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From Potential to Practice: Seneficiency as a Sociopolitical Strategy for Activating Older Adults' Generativity, Inclusion, and Social Recognition

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Abstract

In the context of “liquid modernity,” older adults’ social inclusion is challenged by weakening support networks. This study examines generativity—the capacity to contribute to future generations—as a vital component of active aging. The aim is to analyze generative interests and opportunities to bridge the structural deficit that prevents seniors from being recognized as active social subjects. Adopting a qualitative single-case-study design, research was conducted via focus groups with 17 retired adults (aged 65–75 years) from urban and rural settings in Jaén, Spain. Data collection followed a semi-structured script, and transcripts were systematically processed using ATLAS.ti 23 software for thematic content analysis to ensure methodological rigor. The results indicate a significant interest in mentorship and transmitting “experiential wisdom”. However, systemic barriers such as agism and a lack of adapted institutional channels constitute a “structural lag”. These obstacles hinder the transition of generative desire into concrete social action, often resulting in wasted human and social capital. The study proposes “Seneficiency” (Planned Generative Efficacy) as a strategic model to transform senior potential into active social capital. It advocates for public policies to transition from welfare-based objectives toward creating formal channels for sociopolitical participation, ensuring that older adults’ contributions are recognized within sustainable community development.

Keywords: generativity; older people; social participation; social inclusion; civic engagement; planned generative efficacy; seneficiency; sustainability



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1. Introduction

In the current demographic context, the social inclusion of older people constitutes a growing challenge. This phenomenon is marked by social transformations that tend to weaken traditional support networks, a process conceptually framed within the “liquid modernity” described by Zygmunt Bauman [1]. In this era, volatility, social fragmentation, and the precariousness of bonds generate a dissociation between the productive potential of the group and the structure of available opportunities. However, the social participation of older people presents itself as a key factor to strengthen the social fabric and improve their well-being, acting as a search for solidity and permanence in the face of uncertainty, in line with Activity Theory in aging, which links social commitment with psychosocial well-being [2]. In fact, social participation is configured as a right

and a civic duty, constituting the backbone of active citizenship that pursues real engagement in collective decisions for social transformation [3].

To address this concept rigorously, a consensual and interdisciplinary definition has been adopted that emphasizes the subject's intentionality, in line with recent conceptual analyses identifying the essential attributes of participation [4]. According to Levasseur et al. [5], social participation is defined as: "a person's involvement in activities providing interactions with others in community life and in meaningful shared spaces, which evolves according to time and available resources, and is based on the social context and what individuals wish and what is meaningful to them" (p. 2). Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that the actual capacity of older adults to participate is conditioned by social inequality, as the diversity and intensity of practices are affected by socioeconomic factors and health determinants [6].

The dimension of meaning underscored by this definition is crucial. Indeed, the analysis of aging policies has identified the need to define and actively promote meaningful participation for older people, highlighting that meaning is an indispensable element that goes beyond mere activity or contribution [7]. It is precisely this dimension that allows linking participation with the construct of generativity.

Generativity, which Erikson [8] defined as "the interest in establishing and guiding the next generation," is the psychosocial task par excellence of adulthood. It is articulated with the human need to transcend the self and leave a legacy [9], and is considered the essential component for active aging, providing vital purpose under an ethic of "joint responsibility" [10]. It is imperatively expressed in concrete social action [11], channeled through multiple avenues, with cultural participation being a fundamental mechanism for social inclusion and the transmission of knowledge and heritage [12].

Despite the inherent value of generativity, its full expression is hindered by a fundamental mismatch in social design. The central problem lies in the structural lag [13], an evident gap between the generative impulse of older people and the scarcity of recognized social roles that allow them to exercise it. This disconnection has direct consequences: by not being recognized by the social structure as an active subject and protagonist of actions and decisions [14], an older person is confined to inferior statuses of contribution (such as conventional or stagnant) despite their intrinsic motivation [15]. In essence, this structural deficit frustrates the effective transfer of knowledge [16] and limits their potential for contribution. To achieve successful aging, therefore, the findings suggest a need to reorient the approach towards gain and social utility in this life stage [17].

Given the urgency of addressing social inclusion from a perspective of asset revaluation, the need to develop a strategic model of social inclusion that gives operability to generativity is postulated. The concept of Senefficiency [18] arises as the strategic evolution and lever for inclusion, aiming to transform the generative impulse into a planned and visible action that instrumentalizes empowerment (combating the perception of being undervalued) and facilitates community cohesion [14]. Therefore, social intervention is positioned to act as an agent of change, facilitating contexts of participation where experience is transformed into social capital and "vital pedagogy" [19] and translating prosocial motivation [5] into effective social inclusion. In this sense, Social Work emerges as the key discipline for mediation between the generative potential of citizenship and institutional barriers, facilitating channels of active participation for social and democratic construction [3].

Faced with this situation, the main need of this research lies in the urgency to describe a model of generativity for older people centered on meaningful social participation and contribution. The concept of Senefficiency [18] arises as the strategic evolution of generativity necessary to guarantee its effective social contribution in old age. Senefficiency is presented as the strategic evolution of generativity in the life stage of old age, transcending its phenomenology as a simple individual psychological task towards a sociopolitical and

operational dimension [18]. This neologism is based on the capacity to transform the vast wisdom accumulated by older people into planned social utility, thus conceiving this population group as valuable dynamic social capital requiring effective management.

To clarify the theoretical progression that informs this research, Table 1 synthesizes the shift from classical psychological models of generativity to the strategic framework of Senefficiency. This conceptual roadmap illustrates how individual motivation is articulated through community action and institutional co-responsibility to achieve full social inclusion in later life.

Table 1. Theoretical models of generativity: from psychological imperative to Senefficiency strategy.

Approach/Author	Central Concept	Key Dimensions	Type of Contribution	Relation to Social Generativity	Relation to Senefficiency
Psychological Models Erikson [8]; McAdams [10]; Bradley [11,15]	Generativity as adult development task	“Motives, commitment, actions, narrative”	Psychological	Describes internal structure of generative process	Aging as accumulation of useful knowledge
Kruse & Schmitt [10]	Generativity as shared responsibility	“Participation, intergenerationality, social ethics”	“Psychosocial, moral”	Frames generativity in terms of inactive aging	Recognizes social value of older knowledge
Villar [17]	Generativity as criterion of successful aging	“Meaningful goals, eudaimonic well-being, growth”	“Psychological, development-oriented”	Defines motivation and generative meaning	Motivational base to express Senefficiency
Gomá [14]	Framework of community action	“Mutual support, reciprocity, citizenship, transformation”	Community and territorial	Provides context where generativity is exercised	Offers “natural stage” for Senefficiency
Amezcuca & García [18]	Senefficiency (efficiency of senescence)	“Wisdom, guidance, support, useful experience”	Social and relational	Concrete manifestation of generativity in old age	Conceptual core: social value of experience

The central purpose of Senefficiency is twofold: on the one hand, it aims to overcome the structural lag through the real exercise of institutional co-responsibility; on the other, it aims to achieve this through the creation of formal and sustainable channels ensuring that active contribution is rewarded with the necessary sociopolitical recognition and thus a self-perception that allows for “elder pride” [18]. Thus, this model guarantees that the powerful motivating force of generativity effectively transforms into an engine of social cohesion and community development.

In line with this need, the present work analyzes the opportunities and interests regarding generativity among older people in a Spanish city, aiming to describe a model of generativity for older people centered on meaningful social participation and contribution. The research employed a qualitative methodology based on focus groups, the results of which evidence significant interest in mentorship and cultural transmission, while also highlighting barriers. The study concludes by underscoring the importance of promoting generativity as a sociopolitical strategy for inclusion, recognizing its capacity to strengthen social cohesion and the development of fairer, more inclusive, and sustainable communities.

The main purpose of this research is to analyze the opportunities and interests regarding generativity among older adults in the context of a Spanish city, specifically in the province of Jaén, Andalusia, covering both urban and rural environments. The qualitative design was selected to achieve a deep exploration of the motivations, perceptions, and limitations of the participants. Beyond a simple technical evaluation, this work focused on identifying the most significant aspects for older adults in their processes of active social participation in the community in which they live their lives.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- To identify existing opportunities and how older adults can actively contribute to the development of their communities, attending to their interests and immediate needs.
- To conduct a detailed and enriching exploration of motivations, perceptions, and limitations for approaching community participation.

- To evaluate the barriers and facilitators of active participation, analyzing how social participation contributes to emotional well-being and strengthens older adults' role as valuable and active members of society.
- To propose specific and adapted recommendations for the design of public policies, community programs, and intervention strategies that foster the social participation of this age group, taking into account the particularities of the environments in which people live.

2. Materials and Methods

This research employed a dual-phase methodological approach to provide a comprehensive analysis of senior generativity. First, a narrative literature review was conducted, applying systematic review procedures to ensure methodological rigor, transparency, and the minimization of bias. Although systematic steps were followed in the search and selection process, the review adopts a narrative and thematic approach to synthesize existing evidence and identify theoretical gaps regarding social participation in old age. Second, a qualitative empirical phase based on focus groups was implemented to explore the specific motivations, perceptions, and barriers of older adults in the province of Jaén. These two methodologies were strategically integrated: the review established the foundational framework and directly informed the design of the semi-structured focus group script, ensuring that the empirical data collection addressed key trends while remaining grounded in the participants' lived realities.

A qualitative single-case-study methodological design was adopted. This approach was selected for its suitability in understanding complex social phenomena—such as generativity and Senefficiency—within their real-life context. The “case” was territorially delimited in the province of Jaén (Spain), selected as a paradigmatic scenario of demographic aging in intermediate areas that combine urban and rural centers. This approach allowed for the analysis of not only individual narratives but also how local sociopolitical structures condition participation, seeking analytical generalization (theoretical transferability) rather than statistical generalization.

The methodology was based on conducting focus groups (FGs), following a literature review, which contributed to the configuration of the research framework. Data collection focused on analyzing technical efficacy, identifying needs, and manifesting the individual preferences of the participants, aiming to obtain results that can serve as a pilot for future research in both rural and urban environments of other populations. The goal was to obtain a detailed understanding of the opportunities and barriers to community participation and the development of more inclusive and sustainable communities.

The research commenced with a comprehensive review of the existing literature on generativity-related interests among older adults. This was followed by a qualitative phase involving FGs conducted with older participants from both urban and rural settings in the province of Jaén (Andalusia, Spain). Afterward, the analysis of the FGs was carried out, determining the results of this study and the importance of designing policies and programs that drive effective social participation of older adults from the generativity approach and active contribution to collective well-being and the development of more inclusive and sustainable communities. The content analysis used the ATLAS.ti 23 program, a powerful software tool for the qualitative analysis of large bodies of textual, graphic, audio, and video data [20]. The methodological combination provides a comprehensive view that addresses everything from literature identification to the needs and perceptions of older adults. This feedback improves the validity and practical relevance of the results. Furthermore, this methodological approach aimed to identify best practices in the culture of generativity and configure active proposals for the collective, inclusive, and sustainable well-being of communities.

2.1. Literature Review

In this first phase, the objective was to analyze and synthesize the existing body of evidence on generativity and social and civic participation in the older adult population. To carry this out, a narrative review was conducted by applying systematic literature review procedures, a strategy that ensures greater transparency and the minimization of potential biases through an explicit and reproducible approach. For this, the procedure established by other referenced authors was used [21,22]. Specifically, the PRISMA 2020 standards [23,24] were utilized to guide the identification of the eligibility criteria, information sources, search strategy, selection process, data collection process, and data list. While these systematic steps were followed to enhance methodological rigor, the primary purpose was to construct a thematic and narrative framework to identify theoretical gaps and inform the subsequent design of the empirical phase. All of this facilitated the identification of prevailing trends, prior approaches, perceived benefits, and related challenges. The purpose was to assess the effectiveness and benefits produced within the citizenry, both for older adults and the rest of the citizenry in parallel, and thanks to intergenerationality, the improvement of emotional well-being and the promotion of socialization between older adults and the rest of the citizenry.

This review encompasses research on the social participation, civic participation, and social inclusion of older adults, which was incorporated into the final methodological phase, and facilitated the configuration of the work script in the realization of the subsequent focus groups. Although systematic review procedures were applied to enhance methodological rigor, the aim was not to present a systematic review per se, but rather to gather supporting evidence through a narrative and thematic approach. Accordingly, the study adopts a narrative review approach [25], focusing on trends, prior approaches, and identified gaps that are most relevant to the broader research context, rather than on an exhaustive analysis of all retrieved studies.

Extensive searches were carried out across academic databases in the fields of social sciences, health, and sustainability, as well as in specialized journals and relevant conference proceedings. We used the Scopus, PubMed, and ProQuest databases. The systematic inquiry was executed using descriptors and combinations, such as “generativity”, “civic engagement”, “older people”, “social participation”, “citizen participation”, “social inclusion”, “elderly”, “loneliness”, “well-being”, and analogous terminology. Filters were established to restrict the selection to research written in English or Spanish, without temporal restrictions. By way of illustration, the specific search syntax utilized within the Scopus database is presented as follows: “TITLE-ABS-KEY [(“generativity” OR “social participation” OR “citizen participation” OR “social inclusion”) AND (“older adult” OR “elderly” OR “senior” OR “older people”)]”.

The studies incorporated into this review satisfied the subsequent eligibility criteria:

- Focus on generativity or collective well-being.
- Participation of older adults as the focal subject group.
- Relevance to social participation, community participation, civic participation, emotional well-being, or socialization.
- Varied methodologies, including clinical trials, qualitative studies, quasi-experimental designs, and systematic reviews.

The selection process was executed independently by two blind reviewers, who initially screened titles and abstracts to exclude non-pertinent research. Following this, an exhaustive analysis of the full-text manuscripts was conducted to establish their eligibility for final integration into the literature review. Pertinent data were systematically retrieved from the selected literature, encompassing variables such as authorship, publication timeline, study design, cohort size, population-specific interventions, primary findings, and limitations. A standardized data collection form was employed. The synthesis of information was achieved via narrative and thematic methodologies, which facilitated the detection of emerging patterns and the categorization of data into core themes. Ultimately,

this consolidation of prior work established a robust theoretical foundation that informed the research design and contextualized the outcomes, facilitating the configuration of the work script for the development of the focus groups.

2.2. Focus Group-Based Research

2.2.1. Participants and Setting

The demographic cohort constituting this sample was intentionally recruited to exhibit analogous profiles and attributes, thereby guaranteeing the inclusion of diverse socioeconomic and cultural experiences. The primary aim is to enrich the understanding of the intersection between generativity, social and civic participation, sustainability, and social inclusion in this demographic group, which comprises a total of $n = 17$ individuals. All subjects considered were within the age range of 65 to 75 years; had diverse educational, training, cultural, and professional backgrounds; were currently retired; had decision-making and critical capacity; and actively participated in their communities at the time of the FGs.

The study expanded its analytical scope by conducting two separate focus groups held on 25 February and 21 April 2025, each lasting approximately 1 h and 45 min. One FG was made up of participants from an urban environment and the other of participants from a rural environment, composed respectively of nine and eight participants, thus forming a cohesive sample of 17 people ($n = 17$). The composition of these groups was carefully crafted, considering educational and cultural backgrounds to guarantee a set of diverse and representative perspectives. The complete participant pool exhibited a medium-to-high socioeconomic and cultural status, characterized by individuals who had previously held mid-to-high-level professional positions.

- FG1: Urban profile group, older adults residing independently, with physical and mental autonomy, and with decision-making and critical capacity. These were active people in the life of their communities in an urban environment in the city of Jaén, comprising 5 people between 65 and 69 years old (55.5%) and 4 people between 70 and 75 years old (44.5%). The gender distribution was 5 females (55.5%) and 4 males (44.5%).
- FG2: Rural profile group, from various localities. Similarly, this group was formed of older adults living independently in rural environments, with an equitable gender distribution. In total, 3 people (37.5%) were aged between 65 and 69 years, and 5 people (62.5%) were aged between 70 and 75 years. The gender distribution was 4 females (50%) and 4 males (50%). The rest of the criteria were met for both groups.

Through the FGs, a space was provided to facilitate interpersonal interaction and collective deliberation regarding experiences of active participation in society and habitual environments of residence. This facilitated the identification of recurrent patterns, the contrast of divergent perceptions, and the examination of group dynamics. The primary thematic areas investigated included innovative proposals for proactive generativity, such as mentorship and the transmission of life experience, as well as the desire to share knowledge and life lessons. This adaptive research design facilitated adaptation to unforeseen responses, enhancing the comprehension of the complexities of contemporary society in older adults.

Following the Declaration of Helsinki, an ethical review was conducted by the University of Jaén, but approval was waived for this study due to the fundamental principle of non-intrusive observation. All subjects provided written and verbal informed consent, thereby guaranteeing strict confidentiality and the preservation of their individual rights. The consent process was formalized in writing with the direct facilitation of the interviewer, who provided a detailed oral explanation and performed continuous comprehension checks to ensure participant understanding. Beyond securing verbal agreement and verifying clarity, each participant formally endorsed the informed consent documentation via signature. Furthermore, the inquiry was executed with sensitivity and empathy regarding the

participants' experiences, ensuring that their perspectives were faithfully and accurately represented within the final results. To ensure privacy, all personal data were anonymized using alphanumeric codes.

2.2.2. Assessments

The primary assessment tool was a semi-structured focus group script (originally detailed in Appendix A), which was developed based on a prior literature review. The instrument was designed as a focused interview to analyze responses to specific research situations. It aimed to identify technical efficacy, social needs, and individual preferences across four central dimensions: (1) internal motivations and the search for purpose; (2) current generative contributions and mentorship; (3) structural and institutional barriers; and (4) strategic proposals for social inclusion through the Seneficiency model.

2.2.3. Design and Procedure

Once the bibliographic literature review had been carried out and the parameters or characteristics to be studied in our immediate environment had been obtained, we decided on the design and establishment of FGs, through key informants, as a research and data collection technique regarding the opinions, beliefs, perceptions, interests, and attitudes of a group of people involved in our object of study [26]. This information collection technique is one that has received a great deal of attention in recent times regarding its use in different disciplines, in the analysis of the effects of mass media usage, and in the discussion of important problems affecting specific human conglomerates [27]. FGs emerge as a focused interview designed to analyze the responses and reactions of participants to specific research situations or questions. Their function centers on essential aspects describing procedures to satisfy criteria of specificity, range, and depth in an interview [28]. FGs favor the valuation and interaction of participants, stimulating a dialogue on topics that might otherwise not yield information. Likewise, FGs allow for deepening and understanding behaviors in certain contexts. This technique is used in qualitative research, and its development requires a prior study of the aspects to be treated during the course of the group [29], as was carried out in the development of this research.

In accordance with these premises, the present study adheres to a qualitative methodological framework, requiring a dialogical posture. Within this paradigm, beliefs, mindsets, cultural myths, ingrained prejudices, and emotions are utilized as fundamental analytical units to synthesize knowledge regarding the human reality [30]. Based on this, the present investigation endeavors to scrutinize the lived experiences, subjective perceptions, and intricate social dynamics of older adults with heterogeneous requirements concerning active participation in their communities. By undertaking this inquiry, the study aims to address the multifaceted needs of these individuals to actively contribute to the collective well-being of communities, ultimately improving their quality of life. The methodology employed, through active participation in the development of two FGs, allows for a complete and participatory exploration of the real interaction of the older adult population in urban and rural environments in their communities and society. This approach facilitates an in-depth exploration and the integration of individual perspectives within the realms of trust and confidentiality.

The sessions followed a standardized protocol comprising (Appendix A): (1) an ethical briefing with data anonymization and recording consent; (2) a leisure-based icebreaker; (3) discussion on community engagement and its barriers; (4) reflections on sharing accumulated wisdom; (5) proposals for specific roles in education, traditions, or care; and (6) a final summary for participant validation. All sessions were audio-recorded and supported by field notes to ensure thematic accuracy and data saturation.

2.3. Analysis

The qualitative data derived from the sessions were subjected to analytical processing via ATLAS.ti 23 software, which served as the central repository for primary documentation, including verbatim transcripts, codes, memos, and comprehensive code groups. The consolidation of findings was executed through the application of uniform categorization criteria. This synthesis of data culminated in the establishment of thematic groups, which are further elucidated in the Section 3 of the present study. The analytical process utilized a thematic framework, initiating with open coding to discern emergent patterns and conceptual categories. Furthermore, the collaborative involvement of several researchers guaranteed a multifaceted and contextualized interpretation of the gathered data.

To ensure the rigor, transparency, and credibility of the qualitative reporting, this study followed the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) guidelines. A detailed breakdown of the 32 items regarding the research team, study design, and analysis process is provided in Table 2, demonstrating adherence to international standards for qualitative inquiry.

Table 2. Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ): 32-Item checklist for the study on senior generativity and Senefficiency.

N°	Item	Description/Details
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity		
1	Interviewer/facilitator	The focus groups were conducted by researchers from the University of Jaén and Alicante (A.R.-M. and T.A.-A.).
2	Credentials	Authors are affiliated university professors/researchers, typically holding PhDs.
3	Occupation	Academic researchers and experts in Social Work and community intervention.
4	Gender	The research team comprised both male and female researchers.
5	Experience and training	The team has expertise in qualitative methodology and aging studies.
6	Relationship established	Relationship established with participants through key informants and community associations.
7	Participant knowledge	Participants were informed about the study's purpose through written and oral informed consent.
8	Researcher characteristics	The study was driven by a sociopolitical interest in senior generativity and the "Senefficiency" model.
Domain 2: Study design		
9	Methodological orientation	Qualitative single case study and thematic content analysis.
10	Sampling	Purposive sampling.
11	Method of approach	Recruitment via key informants and associations.
12	Sample size	n = 17 participants.
13	Non-participation	Three individuals were unable to participate—one from the urban group and two from the rural group—as they could not attend on the day of the focus group sessions.
14	Setting of data collection	Urban (Jaén capital) and rural environments within the province of Jaén.
15	Presence of non-participants	Sessions were conducted in controlled focus group settings.
16	Description of sample	Retired adults (65–75 years), autonomous, diverse professional backgrounds.
17	Interview guide	A semi-structured working script was used (see Appendix A).
18	Repeat interviews	No; single session per group.
19	Audio/visual recording	Audio recording was used for data collection.
20	Field notes	Gestures and non-verbal expressions were documented through observational notes.
21	Duration	Approximately 1 h and 45 min per session.
22	Data saturation	Data saturation was achieved and is discussed in Section 2.2. Thematic analysis of the 17 participants showed high confluence between urban and rural groups, identifying consistent patterns in motivations and barriers.
23	Transcripts returned	Transcripts were not returned to participants for comment or correction.

Table 2. *Cont.*

N°	Item	Description/Details
Domain 3: Analysis and findings		
24	Number of data coders	Two researchers (T.A.-A. and A.R.-M.).
25	Description of coding tree	Four major central themes were identified, with specific subthemes described in the Section 3.
26	Derivation of themes	Themes were derived from the data using open coding and identifying emerging patterns.
27	Software	ATLAS.ti 23 software.
28	Participant checking	Participant checking was not performed.
29	Quotations presented	Extensive illustrative quotes from participants are included with alphanumeric codes (e.g., [GF01P08]).
30	Consistency	High consistency between the raw data (quotes) and the presented themes.
31	Clarity of major themes	Major themes are clearly defined in Sections 3.1–3.4.
32	Clarity of minor themes	Minor themes and subthemes (e.g., barriers, motivations) are detailed in the results.

Regarding the adequacy of the sample size and following COREQ criterion 22 (data saturation), the thematic analysis confirmed a high degree of confluence between the perspectives of the urban and rural focus groups. This thematic stability indicated that the core patterns—specifically concerning generative motivations and structural barriers—had been sufficiently captured within the two groups. Consequently, it was determined that the sample ($n = 17$) reached the point of saturation required for the study’s exploratory aims, ensuring the credibility and internal validity of the findings without the need for additional participants.

3. Results

The purpose was to reflect on the ways in which older people contribute to society and the role they feel they have in their community. By inquiring about their experiences and opinions, the aim was to understand how and in what they participate and how their participation opportunities can be improved. The research focuses on participation from the concept of “generativity,” defined as the desire and capacity of older people to contribute to the well-being of younger generations through the transmission of values, knowledge, and experiences [8].

The thematic analysis of the focus groups allowed for the emergence of four large central themes addressing: (1) the internal motivation of older adults, (2) the diversity of their contributions, (3) the obstacles limiting their participation, and (4) strategic proposals to reverse the structural deficit.

To enhance analytical clarity and provide a concise overview of the qualitative findings, Table 3 presents a synthesis of the thematic analysis. This table summarizes the four central themes identified—motivations, contributions, barriers, and strategic pathways—along with their corresponding subthemes and representative illustrative quotes from the participants. The following subsections offer a more detailed narrative exploration and interpretative depth for each of these core areas.

Table 3. Synthesis of qualitative findings: themes, subthemes, and illustrative quotes.

Main Theme	Subthemes/Categories	Descriptive Summary	Illustrative Quotes
The Generative Potential: Motivation and Meaningful Participation	- Psychological Motivation - Prosocial Motivation - Reinforcing Factors	Generativity is identified as an intrinsic need and a vital pillar of identity. It is driven by the search for meaning, purpose, and the desire to feel useful after retirement.	"I receive much more than I give. . . that helps a lot. . . participating in activities." [GF01P08] "What motivates me most is feeling useful. . . I felt valuable again." [GF02P06]
Current Contributions: Diversity of Generative Practices	- Intergenerational Generativity - Care & Community Cohesion - Civic Engagement	Older adults act as active social subjects through the transmission of "experiential wisdom," formal/informal mentorship, family care, and active involvement in local governance and associations.	"Many young people. . . come to ask me about things from the neighborhood's history. . . It's like being an improvised 'mentor'." [GF02P01] "I contributed a vision of what would really work for older people. . . shaded areas." [GF02P07]
Structural Barriers to Contribution: The Social Deficit	- Undervaluation & Agism - Institutional Blockage - Personal & Social Limitations	Significant obstacles hinder contribution, including agist perceptions (seniors seen as a burden), bureaucratic hurdles, and a "structural lag" that results in "wasted wisdom".	". . . old people are a burden. . . they are those who are no longer useful and who have to be done for and maintained." [GF01P02] "I feel that there is a lot of wasted wisdom. . . society didn't see us as a valuable resource." [GF02P03]
Pathways to Inclusion: Strategic Proposals and Senefficiency	- Operational & Pedagogical Proposals - Paradigm Shift Strategies - Senefficiency Model	Participants propose formalizing generative roles through "senior talent banks" and institutional reforms that recognize senior potential as dynamic social capital for the common good.	". . . there should be municipal or regional offices that function as 'senior talent banks'." [GF02P03]
The Generative Potential: Motivation and Meaningful Participation	- Psychological Motivation - Prosocial Motivation - Reinforcing Factors	Generativity is identified as an intrinsic need and a vital pillar of identity. It is driven by the search for meaning, purpose, and the desire to feel useful after retirement.	"I receive much more than I give. . . that helps a lot. . . participating in activities." [GF01P08] "What motivates me most is feeling useful. . . I felt valuable again." [GF02P06]

3.1. The Generative Potential: Motivation and Meaningful Participation

This first theme addresses the motivations, perceptions, and interests of older people to participate socially, evidencing that generativity is an intrinsic need and a vital pillar of their identity, directly related to the search for meaningful participation in their community.

3.1.1. Psychological Motivation: Meaning, Purpose, and Intrinsic Well-Being

Generativity is primarily driven by the search for meaning and purpose after retirement, translating into intrinsic personal satisfaction. This vital need aligns with the *inner desire* of the model developed by McAdams and de St. Aubin [31]. Participants report that actively involving themselves in community life allows them to "feel good" and overcome difficult personal situations [GF01P08], even going so far as to "receive much more than they give" [GF01P08], evidencing a "positive selfishness" in contribution.

[GF01P08]: "[. . .] I like collaborating in-with projects and associations, uh, maybe it's also out of selfishness, right? And that, hm, well to feel good, right? To feel better, because it is true that I hear around there, I do such a thing altruistically and so on, say, I receive much more. Well yes, that is true, I receive much more than I give, when they have when they have a difficult personal situation, well that helps a lot. . . participating in activities [. . .]."

3.1.2. Prosocial Motivation: Utility, Legacy, and Collective Responsibility

The central motivational force is the need to feel useful, to see their time and dedication translate into a significant contribution for other people [GF02P06]. This utility is directly linked to the transfer of knowledge and experience, understood as a way to

transcend and leave a legacy [GF02P03]. This commitment is based on care towards others [GF02P04], generosity, and human connection, essential elements for mutual support and social cohesion [14].

[GF02P06]: “[...] What motivates me the most is feeling useful. It is a need, truly. Since I retired, at first I felt a void, as if suddenly my life lost part of its purpose. But by getting involved in volunteering, accompanying these people, knitting the blankets, I felt valuable again.”

[GF02P03]: “[...] I feel I have experience and knowledge, and I don’t want them to be lost. I want to share them. It is a way of transcending, of leaving something behind. And seeing how new generations become interested in what you can teach them, that gives you a lot of energy.”

[GF01P11]: “[...] The reason is that I feel I must do it because we all need support and affection at some point and as a conscientious human being it is my obligation and my satisfaction to do so.”

3.1.3. Factors Reinforcing Contribution

Motivation is sustained and renewed by reinforcement factors that consolidate relational satisfaction and tangible impact:

- **Tangible Results and Future Vision:** The importance of seeing tangible results derived from their actions acts as a stimulus renewing their energies [GF02P01], complemented by a vision oriented towards leaving a positive mark on future generations [GF02P07].

[GF02P07]: “[...] I am motivated by a vision of the future. Thinking that what we do today will have a positive impact on future generations. It is about leaving a mark. Urbanism is something that remains, and knowing that I have contributed to creating a better space for everyone—that is very rewarding.”

- **Intellectual Stimulus and Sense of Belonging:** Participation is valued as a source of intellectual motivation, offering the possibility to debate, exchange ideas, and learn [GF02P07, GF02P08]. Furthermore, human connection and the feeling of being part of something larger than individuality provide deep emotional satisfaction [GF02P04].

3.2. Current Contributions: Diversity of Generative Practices

The results demonstrate that older people are active subjects in their communities, deploying their generative activities in three key spheres that strengthen the social fabric.

3.2.1. Intergenerational Generativity and Transmission of Knowledge

Coinciding with previous studies [6,7], older people channel their accumulated experience (experiential wisdom) through formal and informal mentorship, thus embodying interest in the next generation [31]. This sphere includes cultural participation as a fundamental vehicle for social inclusion [12].

- **Formal and Educational Mentorship:** Includes professional volunteering (e.g., advising young entrepreneurs through social entities) [GF01P02] and enriching the academic field (University for Seniors).

[GF01P04]: “[...] One of the association’s mottos is: everything that society has given me throughout my life, why should it be lost when I retire? What I must do is give back to society what society has given to me. How can I do that? One of the ways we can do it is exactly what we are doing.”

- **Informal and Cultural Transmission:** The function of improvised mentorship is exercised in the family and neighborhood sphere [GF02P01]. Additionally, interest in the

preservation of historical and cultural memory (neighborhood identity and trades) is highlighted [GF02P03].

[GF02P01]: “[...] Many young people in the neighborhood, and not so young, sometimes come to ask me about things from the neighborhood’s history, or about some problem they have. [...] I give them advice based on my life experience, not just what I know from books. [...] It’s like being an improvised “mentor”, right?”

3.2.2. Care, Social Support, and Community Cohesion

This area covers essential emotional and practical support contributions at personal and community levels, acting as a network of mutual support and reciprocity [14].

- Family and Reciprocal Care: Older adults assume vital tasks such as raising grandchildren and accompanying dependent spouses [GF01P06]. Although crucial, this labor is perceived as invisible and undervalued.
- Accompaniment Volunteering: Support extends to other older people in situations of isolation or unwanted loneliness, including initiatives like “guardian neighbors” programs [GF02P01] and workshops to reduce the digital divide [GF01P04].

[GF02P01]: “[...] Lately, we have been focusing heavily on a ‘Guardian Neighbors’ program for elderly people living alone. It consists of giving them one call a day, a weekly visit if possible, just to see that they are doing well. It’s something simple, yet fundamental.”

3.2.3. Civic Engagement and Institutional Protagonism

This sphere demonstrates the will to influence the improvement of collective living conditions, which is fundamental to reaching the status of inclusivity [15] and civic protagonism [14].

- Formal and Associative Participation: Active collaboration in social volunteer entities (Red Cross and Caritas) [GF01P08] and a wide range of associations (cultural, neighborhood, and human rights) [GF01P05].
- Local Governance: Direct involvement in the construction of shared knowledge and culture through participation in municipal working tables on participatory urbanism [GF02P07] or leading community photography projects.

[GF02P07]: “[...] I am at the city council working table on participatory urbanism. The truth is that it is a very enriching experience. [...] Because of my age and my life experience in the neighborhood, I think I contributed a vision of what would really work for older people, for example, benches with backrests or shaded areas.”

3.3. Structural Barriers to Contribution: The Social Deficit

Despite the strong desire and capacity manifested, recurrent obstacles emerge that limit their full participation, revealing that generativity is hindered by a web of structural barriers (structural failure) and not by a lack of will.

3.3.1. Undervaluation, Agism, and Consumption Logic

The main identified problem is the perception of undervaluation and agism towards older people. Testimonies reflect that society perceives them as a burden [GF02P03] [18] and not as a resource, reducing them to the condition of “old people” whose utility is exhausted [GF01P02] [32]. This feeling is reinforced by the logic of the economic system based on consumption, which disincentivizes unpaid contribution, reinforcing the idea that “what costs nothing is not valued” [GF01P01].

[GF01P02]: “[...] what is the majority concept of society regarding the elderly? Well, old people are a burden, they are the grandpas, uh, they are those who are no longer useful and who have to be done for and maintained.”

[GF02P03]: “[...] I feel that there is a lot of wasted wisdom, older people who stay at home because they don’t know where or how to offer themselves, or who believe that ‘they are no longer useful’. It’s as if society didn’t see us as a valuable resource, but rather as a burden.”

3.3.2. Structural and Institutional Blockage

The deficit of co-responsibility [10] translates into a systematic blockage of generative action at the institutional level.

- **Structural Failure and Scarcity of Means:** The main criticism is directed at the scarcity of adequate means, generating the sensation of “wasted wisdom” [GF02P03] and is directly framed within the concept of structural lag [13].
- **Resistance and Bureaucratic Barriers:** Participants consider that institutions like universities and city councils do not believe in their potential beyond the consumption of services [GF02P08]. Added to this are bureaucratic hurdles and administrative slowness [GF02P07] that disincentivize participation.

[GF02P08]: “[...] the slowness of administrative processes. Decisions take a long time to be made, and sometimes people get discouraged. And then there’s the lack of political continuity. A project that starts under one government can be halted by the next, and that is frustrating.”

3.3.3. Personal Limitations and Inequality in Access

The findings reflect limitations of a personal and social nature that restrict community involvement, in line with the concept of social inequality [6].

- **Main Caregiver Role:** The practical and emotional burden of the caregiver role for dependent family members [GF01P06] drastically reduces opportunities for involvement in broader community projects.

[GF01P06]: “[...] My life has changed so much, including the volunteer work I used to do and all that. [...] I’ve reached a point where I almost need help more than I can give it. [...] And so, I have to make up for that effort during that time—I know many couples, friends, acquaintances, and even strangers, who handle it differently; they can vent in other ways or focus on other things. But me, I have to dedicate that time to this [...]”

- **Health, Resources, and Apathy:** Health and energy limitations, physical tiredness [GF02P01], and the scarcity of resources and funding in associations [GF02P05] were recognized. Added to this is the apathy of other older adults, which discourages those who do wish to get involved [GF02P01].
- **Value Conflicts:** Intergenerational value conflicts (austerity vs. consumerism) and the feeling that young people do not want to listen were identified, obstructing the transmission of the legacy.

3.4. Pathways to Inclusion: Strategic Proposals and the Senefficiency Model

The potential generativity, despite obstacles, is articulated in operational and strategic proposals reflecting a clear will for full social inclusion. These proposals are framed within the Senefficiency model [18], which transforms experience into active planning for the common good.

3.4.1. Operational and Pedagogical Proposals

Participants identified key areas and proposed concrete channels to execute their generative desire:

- **Mentorship and Intergenerational Knowledge:** They propose the transmission of life experience [GF02P03] through the guidance of adolescents [GF01P07] or advising on traditional trades [GF02P05], reversing the sensation of wasted wisdom through the pedagogy of experience [19].

[GF01P07]: “[...] I would like for us to be able to participate in secondary education—not primary school or university, but secondary—when they are teenagers, so we could act as mentors for them; guiding them and helping them through debates among themselves. Specifically, in secondary school, because I see that at those ages, they are a bit ‘stuck’ or unsettled [...]”

- **Care and Social Cohesion:** They propose formalizing the role of emotional support through community care networks or thematic support groups, leveraging the “life wisdom” of older adults [GF02P08].

[GF02P08]: “[...] Knowing how to listen without judging, offering a word of encouragement based on having lived through similar situations. My caregivers’ group is an example. But it’s also about supporting young people with anxiety or depression, or families dealing with illness. It’s a ‘life wisdom’ that isn’t learned from books.”

- **Sustainability and Practical Services:** Practical initiatives such as repair workshops [GF01P03], recovery of urban gardens [GF02P02], and preservation of historical and cultural memory [GF02P03].

3.4.2. Strategies for a Cultural and Political Paradigm Shift

To fully leverage their contributions, strategies addressing the structural failure were highlighted:

- **Change of Mindset and Cultural Visibility:** The fundamental strategy is a profound change in the social representation of old age [GF02P01], conceiving older people as a valuable asset. Public recognition and the visibility of their work is demanded, especially unpaid volunteering [GF01P01], fostering elder pride [18].
- **Institutional and Governance Reforms:** The creation of formal and sustainable channels (e.g., “senior talent banks” [GF02P03] or municipal offices) capable of channeling potential is claimed, as well as the integration of older adults into decision-making processes, and thus into local governance, through advisory councils or the creation of Schools of Citizen Participation [GF02P01].
- **Humanization of Key Professions:** The incorporation of humanization protocols and care ethics in healthcare and education is proposed [GF01P04].

[GF01P04]: “[...] I understand that we should demand another type of protocol, in addition to the technical one, regarding the issue of humanization—introducing a subject in education and healthcare on the matter. I’ve said it could be that way, but just as that [technical] protocol exists—because you have to follow it no matter what, and if you don’t, you’re called out and sanctioned in some way—there should also be this other protocol regarding the humanization of professions [...]”

[GF02P03]: “[...] society should create clearer and more accessible structures and channels so that our contribution is effective. We cannot depend only on the goodwill of associations. There should be municipal or regional offices that function as “senior talent banks” [...]”

4. Discussion

The findings of this study on generativity suggest clear pathways to improve the life satisfaction and well-being of older people, in line with Activity Theory [2]. In this sense, qualitative research corroborates the strong correlation between active social participation and life satisfaction [6]. The results of the qualitative research converge with the proposed theoretical framework, demonstrating the structural division that exists between the intrinsic generative imperative of older people and the rigidity of available social roles.

The findings from the focus groups in Jaén reveal that for older adults, generativity is not merely a psychological phase but a lived imperative driven by a deep-seated search for meaningful social roles [31]. Participants consistently described their involvement in the community as a source of intrinsic well-being, often framing it as “positive selfishness”, where the act of giving results in receiving greater emotional rewards [4]. This empirical evidence aligns with Villar’s perspective [17] on successful aging, suggesting that eudaimonic well-being in later life is inextricably linked to social contribution [33] and the fulfillment of generative goals [5,15]. Rather than being a passive stage, old age appears in these narratives as a period of active search for purpose, echoing the “inner desire” described by McAdams and de St. Aubin [9,31].

Furthermore, the transition from individual motivation to prosocial action is manifested through the participants’ desire to leave a legacy and feel useful to future generations [9]. The interest in mentorship and the transmission of experiential wisdom, observed in both urban and rural groups [12], serves as a practical manifestation of what Erikson termed the “interest in guiding the next generation” [8]. However, the results suggest that this commitment goes beyond simple guidance; it constitutes a vital narrative or “generative script” [34] where participants integrate their life stories into the collective identity of their community [14]. This suggests that social participation, when centered on generativity, functions as a mechanism for community cohesion [35] and the preservation of social capital [19].

The articulation of these findings with the Senefficiency model [18] highlights a significant opportunity for social intervention. The participants’ willingness to engage in “senior talent banks” or “schools of participation” indicates that the generative potential is present and ready to be mobilized, provided that institutional structures transition from a welfare-oriented approach to one that recognizes older adults as active subjects of governance [3]. Consequently, interpreting these results through the lens of joint responsibility suggests that the “wasted wisdom” reported by participants is not due to a lack of individual motivation, but a reflection of a social design [13] that has yet to provide the necessary channels to transform this generative impulse into visible and recognized social utility.

The analysis of generative desire suggests a profound clash between individual motivation and the prevailing social structure. While older adults exhibit a clear “inner desire” for social contribution [31] and a search for well-being through social gain [17], this momentum frequently faces a systemic structural deficit. Generativity, as a form of co-responsibility [10,15], requires a reciprocal cultural demand that currently appears to be absent, leading to a disconnect between the individual’s will and the societal framework [10,35]. This systemic exclusion, particularly evident in bureaucratic hurdles and the lack of adequate channels, reflects broader European patterns where macro-level determinants and public policy design significantly influence social isolation and participation in later life [36,37].

This phenomenon serves as empirical evidence of the structural lag [13], where institutional rigidity and inadequate program design prevent the effective transfer of knowledge despite high levels of individual interest [16,38]. By failing to provide opportunities aligned with the collective’s generative potential [11], society limits community development and

effectively renounces a valuable human asset [16,19]. Furthermore, although many participants possess the psychological profile for high involvement and inclusivity [15], external barriers—such as the intensity of caregiving roles or health determinants—often relegate them to a stagnant status. This gap highlights how social inequality continues to shape the intensity of participation practices, preventing the transformation of generative desire into concrete social action [6].

The barriers and challenges identified in this research highlight that the most significant cost of the structural lag [13] is failed social inclusion. The prevalent perception of undervaluation and agism—where older individuals are frequently viewed as social burdens whose utility is considered exhausted—represents a fundamental breakdown of joint responsibility [10,18]. This phenomenon of “wasted wisdom” reported in the narratives is not merely an individual loss; it constitutes a significant waste of social and human capital that undermines the community’s collective potential [19].

In the Spanish context, the narratives of “wasted wisdom” and the feeling of being a social burden align with previous qualitative research on older adults in post-industrial societies. Studies conducted in Spain have highlighted that the frustration of the generative impulse—specifically in the areas of mentorship and cultural transmission—is a primary concern for the elderly, who perceive their social utility as being overshadowed by a logic of consumption [32]. By comparing our results with national trends, it becomes evident that the structural lag identified in Jaén is a persistent feature of the broader Spanish social framework, where the transition from professional life to retirement often lacks the necessary roles for legacy-building.

Furthermore, the study suggests that the current economic system, heavily driven by the logic of consumption, fails to recognize or reward immaterial contributions, leading to the alienation of older adults. By obstructing the pathways for leaving a legacy and transmitting life experience, the social structure effectively denies individuals the opportunity to achieve Integrity, which is the vital culmination of psychosocial maturity [9]. Consequently, when the generative impulse is frustrated by societal inaction and a lack of recognition, the search for purpose is thwarted, transforming what should be a stage of psychosocial gain into a source of exclusion and collective stagnation.

The discussion culminates by identifying Senefficiency as the essential strategic framework for transforming individual generative potential into tangible social utility [18]. This model operates through community action [14], which serves as the primary vehicle to operationalize experience and ensure that the developmental “gain” described by Villar [17] is visible and beneficial to the collective. By shifting the focus from the psychological plane of internal desire to a system of active social planning, Senefficiency ensures that older adults’ contributions are not left to chance but are instead integrated as recognized assets within the community fabric.

Furthermore, achieving full social inclusion necessitates a fundamental transition toward civic empowerment and institutional recognition. The creation of formal channels, such as senior talent banks or advisory councils with real decision-making influence, allows older adults to attain the highest levels of inclusivity [15]. This shift addresses the problem of systemic undervaluation directly, fostering a renewed sense of elder pride [18]. Ultimately, true inclusion is realized when an older person is no longer treated as a passive object of care but is recognized as an active subject and a central protagonist in community governance [3,14]. In this scenario, generativity is successfully channeled into a meaningful sociopolitical contribution that strengthens social cohesion and community sustainability.

5. Limitations

Despite the richness and depth of the findings obtained, it is necessary to recognize the limitations inherent in this study's design. First, given its qualitative nature and focus on a case study in a specific urban context, the conclusions are not directly generalizable to the entire older population, especially rural environments or countries with different sociopolitical structures.

Although this research is territorially delimited to the province of Jaén, the findings provide a basis for analytical generalization rather than mere statistical representation. The identified patterns regarding the “structural lag” and the desire for generative contribution are not unique to this region; they reflect a global phenomenon in post-industrial societies characterized by “liquid modernity”. Consequently, the Senefficiency model proposed here is designed as a transferable strategic framework. It offers a scalable pilot for other urban and rural contexts to transform the accumulated wisdom of older adults into active social capital, moving beyond local particularities to address the universal challenge of senior sociopolitical inclusion.

Additionally, the sample, recruited among associations, presents an active participation bias excluding older adults at greater risk of social exclusion or health limitations, who are most affected by the structural lag, which may have moderated the perception of certain barriers. The choice of focus groups, while enhancing interaction, implies a cross-sectional design offering a static image of interests and barriers without capturing their temporal evolution.

6. Conclusions

This research demonstrates that older adults in the province of Jaén possess a profound generative imperative, characterized by an intrinsic desire to contribute to society through mentorship, knowledge transmission, and community engagement. By addressing the study's primary aims, the findings validate that social inclusion in later life is not merely a welfare objective but the necessary culmination of the generative process, where the need to feel useful acts as a vital asset for community cohesion.

However, a significant “structural lag” persists, representing a gap between the generative potential of older adults and the scarcity of recognized social roles provided by the current social structure. The results highlight that systemic barriers—such as agism, bureaucratic hurdles, and the undervaluation of immaterial contributions—clash with individual motivations, often forcing active-minded individuals into social stagnation. This study concludes that overcoming this deficit requires a paradigm shift from viewing older people as objects of care to recognizing them as active agents of sociopolitical transformation.

To address this, the study proposes the Senefficiency model as a strategic framework for full inclusion. Senefficiency operationalizes generativity by transforming accumulated wisdom into planned social utility, directly combating undervaluation through institutional recognition and the promotion of “elder pride”. For public policy, this implies a move beyond traditional welfare toward the strategic planning of generative contexts. Concrete recommendations include the creation of formal, sustainable channels—such as “senior talent banks” or municipal advisory councils—to ensure that the resource of experience is effectively integrated into local governance and community development.

Finally, Social Work and social intervention emerge as key mediators to bridge the gap between individual potential and institutional barriers. By facilitating spaces for civic participation and building social capital, professional intervention can ensure that the driving force of generativity translates into sustainable community health.

The most transcendental implication of this research points directly to the design of public policies, demonstrating that generativity is a social asset that cannot be left to spontaneous or individual management. The results suggest that sociopolitical action is the

only effective way to transform the existing structural lag into a formal structure of opportunities. This transition requires strategic investment that transcends mere welfare provision and focuses on planning generative contexts, which implies creating and financing formal channels—such as “senior talent banks” or municipal participation offices—equipped with the necessary infrastructure and bureaucratic capacity to channel the collective’s potential. Consequently, generativity should serve as the primary lens through which aging policies are articulated, ensuring that the resource of experience is recognized and integrated into local governance and community development mechanisms.

Achieving the full social inclusion of older people requires generativity to be elevated to a sociopolitical dimension. Public policy design, built from the perspective of Seneficiency and active coordination, is an essential tool for transforming accumulated wisdom into dynamic social capital. The contribution of older people is not only a matter of individual well-being but indispensable for the continuity and health of society.

Future lines of research might focus on the development and quantitative validation of instruments allowing the operationalization of the Seneficiency construct and evaluating its correlation with key well-being indicators on a large scale. Future research would benefit from addressing the temporal dimension, with longitudinal studies tracking how the generative need and the impact of the structural lag evolve throughout the aging process. Finally, this research evidences that applied research must focus on the design and evaluation of pilot programs materializing strategic proposals (such as talent banks or schools of participation) and on comparative and multilevel analyses integrating the perspectives of younger generations and political managers to achieve a complete picture of the cycle of social co-responsibility.

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Institutional Review Board Statement: This study was conducted according to the Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical review and approval were waived for this study due to the fundamental principle of non-intrusive observation. No manipulations or substantial interventions were introduced that could have negatively affected the participants’ lives. The essence of the focus groups centered on listening and understanding without altering the natural course of the experiences of the older adults involved. Furthermore, rigorous measures were implemented to guarantee the protection of participants’ privacy. Personal identification information has been carefully coded so that it is impossible to directly associate it with a particular individual. This approach ensures the effective anonymization of collected data. It is important to note that, despite the non-intrusive nature of this research, informed consent was requested and obtained from each participant. This guaranteed clear transparency regarding the purpose of the research and how data will be protected, an approach that, according to the ethical protocols of the University of Jaén, respects the dignity and autonomy of the participants. You can find further information at the following link: <https://www.ujaen.es/gobierno/vicinv/comision-de-etica> (SOLICITUD INFORME ÉTICA_CRITERIOS) (accessed on 24 November 2025).

Informed Consent Statement: Verbal and signed informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. The informed consent was prepared in writing, with the oral assistance of the interviewer for complete understanding.

Data Availability Statement: The qualitative dataset and transcripts of the narratives are not publicly available due to ethical restrictions and privacy concerns.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

GENERATIVITY Focus Group Script

Date:

Location:

Moderator:

Participants:

1. Introduction (10 min)

- Welcome and moderator presentation: “Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for participating in this conversation. My name is [Name], and I will be moderating this session. The purpose of this meeting is to reflect together on the ways in which older people contribute to society and the role you feel you have in your community. We want to learn from your experiences and opinions.”
- Focus group purpose: “The information you share with us will be used to better understand the ways in which older people participate and contribute to society, and how we could improve these opportunities in the future.”
- Confidentiality Guarantee: “We guarantee the confidentiality of your personal data. To do this, all information will be anonymized, that is, each of you will be assigned an alphanumeric code which will be used to refer to the comments you make in this space for reflection.”
- Request for permission to record the session: “To ensure the quality and validity of the information that the debate generated provides, the session will be recorded, for which we request your verbal authorization.”
- Ground rules:
 - This is a safe space, all opinions are valid.
 - Let’s respect others’ ideas, even if we disagree.
 - If someone does not want to answer a question, that is fine.

2. Warm-up and context (10 min)

- Icebreaker question: “To start, I would like each of you to share your name and something you like to do in your free time.”
- Topic introduction: “Today we will talk about your participation in the community, the things you feel you have achieved throughout your life, and how you believe you can continue contributing to the world around you.”

3. Participation and community engagement (20 min)

- Question 1: “In your opinion, what does ‘being committed to the community’ mean to you?”
- Question 2: “In what community activities or projects have you participated recently? For example, it can be as volunteers, caring for others, or sharing your experience and knowledge.”
- Question 3: “What motivates you to get involved in these activities? And what obstacles do you find to participating more?”

4. Contribution opportunities (25 min)

- Question 4 (introduction to the concept without using “generativity”): “Many people feel that, over the years, they have accumulated a lot of experience and wisdom. In what ways do you feel you have been able to share that with other generations or with your community?”
- Question 5: “Do you feel there are enough spaces or activities where you can contribute your ideas, skills, or experience? Why or why not?”

- Question 6: “What type of activities or initiatives would you like to exist to feel more involved and valued?”
5. Specific contributions (20 min)
- Question 7: “In what areas do you believe you could contribute more to society? For example, it could be education, care for people, preservation of traditions, or anything else that seems important to you.”
 - Question 8: “If you had the opportunity to lead or create something in your community, what would it be and why?”
 - Question 9 (wrapping up): “What do you think society could do to better leverage the contributions of older people?”
6. Closing (15 min)
- Moderator summary: “Thank you very much for sharing your ideas and experiences. I would like to make a brief summary of what we have discussed today: [summary of key points]. Is there anything you think we should add?”
 - Acknowledgments: “We greatly appreciate your time and valuable participation. Your ideas are very important to us and will be fundamental to improving how the contributions of older people are integrated and valued in society.”
 - Farewell: “Before we say goodbye, remember that if you have anything else you would like to share, you can do so now or after the session.”

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