their communities, passing on their knowledge and experience to children and young people, and performing in front of audiences without being called “silver volunteers.”

Sugarhood et al. (2016) believe that for older adults, participation in society embodies the values of connecting with others, maintaining autonomy, affirming abilities, maximizing output, being useful, maintaining self-identity, and realizing interests. According to Lie et al. (2009), for older Britons, volunteering is a form of citizenship that requires a new approach and should not be considered as recreational or occupational activity. Instead, volunteering should be seen as an act of care and an embodiment of civic consciousness. European studies on volunteering initiatives of older people often implement the functional approach utilizing Volunteer Functional Inventory (VFI) methodology developed by Clary et al. (1998). Due to VFI, there are six domains, including Values, aligned with altruistic beliefs; Understanding, i.e., acquiring new skills and knowledge application; Social, that is opportunity to interact with others and conform to normative influences; Career, meaning advancement benefits, Protective, which is volunteering for protecting ego from negative problems; and Enhancement, seeking personal growth and development (Clary et al., 1998). When discussing the motivation of volunteers of all ages, it is necessary to distinguish between altruistic, instrumental, and external commitment motives (Anheier & Salamon, 1999). Additionally, compensatory and idealistic motives, as well as motives of benefit, personal growth, and expansion of social contacts should be taken into account (Azarova & Yanitsky, 2008). The author acknowledges the polymotivated and dynamic nature of social participation, involving a combination of altruistic, egoistic, and prosocial motivations (Cnaan et al., 1991; Pevnaya, 2015).

It is useful to consider the motivation for older people's social participation in terms of goals: socially significant (social change, being useful) and personally significant (self-realization and development, inclusion, belonging). Bukov et al. (2002) identified three types of social participation among older adults based on their goals and available resources: Collective Participation focusing on the interests of the group; Productive Participation that involves providing services and support; and Political Participation, which aims to distribute power. Piškur et al. (2014) distinguish such approaches as Social Consumerism (participation for personal needs, resources), Inclusion and Participation (participation with others for social inclusion and fulfillment), Tiered Approach to participation through levels of involvement in society, and Empowerment (participation for the benefit of others and social change).

Based on the integration of the approaches (Bukov et al., 2002; Piškur et al., 2014) the author proposes four types of social participation of older people:

1. *Social consumer participation* is defined as acquiring resources in order to achieve personally significant goals. The participation is focused on oneself.
2. *Collective participation* is focused on social inclusion and self-realization through the process of creating and utilizing resources in collaboration with others.
3. *Productive (helping) participation* aims to generate goods, resources, creative products, assistance, and care for others.
4. *Civic (political) participation* is intended to produce, transfer and redistribute resources for social change.

In this paper, the described approaches and the author's model are applied to analyze empirical data as well as to verify its validity for qualifying the motivation for continuous social engagement among the seniors.

Results and Discussions

The analysis of the interviews revealed a diverse range of motivations and interpretations.

“Being Needed and Do Something”: Participation as an Embodiment of Values and Motives of Moral Duty

The primary motivation for older leaders and activists is the chance to participate in socially significant endeavors. This is a moral obligation, a value, a necessity, and a calling for the individuals involved.

Participant 6: *Helping people. This is where I see my vocation.* (Trans. by Tatyana Kienko—T. K.)

Participant 9: *There are no random people.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 17: *I just wanted ... to be needed and do something.* (Trans. by T. K.)

The desire to be active and do good reflects the value system of the older generation, or mobilised generation, thaw's generation (Levada, 2001; Radaev, 2018). They had gone through the school of responsibility, they are used to limiting themselves, they have a sense of duty (Levada, 2001). Furthermore, this generation values camaraderie and mutual aid.

Participant 10: *This is ... a characteristic that defines the quality of our country's population, of our generation. It is ingrained in us from childhood—to help others.* (Trans. by T. K.)

At the same time, it is the result of life experience, especially professional experience. The majority of informants were leaders, public figures, representatives of socially important professions. They have spent most of their lives solving complex tasks, setting personal examples and taking responsibility; they have got used to living with an “I care” attitude and doing what is useful for others.

Participant 3: *It's not what you want to do. It's what's necessary, useful, worthwhile.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 15: *I used to be a school principal, I had to serve as an example to others.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Sometimes, compensation in the form of help is provided as a return for the effort and resources that informants previously received from other people, organizations, or institutions.

Participant 3: *I took a course there, learnt some of the basics, and when there was no one else to lead ... decided to pass on what I had learnt to others.* (Trans. by T. K.)

This provides a basis for rethinking ageing as an exchange (Dowd, 1975). Duty motives reflect the goals of participation (helping) of the “for others” type, the Values domain (VFI), the desire to “do one’s best” and “be useful,” as addressed by the typology of Sugarhood et al. (2016).

“Sponsors Come to Us”: Participation as a Way to Obtain Resources

The start of activities often begins with the provision of resources. Information, organizational, material, educational, and moral support strengthens and stimulates practices. Participation in the work of initiative groups, communities, and organizations brings what may be called “side benefits.” This participation enables them to be included in programs such as food aid, social tourism, health improvements, training and development, as well as the receipt of gifts and discounts on passes to gyms, museums, and more.

Participant 6: *We now have 60 people recovering, their courses are paid for by the Presidential Grants Fund ... theatres, museums, concerts ... we are going to Adygea as part of a Grant ... our sponsors meet our needs ... we work with a travel agency, Zabota Riadom [Caring Nearby] coalition, the Rus' [Russia] food fund ... we have received help from them.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 14: *We go on pilgrimages; we live in the monastery ... absolutely for free.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 18: *And what an inventory we have! ... a gym like no other ... lots of machines.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Resources can encompass various forms of assistance from organizations such as training, photo sessions, vacations, excursions, costumes, thank-you notes, and gifts. Other resources include developing new interests and skill sets, establishing relationships and contacts, intergenerational relations, creating a friendly atmosphere, and showing respect and attention.

Participant 8: *Participation in our organization's projects ... promotes intergenerational communication ... helps to solve leisure and communication problems and improves the quality of participants' lives.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participation for the sake of resources is important for each participant and reflects the goals of the social consumer type (“for oneself”). This category of motives is expounded upon in approach of Sugarhood et al. (2016), in which the pursuit of interests is referred to as instrumental motives (Anheier & Salamon, 1999) or profit motives (Azarova & Yanitsky, 2008). The resources themselves are diverse and can be a tool for developing practice, improving the quality of life and maintaining the volunteers' vitality, a reward for effort, a form of recognition, confirmation of status and

competence, a factor of commitment to the community and its values, i.e., a basis for transforming and expanding the motivational structure, shifting motives to purpose-oriented (Leontiev, 1975).

“When You Receive Gratitude, You Really Feel Needed”:

Participation as a Pathway to Social Approval and Recognition

Activists require recognition, positive evaluations, acknowledgment, and contribution. This affirms their competence and validates their practices, justifies efforts, enhances self-confidence and skills, increases self-esteem and self-respect. When participants achieve their goals and receive recognition, it generates positive emotions and encourages them to continue activism.

Participant 1: *Those who had glimpsed what I was doing said, “Wow, it’s great!” Well, one person liked it, then another, so I decided to make an exhibition.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 4: *When you receive gratitude for the work you have done, see the return and some positive results, you really feel needed ... It is very motivating.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 17: *Some cry with happiness that we come to visit them, do not forget them ... it is an indescribable feeling of happiness.* (Trans. by T. K.)

The forms and sources of recognition are numerous and diverse: the gratitude of spectators, the respect of neighbors, the familial pride, the trust and growing number of supporters, the attention of authorities and the media, the provision of resources, involvement in worthy causes and communities.

Participant 6: *People around notice, pay attention, and even the grandchildren feel a sense of pride ... that their grandparents are so active.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 12: *People trust me, come to me hoping that we can help them in some way ... Even children come to me and they all call me by my first name and patronymic.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 16: *I got presents ... I was on TV all week, in the papers.* (Trans. by T. K.)

The role of recognition is significant in understanding social participation as a way of gaining influence and a “stamp of approval” (Blau, 1986, p. 63) or the struggle for recognition (Honneth, 1991, 2009, 2010). The desire for recognition reflects the goals of the social consumer type (“for oneself”). This motive is commonly referred to as “affirmative abilities” in traditional typologies proposed by Sugarhood et al. (2016).

“We Agreed to Get Together Like We Used to”:

Participation as a Way of Integrating With Significant Others

A substantial number of participants seek social integration and self-actualization “with others.” They join the activities by following their friends, neighbors, or relatives,

or by discovering a “second family” within the communities. Participants value the compassionate and cooperative atmosphere, cherish the skills and personal traits of their community members.

Participant 14: *I always participate and invite everyone ... There are many people I know, whom I have invited ... we agreed to get together like we used to ... young, middle-aged, and old ... There are no conflicts! When you go to the mountains, the young people help you.* (Trans. by T. K.)

In later life, informal participation frequently occurs among a tight-knit group of acquaintances and close individuals focused on creating resources, spaces, and infrastructure that benefit friends, colleagues, neighbors, family members, children, and grandchildren.

Participant 6: *We also do intergenerational projects, taking our grandchildren with us.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 10: *... targeting specific people in the social circle, former classmates, colleagues.* (Trans. by T. K.)

In the experience of inclusive social participation with others, new goals for others and for social change (such as co-creating meaningful products, caring for others, and developing the community) emerge through sharing interests and support, exchanging resources and experiences, and showing approval and recognition. At the same time, individuals acquire resources and benefits for themselves such as competencies, connections, recognition, and approval, and participating in the search for resources for both oneself and others can foster the development of communities. Sugarhood et al. (2016) refer these motives as “connection with others”, in VFI of Clary et al. (1998) they are named “social motives” (1998); Azarova and Yanitsky (2008) use the term “expansion of social contacts.” In the model proposed in the article, they are referred to as motives of the inclusive type (“together with others”).

“I Do Not Feel Retired at All”: Participation as a Tool for Preserving Identity, Social Life, and Postponing Ageing

The informants are part of the pensioners’ group but do not associate themselves with their status as retirees. They seek to maintain their prior way of living, explore their abilities, and discover themselves through familiar social, charitable, and artistic pursuits.

Participant 2: *My whole life is musical ... I started when I was eight ... Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday, there is a band on the dance floor, me and an accordion.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 12: *I have been and still am a manager of an organization working with families ... I have an attitude and I know what it is like ... Are the children properly dressed? Are they eating well?* (Trans. by T. K.)

In situations of “transitions” in old age (retirement and social ties’ weakening, change of residence, loss of spouse, change of mobility), one has to “find oneself” and the meaning of life anew.

Participant 1: *I have been living in a residential care home since 2018. For a year I was searching for myself and, in the end, I came to the conclusion that I had to do something, had to live a full life. So, I started doing creative work, that is, painting.* (Trans. by T. K.)

By selecting avenues of participation in familiar areas, individuals maintain professional longevity, fullness and solvency of active life, its quality and style, make plans. They also lead communities, win competitions, and embody the image of an active and successful older person.

Participant 3: *As long as you are active, doing something, you are living.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 11: *This was my way of life ... I do not feel retired at all ... I continue to live the way I have been living.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participation is increasingly viewed as a socially desirable method for delaying aging and maintaining a lifestyle consistent with trends in active longevity.

Participant 15: *Because I was active, I decided not to stop. For me, retirement doesn't mean what it is commonly thought to mean. My age means nothing.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 16: *I am 90 years old. Despite my age, I do not feel, you see, I do not feel old. I hear well. I read somehow, I work, I remember everything, I play the accordion, I sing, I ski well, I shoot and I drive a car.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Active longevity trends can exert pressure on older people to adhere to models of successful aging, but can also offer opportunities to unlock their potential, gain recognition, and turn their age into an advantage. Participation becomes a tool to overcome identity crises, prolong social life, and postpone aging in a socially acceptable way. In the author’s model, these motives represent the objectives of the social consumer type (“for oneself”), reflecting the aim to preserve self-identity and independence, confirm abilities (Sugarhood et al., 2016), social and enhancement motives (Clary et al., 1998), instrumental (Anheier & Salamon, 1999), personal growth (Azarova & Yanitsky, 2008).

**“You Have Fulfilled Your Mission on This Earth”:
Participation as Realization of Generativity**

Senior activists engage in helping, communication, development, and creative practices, including mentoring. By participating in activities they find compelling and familiar, they feel valuable, recognized, and fulfilled through meaningful social and status motives.

Participant 3: *It is important to pass on knowledge ... I am not just a teacher, I am a senior mentor, it is important for me to talk, to teach children to be active and persistent, to build character. And it is to my advantage: I am in demand and I can be useful.* (Trans. by T. K.)

But above all, assisting others and sharing one's resources and experiences allows for the discovery of purpose beyond one's individual existence.

Participant 11: *In fact, all this fuss is so that when you die, you know that you have fulfilled your mission on this earth ... people find the meaning of life, the opportunity to pass on something of their own, even if not to a loved one, then close in spirit, you know?* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 17: *If your activity is useful, then you are needed and you exist.* (Trans. by T. K.)

By engaging in the project, participants forget their own problems, they feel happy, free, and capable of changing the world. By helping others, learning new, expanding their circle of acquaintances, progressing towards their objectives, and realizing their creative potential, the participants can then share their experiences to create benefits and provide resources for their immediate environment, strangers, city, region, country, and future generations, thereby gaining power and control over their own ageing and mortality.

Participant 4: *In the process of social activity, I become happier ... I want to live and continue to make people happy.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participant 17: *If a man wants to live, bring joy and benefit to people, he will not just sit on a bench saying, "Oh, how bad it is!" Everything depends only on us ... as I want, I will have such a life, and no one can harm or hinder me ... when you feel that people need you ... the energy you receive from them and you give it away, it ... will be with you until your last days.* (Trans. by T. K.)

The desire to help others and contribute to future generations characterizes all of our study's participants and is associated with generativity motives. Erikson (1980) introduced the term "generativity," which entails the yearning to create an enduring legacy (Warburton & Gooch, 2007) and possessing skills to invest in subsequent generations (Polyakova, 2019). Generativity is present in individuals with a background in volunteering and social service (Kramer, 2020), and is a defining trait of older volunteers (Warburton & Gooch, 2007). Additionally, generativity can be observed through leisure activities driven by a desire to make a difference and help others (Maselko et al., 2014). The author describes generativity as a sustained form of intrinsic motivation that integrates personal and socially significant goals, including goals "for oneself," "for others," "together with others," and "for social change." This type of motivation is formed through experiences of participation. Thus, as the author believes, the experience of participation indirectly relates this particular type of

self-motivation to age and forms it throughout the life course. This motivation stems from identification with the status of a social subject and a subject of care, leading individuals to seek out or initiate socially significant activities. As long as this identity persists, a person remains driven to engage in such activities.

Conclusion

In the analysis of the interview material, research questions were answered, as well as a multitude of hypotheses were confirmed. Older leaders and activists involved in sustainable social participation practices in Rostov Oblast are united by higher education, managerial status, leadership, involvement in socially important activities or professions throughout their lives. The participation of older adults in activities is the result of their entire lifespan, thus supporting life course theories.

A diverse range of participation motives were discovered, including moral obligation, available resources, interaction with important individuals and groups, acknowledgment and social validation, elevated status, inclusion, extending social interactions, delaying the effects of aging, and transference of experience for the benefit of others and future generations (generativity). The core motivation of 60+ activists is the desire to be needed and active, to be useful in order to feel their own importance, recognition, and fullness of life. As one quote goes, “if your activity is useful, it means you are needed and you exist,” while another highlights the idea that “as long as you are active, doing something, you are living.”

Some disparities exist in the motivations of leaders and activists. Specifically, activists place great importance on the role of communities and social ties, whereas leaders tend to focus on recognition, status, leadership, freedom, and generativity. The author defines generativity as an integrated form of sustained intrinsic motivation. It emerges from participating in experiences that involve the integration of personal and socially significant goals, such as those accomplished “for oneself,” “for others,” “together with others,” and “for social change.” Generativity is not dependent on age, but is instead linked to socially significant activities that shape a person’s social agency, responsibility, and sense of identity as an activist or helper for the subject of care. As long as this identity is maintained, individuals are driven to participate based on their own self-motivation, fulfilling a moral need, duty, and calling.

For the typology of older activists’ motivations, the model of older people’s social participation motivation as an embodiment of values by Sugarhood et al. (2016) was found to be the most effective. Our data align with the motives highlighted by Prokhorova (2019). The typology model based on participation goals by the author is promising in terms of explanatory potential, but requires further examination. Other typologies are partially confirmed (Anheier & Salamon, 1999; Azarova & Yanitsky, 2008; Clary et al., 1998, etc.). It transpired that they do not pay enough attention to the motives of preserving social identity, status, fulfilling social life, obtaining resources, generativity. However, the identified motives fit into Gerchikov’s typological concept of labor motivation (Gerchikov, 2005a, 2005b). This analysis does not pertain to volunteering, but among the surveyed individuals, the majority reported feelings of

mastery motivation (a desire for independence and the ability to organize their own and others' activities) and patriotic motivation (the importance of feeling needed, being involved in a meaningful cause, and benefiting their country). There are also professional (a desire to maintain or confirm one's own competence) and instrumental (seeking resources, prizes, other assets) kinds of motivation. Gerchikov's model reflects the values of the older generation of Russians and provides valuable insight into both the motivation for achievement and avoidance of failure. In old age, "failure" is not limited to dismissal or reprimand, but also encompasses the likely approach of old age, weakness, lack of demand, inactivity, unsuccessful aging, and social death. The desire to postpone ageing, gain recognition, and prolong social life through practices of social participation is seen as a specific older people's motive is viewed as a distinct motivation. Given that social identity becomes established in old age, and being a leader or activist holds higher status than being a retiree, individuals strive to maintain their previous status, way of life, and level of activity to overcome any identity crisis. Thus, for an aging person who has experience of participation and identity with the status of an active person, social subject (agent, actor), participation becomes a socially desirable way to delayed aging, overcome dyschronosis (Ambarova & Zborovsky, 2017) and identity crisis.

Given the polymotivation and overlap between different types of motives, older activists' participation can be viewed as a way of acquiring benefits, such as obtaining resources, gaining recognition, prolonging social life, and delaying aging, in line with exchange theory. According to Honneth (1991, 2009, 2010) and Fraser (2004), social participation is a way of gaining recognition. Through socially significant activities, older activists overcome the risks of reducing contacts and functionality, barriers of "invisibility" and neglect, acquire the opportunity to act as subjects rather than objects of social relations, and gain recognition that is not ascribed but deserved. Participation offers independence, self-expression, and protection against devaluation, on the condition of *parité de participation* [participation parity] (Fraser, 2004, p. 161). It provides opportunities to share stories, enter the realm of symbolic culture, and cultivate one's sense of self by contributing to family, community, and culture (Zakovorotnaia, 2016, p. 34).

Through the process of social participation, the integration and accumulation of goals and motivations can result in a more intricate structure of motivation because of its dynamic and activity-based nature. Reciprocity is necessary when participating for resources, status, recognition, or moral obligation. The more resources and effort are dedicated to an activity, the greater sense of identification with the activity, community, and the status of helper, activist, and subject is established. Recognition encourages integration with people and communities. The acquisition of goals and motives through participation fosters continued engagement, whereas a lack of participation experience during youth and adulthood is likely to result in disengagement during old age. Consistent with current research on the role of participatory experience (Pevnaya et al., 2023), this finding highlights the need for adaptable tools to involve individuals in socially significant activities. Such activities offer lifelong commitment, integration,

and acknowledgement, while considering participants' unique personal goals, requirements, and familiar surroundings (family, friends, neighborhood care, work, etc.) as exemplified by volunteers with professional knowledge (Obukhov, 2023).

Promising goals for further studying this problem include testing the author's motivation model based on participation goals and Gerchikov's typological work motivation concept on larger sample sizes, analyzing generativity formation mechanisms and their connection to age, and conducting comparative studies on the goals, motives, and values of participation and non-participation, as well as the motivation of older volunteers and individuals without participation experience.

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Appendix

Basic Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

(gender; age; role in practice, form, type of participation; education; labor status; family status and living arrangements; occupation and previous employment)

Participant 1: male; 70; Artist, author of a permanent art exhibition at a residential care home; higher education; retired; widower, lives in a residential care home; teacher of drawing and construction disciplines.

Participant 2: male; 88; Musician, initiator of weekly concerts in a retirement home; higher education; retired; widower, lives in a retirement home for the elderly and disabled; musician, composer, music school principal.

Participant 3: female; 70; Master of weaving, activist of the craftsmen community “Volgodonchanka,” leader of a children’s needlework club, volunteer teacher of mental arithmetic courses, health group participant; higher education; retired; lives with her husband; director of the Social Service Centre.

Participant 4: female; 67; Activist of the Union of Pensioners of the Don and the Council of Veterans, organizer of exhibitions, educational programs, coordinator of interaction with leaders of local self-government bodies; higher education; retired; lives independently; commodity specialist, individual entrepreneur, specialist of the Regional Ministry of Agriculture, public activist.

Participant 5: female; 70; Head of a local self-government body, member of the District Veterans’ Council, Women’s Council, leader of a veterans’ choir; secondary vocational education; retired; lives with her spouse.

Participant 6: female; 65; Founder and director of the “Sodeistvie” Civic Initiatives Foundation and the Active Longevity Community, implements health-saving, health-improving, development and voluntary projects in the industrial settlement; higher education; retired; lives with her husband; teacher.

Participant 7: female; 65; Journalist, author, editor, TV presenter of a regional channel; higher education; retired; lives with her spouse; journalist, editor.

Participant 8: female; 68; Founder and leader of the public organization for assistance in protecting the rights of the victims of the terrorist attack in Volgodonsk (September 16, 1991), initiator of development and health-promoting practices and volunteer activities; higher education; retired.

Participant 9: female; 72; Director of supplementary education, social and legal counselling programmes for people of pre-retirement and retirement age; higher education; working pensioner; lives with her spouse; university lecturer and rector.

Participant 10: male; 67; Member of a self-organized support group of former classmates; retired; living with his wife; university lecturer.

Participant 11: male; 68; Organizer of the Don community of inventors and craftsmen for the development and improvement of technical devices, mentor for children and youth, environmental and political activist; secondary vocational education; retired; lives with his wife; craftsman, inventor.

Participant 12: male; 67; Initiator and leader of the public organization “DOM,” searching for resources and support for large families in the region since 1991, leader of the District Veterans’ Council; higher education, retired, lives with his wife; cinema director, factory worker, father of many children, public activist.

Participant 13: female; 69; Activist of the Orthodox spiritual-educational center, participant of educational, health and pilgrimage practices; secondary vocational education; retired; builder, pension fund specialist.

Participant 14: female; 72; Activist of the Orthodox spiritual-educational center, participant and co-organizer of educational, health and pilgrimage practices; higher education; retired; head of the pension fund department.

Participant 15: female; 76; Leader of “silver” volunteers, initiator and coordinator of educational and developmental, health-saving, creative, voluntary practices, member of the Veterans’ Council in the rural settlement; higher education; retired; widow, lives alone; school principal, community leader.

Participant 16: female; 90; Choirmaster, director of choirs at a boarding facility; higher education; retired; widow, lives in a boarding facility for the elderly and disabled; choirmaster, musician.

Participant 17: female; 68; Activist of the “University of the Third Age” in a rural area, artist of a singing and dancing group, participant of educational, health, and creative initiatives; higher education; retired; head of a department of a social service center.

Participant 18: female, 73, Activist of the “University of the Third Age” in a rural area, participant of educational, developmental, health and creative initiatives, tourist trips; retired.