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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### EVALUATION OF ELDERLY POPULATION POLICIES IN DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

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#### ABSTRACT

Today, the increasing population of the elderly in the demographic structure and planning and policies aiming to meet their needs have become an important issue all over the world. The economic, social and physical limitations and inadequacies that occur with old age affect both the social life and active participation of the elderly individuals and their relatives in different areas. Improvements concerning this population group; will affect the social, economic and social welfare levels of the current population, and will support social sustainability by increasing the welfare levels of future generations. The 'development plans' programmed to meet social demands, along with the policies that guide the development of the country, also set out the service targets for the changing population structure. The five-year development plans prepared by the Ministry of Development are strategies and policies targeting the country's developments in social, cultural and economic fields. Eleven development plans, covering strategic plans have been prepared and implemented since 1963. All institutional and structural arrangements are provided by taking into consideration the social life and demographic structure within the scope of Development Plans; and sustainable social, environmental and economic development goals are also set. The aim of the study is to show the change of the policies that is foreseen for the elderly population and progress of the development plans that will meet the needs of the country and ensure its social welfare over the years with a social sustainability perspective. The method for creating the study was examining how the elderly population policies for each five-year period changed over the years by analyzing of all development plans. In this context, the study aims to contribute to the direction in which policies aiming to increase the social welfare and economic life participation of the elderly population should be handled in the context of social sustainability.

#### INTRODUCTION

While traditional support mechanisms encompassing the elderly in our country in the past years have been realized within the extended family structure, the need for new support mechanisms for the elderly in the modern society structure is felt with the emerging of increasing industrialization and urbanization. With this transformation in the family structure, atrophies in intergenerational solidarity have become more visible. The data, like many countries of the similar demographic structure of our country; shows that there is a risk of transformation from being a 'young population' to an 'elder society'. Especially after the date 1946 that the insurance branches began to be created, new support mechanisms for the elderly were needed in the modern social structure. For this reason, the government needs to produce support policies for the elderly population from a multidisciplinary perspective, to deliver services without interruption and to manage the aging process of the young population in its most ideal and active way.

The developments that occurred in the fields of health, sociology, technology and economics in the last century carried human life to the maximum capacity, thus, an increase in the proportion of the elderly has been experienced within the demographic structure. Old age period after the adulthood of life; refers to the process of adapting to physical, cultural, economic and social inadequacies and changes through slowdown in the physiological and biological activities of the person. With this period, some changes occur in the level of relation and interaction of many elderly individuals with the society (Hablemitoglu and Ozmete, 2010:20). Problems experienced in old age affect the social relations, use of space and participation in daily life at various levels. The concept of planning was first applied in the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 20th century. It became widespread in other countries as a form of intervention to market economies after World War II (Soyak, 2003; Soyak, 2013). Our country started to deal with the concept of planning after 1930, but actual planning preparations took place after 1960 programmatically. This planning discipline, which is a road map and includes certain time periods, realizes the country's growth and development policies. Five-year strategic plans have been planned with the aim of paving the way of the national economy by using domestic capital accumulation with government

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support/supervision (Somel, 2009). Turkey's development plans to achieve growth targets which include economic, social and cultural areas; are considered as policy and strategy documents prepared by the Ministry of Development (previously called State Planning Organization-DPT). This study is based on development plans and literature study on this subject. In scientific data, we can observe that 'elderly policies' which are accepted as part of development plans; are determined by sometimes with innovations including the families of the elderly, and on other times including the elderly to disadvantaged (disabled individuals) groups. In the study, in order to analyze the change process of elderly policies by years; the planned development period was examined and the content of all development plans was evaluated in this respect and analyzes were made. The subject is discussed to contribute to subsequent scientific studies and planning decisions concerning elderly policies.

#### **The relationship between social sustainability and development plans:**

Today's modern life flow, technological developments, social and economic changes have changed both the understanding of welfare and living standards of people (Ehrenfeld, 2008). Aforementioned important changes has contributed to the laying of the foundations of the sustainability concept, which has been in effect since the 1970s and has increased its value on the agenda almost every day. The use of the concept as we understand it today has been revealed in the Bruntland Report published by the United Nations in 1987. The mentioned report has defined the concept of sustainability as 'the potential to meet today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs' (Bruntland Report, 1987). The concept has led to political and ideological debates, since it has often been handled within the framework of development. Considering the issue with a cultural, social, economic and political perspective, with the idea that future generations have a right to the values that society has today; it is believed that the values owned should be passed from generation to generation 'continuously and without interruption'. These values that should be transferred can be provided in; ecosystems, management, services, energy spatial areas, cultural and economic areas, or in other words, all aspects of life (Altuntas, 2012:137). While sustainability contributes to meeting the needs of the current generation; it includes the idea of guaranteeing continuity, without jeopardizing the needs of future generations. Sustainability should be considered as a multidisciplinary concept that strives to maintain balanced social, economic and ecological systems and it requires the participation of society at all ages/levels (Benkari, 2013). Sustainability is a development model aiming at high efficiency by providing optimal conditions of efficiency and uninterrupted continuity for many years in the environmental, economic or social sense. With this quality, the concepts of economic and social development have been replaced by the concept of sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development is generally addressed in three dimensions:

- *Economic Sustainable Development:* Includes the ability to produce goods and services on an ongoing basis, continuity of public manageability, and uninterrupted execution of agricultural and industrial production,
- *Environmental Sustainable Development:* Includes the protection of the natural, environmental and renewable

resource systems, as well as the protection of the entire ecosystem with atmospheric balance and biodiversity,

- *Social Sustainable Development:* Refers to adequate provision of social services, including health, education and participation, along with gender, age and all other egalitarian delivery mechanisms of public services with political responsibility (Holmberg and Sandbrook, 1992).

Sustainable development issue arised from the environmental movements of the 1960s acting together with the defenders of basic needs in the 1970s. The negligence of social aspects of development compared to other aspects and the difficulty of evaluations in this area is still the reason for the lack of comprehensive studies on social sustainability issues (Colantonio, 2009). However, even though environmental, economic and social sustainability issues are independent components, these three different approaches should be handled as a whole in achieving sustainable development goals that support each other in studies related to sustainability (Karakurt Tosun, 2013:33). All components of social sustainability need sustainable planning and strategies aimed at meeting the current demands of the population groups of different age and capacities, as well as the demands of other generations. The most important of these is the ground that social sustainability needs; which includes important components such as civil participation, equal rights, social integrity, cultural identity, stability, diversity, tolerance, pluralism, laws, sharing, unity (Tsoi and Choi, 2003). While social sustainability and population growth models make a significant contribution to analyzing the existing ecological, economic and social inequalities of developed and developing nations, it offers support to intergenerational recovery and development by providing solutions to them (Stead et al., 2004). The concept of social sustainability was born out of the need to meet a number of basic needs, similar to the subject of sustainable development. Sustainable development approach has emerged as a precaution for urgent environmental problems such as environmental pollution and reduction of natural resources. Social sustainability has risen from the basis of identifying and meeting the basic needs of the society in order to realize sustainable development. From this perspective, it is necessary to say that social sustainability is to protect and improve the quality of life of individuals and to transfer them to future generations (Weingaertner and Moberg, 2011). Many studies in this field reveal social sustainability as an unexplained 'gray space' among academic, political, and practical descriptions (Davoudi and Porter, 2012). Politicians and planners, that shape the conceptual and implementational principles of social sustainability, and want to balance tensions by triggering initiatives, are gaining more and more importance (Woodcraft, 2012).

For this reason, development plans include all sustainable plans related to the strategies and policies that the country aims to realize in the social, cultural and economic areas that are needed. These plans are public policies for services that will meet the demographic structure demands of the country, and are social and economic sustainability strategies and programs. With the basic reference of sustainability, meeting the services demanded by the elderly population 'continuously and without interruption' and transferring the existing values to future generations will provide the desired development. Development Plans, especially for a certain period shaped by economic references; are documents that reflect both the understanding of the state and the public policies of the

planned period, since they contain very important data about the social structure. In this respect, development plans, which contribute to social sustainability and thus to economic sustainability, has been analyzed through policies for the elderly for the capacity of meeting the needs.

**Planned development periods:** In Turkey, there has been some differences in the economic terms of public intervention during certain periods due to the economic volatility experienced throughout the history of the republic and the effects of uncertainty created under the influence of the global markets. Regarding the population, economy and social arrangements experienced in the country; SPO was established on September 30, 1960s for defining the situation, identifying development strategies / goals, programming development, implementing the program and finally evaluating results to measure success in Turkey. Development plans have been implemented for five-year periods since 1963. Planned development studies started after this date, thus beginning the 'planned development period'. Starting from the first Five Year Development Plan to date (Only exception is the Ninth Development Plan of 7 years), necessary policies and strategies have been included for many sectors, including reducing interregional development disparities and population aging policies. Especially in the five-year development plans of the 1980 period, there was a breaking point with the transition to the free market economy; while simultaneously trying to reduce the differences in living standards between urban and rural infrastructure, the main goals were to reduce the regional differences of the country and to increase its social welfare. Meanwhile, as the policies involving the demands of each period for the demographic structure were planned, the plans for the elderly population, which have reached a significant rate in the population structure, were also included. While planning decisions reveal the needs of older population groups, they also show an analysis of how the country has progressed in the context of social welfare and social sustainability. All development plans have examined population policies in the context of social sustainability with this perspective, and strategic plans for elderly population policies in particular have been mentioned.

**First Five-Year Development Plan (1963-1967):** The population growth rate of the recent past was announced as 3% in the country, due to the increase in crude birth rates and the rapid decrease in mortality rates (SPO, 1963: 12). The data show that the ratio of the urban population within the total population increased at that period and the flow from village to cities continued. In addition, the elderly population has changed very slightly in terms of age group slice (SPO, 1963: 70-71). The new population policy mentioned in this plan, the draft law sent to The Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 1962 came into effect in 1965 under the name of "Population Planning Law No. 557" (Population Planning Law, 1965: 332). While implementing population planning programs, it was planned to help social issues such as the resolution of situations occurring in poor neighborhoods of cities and elderly care (SPO, 1963: 424). While planning investment expenses; as the budget allocated for elderly nursing homes had been reduced for the first two years, an increase was planned for the number of rehabilitation centers (SPO, 1963:424). It was decided to establish a 'Social Service Institution' in order to carry out services and funds for social services in a single handed cooperation (SPO, 1963: 424).

**Second Five-Year Development Plan (1968-1972):** It was aimed to provide environmental health conditions for a solid population structure, with special protection and social work programs for child health, elderly care as well as the elimination of social disorders (SPO, 1968: 634). It was planned to improve the social security of the elderly (and also disabled people) who lost their workforce with social aid measures within the framework of financial means, increase their social security, maintain income, and add unemployment insurance branch to existing social insurance branches (SPO, 1968: 634). It was aimed to strengthen individuals by ensuring income continuity in terms of socio-economic aspects and developing a social security and insurance system in the fair distribution of national income (SPO, 1968: 634). As social welfare services, it was aimed to create the security environment required for people to develop in social life, to ensure that they received a share of increased welfare, thus overcoming the social difficulties they may encounter. For this purpose, public programs should be implemented in the fields of social aid and welfare measures for the elderly, the poor, the care of the elderly and the disabled, medical and social rehabilitation, and leisure time (SPO, 1968: 229). While aiming to provide rural and urban growth and development and to increase socio-economic development in the country, many projects also directing population policies have been implemented primarily in the Southeastern and Eastern Regions. As mentioned in the Urbanization Council - especially after the 1990s - development plans has continued its efforts to reduce development disparities between regions by regional development policies and to create a homogeneous structure for development (Urbanization Council, 2009: 22-23).

**Third Five-Year Development Plan (1973-1977):** Regardless of the financial strength of families and individuals, all of the services that will facilitate their return to their normal lives in the face of human or social risks constitute social welfare services (SPO, 1973:807). Increasing social welfare, improving health conditions and shrinking family structure accelerate the change in population structure (SPO, 1973:105). On the other hand, economic and social development changes the structural quality of the population by affecting death, birth and migration (SPO, 1973:106). From a socio-economic point of view, it is seen as the basic principle of the social security system to provide the necessary income, to ensure that individuals, especially the elderly, who have lost their income security and working opportunities, live their lives at an acceptable minimum standard within a suitable social security system spread to the society (SPO, 1973:804). The total expenditures of the insurance branches applied by the Social Insurance Institution were 357 million 960 thousand, and in 1970 these expenditures reached 1.884 million. There is a rapid increase in the share of disability, old-age and death insurance in total expenditures; the share of this insurance branch in total expenditures was 26.6% in 1963 and 41.7% in 1970 (SPO, 1973:798). With the Law No. 1186, which came into force in 1969, the old age pensions linked to the insured were increased from 50% to 70% (SPO, 1973:798), and it was aimed to use Social Insurance and Social Aid Programs as the basic tool of a single system (SPO, 1973: 805). Social aid and welfare services, which are in the nature of a transfer, are mostly through the funds allocated from the State budget to various Ministry budgets; and are directly or indirectly included in the ministries' own scopes of duty. Since the municipalities in 11 provinces have elderly care dormitories

for the elderly, it is aimed to increase these services (SPO, 1973: 807). Increases in the realization rates of social welfare services, including retirement homes for the elderly, have been determined (SPO 1973: 823).

**Fourth Five-Year Development Plan (1979-1983):** Rural-urban immigration increasing due to three main demographic elements: death, fertility level and industrialization; affected the age structure of the population together with the differences between regions (SPO, 1979:24). Unemployment arising from economic changes emerging from technological advancements in cities; occurs especially among the elderly and young people (SPO, 1979: 27). The scope of social services and social aid programs, which are still tried to be given to those who receive care and those who receive old age, retirement, disability, and other pensions by means of various social insurance and social service programs are very limited throughout the country (DPT, 1979: 143). Studies and Institutions founded for adults with disabilities and elderly care and rehabilitation in Turkey are insufficient. In 1977, the age group of 65 and above was 4.5% of the total population; 494.280 out of 1.9 million people in this group were identified to need care and rehabilitation according to international indicators (SPO, 1979: 143). In this plan period, the law that stipulates the pensions of the elderly who have turned 65, needy and handicapped individuals; came into force in 1977 and 780,000 citizens had the opportunity to benefit from this law (SPO, 1979: 143). It is envisaged to establish and develop nursing homes, rehabilitation and other social service facilities in order to bring social services and social aids to elderly, disabled, orphans, vulnerable groups (SPO, 1979: 285). It has been stated that an effective and widespread social service organization should be headed in order to help solve problems arising from environmental change for the elderly, disabled and needy individuals, especially those who suffer natural disasters (SPO, 1979: 669).

**Fifth Five-Year Development Plan (1985-1989):** It is estimated that there will be no significant change in the share of the elderly population from the projected population perspective in Turkey and that a little more than 4% of the total population will constitute this age group. It has been stated that the share of 0-14 and 65 and above age groups within the total population decreases, while the share of the 15-64 age group increases; and the employment age population will reduce its burden if it can be employed. It was stated that, while a thousand people would have to look after 762 people other than themselves in 1980, they would have to look after 700 people in 1984 and 655 people in 1989 (SPO, 1985:127). At the end of the plan period, the population will reach 54.3 million with an increase of 2.12 percent; and it was determined that the 0-14 age group will be 19.3 million, the 15-64 age group will be 32.8 million, and the age group over 65 will be 2.2 million (SPO, 1985:206). In terms of Social Security, the average life expectancy in Turkey between 1980-1985 is 63 years, and the average old-age pension taking duration has been determined as 20 years. Turkey's implementation of early retirement and pension entitlement is said to lead to a shortage of funding in the future in this respect (SPO, 1985:154). Therefore, the social security system will be increased over 50% of the population, including current insurance programs and attached members (SPO, 1985:206). Social service programs and aids will be organized and expanded to meet the needs of the families, disabled and elderly who need care and protection (SPO, 1985:155).

Increasing the number of nursing homes established in order to protect and care for old people and those in need, in a peaceful environment and to meet their social and psychological needs, in terms of numbers and qualities in line with the ever-increasing needs (SPO, 1985: 155); in addition, the private sector should be encouraged to open nursing homes and similar social facilities in line with the increasing needs (SPO, 1985:156).

**Sixth Five-Year Development Plan (1990-1994):** The capacity of existing services should be increased by developing care, protection and rehabilitation services for the disabled and the elderly (SPO, 1990: 290). Public spaces and facilities to be used in the utilization of leisure time; should be developed in a way that they can be used continuously at different times by children, young people, elderly, disabled and similar groups (SPO, 1990:297). In this plan, protective and preventive practices were prioritized in social service and aid programs (SPO, 1990:306). Family unit was taken as basis in delivering social services and aids. For this purpose, effective cooperation is necessary for all institutions to meet the needs of families in need, to participate in community life and employment, as well as to implement policies for the protection and socialization of the elderly and needy (SPO, 1990:306). With the cooperation of local administrations, voluntary organizations and the private sector, it is aimed to improve the economic status of elderly people in need of protection as well as prioritize programs for preventive measures (SPO, 1990:355). It is aimed to improve the treatment and rehabilitation services for the disabled and the elderly, and to increase the capacity of the existing services (SPO, 1990:290). It is planned to make some adjustments in the monthly payments paid to this group by making arrangements for the elderly and disabled people in need (SPO, 1990:306). Along with this plan, the concept of Regional Planning was replaced by the concept of 'Regional Development'; and with the 16-Zone approach defined in the Fifth Development Plan; it is planned to control the population structure by reducing the population and industry density towards large cities, and directing immigration between regions and inter regions (SPO, 1990:319).

**Seventh Five-Year Development Plan (1996-2000):** The increasing burden of social security systems on public finance in the world, especially in OECD countries; requires social security services to aim at the most purposeful and effective changes in economic benefit, social development and welfare (SPO, 1996:3). For the social welfare of the population, comprehensive reforms are required in the field of health as well as social security. Increasing share of the elderly in the total population in developed countries; pushes the structure in the fields of social security and health and increases the importance of the intergenerational balance problem (SPO, 1996:3). While designing public spaces and facilities for all members of the community; designs should be planned to be used at different times by the elderly and their families, those living alone, the disabled and similar groups (SPO, 1996:31). The family, which is the cornerstone of the Turkish society, needs to be protected and supported (SPO, 1996:38) and it is aimed to strengthen the income continuity of the family by providing health service needs and social security, and to support the family by educating the elderly and disabled members (SPO, 1996:38). Development of programs for strengthening primary health care, elderly health, health care for the disabled, home care services, health and nutrition education services have been identified (SPO, 1996:46).

In terms of Social Security Reform, the age limit set for retirement was abolished in 1992; and women were able to retire upon request after completing 20 years of service and men after 25 years (SPO, 1996:111). Within the framework of social security understanding; in order to improve the services for the elderly, disabled, needy and other risk groups, it was decided to establish a Social Aid and Service Institution responsible for the regulation and administration of all kinds of social aid and services undertaken by the public (SPO, 1996:115). With the draft law prepared for the restructuring of Social Insurance Foundation (SSK); it is aimed to gradually increase the retirement age and the number of insurance premium payment days. In order to increase the disability, old age and death insurance premium rates and to improve the pensions, arrangements have been made to gradually switch to the single indicator system in the calculation of pensions (SPO, 1996:115).

**Eighth Five-Year Development Plan (2001-2005):** It was anticipated that the population has health protection, development knowledge and skills; and the plan aimed to increase the life span of the people and to increase their life quality. Especially, the elderly are provided to be able to continue their vital activities without needing assistance, and their contribution and participation to society is ensured (SPO, 2001:87). Public spaces and facilities to be used in utilizing free time were made available to everyone in the plan, and productive, efficient and participatory utilization of free time was supported for all segments of the society, especially the elderly and the disabled (SPO, 2001:97). At the stages of service planning, project design and implementation of local governments, the development of approaches that take into consideration the needs of the social groups such as disabled, elderly, children and young people has been brought up (SPO, 2001:199). It was stated that the plan emphasizes the importance of the family, and encourages to train and support families in the fields of child-rearing and care of the elderly and disabled members, and also encourages family-related organizations to carry out simultaneous studies (SPO, 2001:94). In addition, in the plan, it is aimed to provide social aid by connecting monthly pensions to the weak, needy and homeless who are in the categories of old age, and disability and who have completed the age of 65 according to the 'Law No. 2022'. As of 1999, it was decided to provide social aid to 937,878 people in the categories of old age, and disability (SPO, 2001:110). In the development plan, industrialization, which developed in parallel with the socio-economic development of our country; changes in urbanization and family structure; the population increase, which started to be seen -although slowly- in the age group of 60 and above, has produced the opening of nursing homes and elderly counseling centers, as well as increasing the maintenance and rehabilitation services for this segment (SPO, 2001:111). In order to develop social services and aids for children, the elderly, the disabled, those in need of special attention, the poor and other risk groups, a new institutional structure has been created, responsible for the organization, administration and coordination of all kinds of public social services and aid programs. For this purpose, legislative arrangements have been made to establish a database for the identification of individuals and families who can benefit from social services and benefits (SPO, 2001:112).

**Ninth Five-Year Development Plan (2007-2013):** It was determined that the population growth rate decreased from

1.41% in 2000 to 1.26% in 2005. In the same period, it was stated that working age population of 15-64 age group and elderly population of over 65 years of age increased and their share in the total population increased from 64.7% to 65.7% and 5.4% to 5.9%, respectively. (SPO, 2007:37). In line with this five-year development plan, according to the report prepared by the aging specialization commission, this trend of the 0-14 age group population, which started to decrease proportionally and numerically since 2005, will continue in the long term, and the rate and number of the working age and elderly population will increase continuously. SPO, 2007:61). A policy to decrease or increase fertility is not foreseen in this development plan. As a matter of fact, family planning policies that have been effective since 1965 have decreased in importance; population policy is shaped around the concept of reproductive health (SPO, 2007:61). In addition to services such as education, culture and health for women, children, the elderly, the disabled and those who migrate to the city, the services aimed for those who face the risk of poverty should also be taken to the elderly (SPO, 2007:43). The need for social services and aids in our country; continues to increase due to migration, urbanization, change in family structure, population growth and unemployment. While the ratio of total social aid expenditures to GDP was 0.48% in 2000, this rate increased to 0.86% in 2005. In this context, monthly and aids are targeted to be given to disabled people and elderly people and the quality of life of these segments will be increased (SPO, 2007:44). It is planned to increase the number and quality of nursing homes and institutional care as well as supporting home care services for the elderly (SPO, 2007:89).

**Tenth Five-Year Development Plan (2014-2018):** The State Planning Organization was closed down in 2011 and the Ministry of Development was established, and the responsibility for making development plans began to be carried out by this ministry. According to the tenth plan, the share of the elderly population in the total population has increased as a result of the decline in infant mortality rate and prolonged life expectancy in terms of population dynamics. With the increase in the elderly population, it has been mentioned that the dependents of the working age population (15-64 years old), will increase in the future and the share of the productive population will decrease. If no action is taken, it is estimated that the working age population will start to decrease after 2038 and the total population will start to decrease after 2050. In this framework, there is a need to increase fertility rate with population policies and to develop effective and timely policies for the aging population (Ministry of Development, 2013:49). In the coming period, developing young populated countries will be more advantageous in terms of labor force compared to the older populated countries. However, young or qualified labor force demand of developed countries may increase migration to these countries (Ministry of Development, 2013:10). Providing an active life and access to healthy and safe living conditions to the increasing elderly population will lead to the strengthening of intergenerational solidarity in the society (Ministry of Development, 2013:50). For reasons such as migration and urbanization, wear in cultural values, increased individualization, deficiencies in family education, new communication technologies; communication among family members decreased, divorces increased, the proportion of single-parent families increased, and the family institution began to weaken and the social structure changed. As a result of the changes in the age structure of the population, there is a risk of increasing the

share of the inactive population and the share of the elderly population with the decrease in fertility rate in the future (Ministry of Development, 2013:192). In developed countries, the share of the elderly population in the total population is increasing. Accordingly, as problems such as the decrease in production, decrease in tax revenues, increase in health expenditures and social security imbalances become more apparent, the pressure on public service understanding increases (Ministry of Development, 2013:10). While social spending in the world is decreasing globally, the increase in spending in this area in our country, the increase in social aid in terms of scope and amount and the institutional capacity to combat poverty have alleviated the negative effects of the crisis on poverty and income inequality, thereby improving the income distribution. (Ministry of Development, 2013:24). Important steps have been taken in order to ensure social inclusion, and to increase the quality of life of disabled people and the elderly in economic and social life in underdeveloped regions (<http://www.sodes.gov.tr/kapsam-ve-bilesenler/>); especially The Social Support Program (SODES) and regional social development programs have been implemented (Ministry of Development, 2013:24). However, there is a need to increase the control of social spending and support practices in the coming period to include the citizens more in the production process (Ministry of Development, 2013:24). Establishing service standards in the field of social services and aid, recruiting qualified personnel and improving control, developing alternative models apart from institutional care for those in need of protection, are necessary (Ministry of Development, 2013: 43).

At the same time, the needs of making the physical environment conditions suitable for the elderly and disabled, increasing the participation of the disabled in education and labor market and improving the quality of care services, diversifying and expanding the services for the increasing elderly population still maintain its importance (Ministry of Development, 2013:43). Services to provide care for the elderly in their homes without leaving their environment will be diversified and expanded. At the same time, the number and quality of institutional care services for the elderly will be increased (Ministry of Development, 2013:44). Aiming to increase livability for different segments of the society, primarily for the elderly, the disabled and children; spatial planning and urban design practices that take equal opportunity and equity as a priority will be implemented and intergenerational social welfare conditions and social sustainability will be ensured (Ministry of Development, 2013:127). Establishing a supply-demand balance in the housing market, directing the housing production according to the needs of the income groups; the need for the design and construction of dwellings and their environments suitable for the needs of the elderly, children and disabled people continues (Ministry of Development, 2013:128). In order to facilitate the access of elderly and disabled individuals to economic and social life due to the decrease in the population density in the villages; innovative models are developed by strengthening the public service provision capacity at the local level (Ministry of Development, 2013:136). As a component of the labor market activation program; it is planned to expand patient and elderly care services (Ministry of Development, 2013:164).

**Eleventh Five-Year Development Plan (2019-2023):** While the elderly population ratio is 8% in 2015, it is estimated to increase to 16% in 2050 with the aging of demographic

structure all over the world (Ministry of Development, 2019:6). Therefore, in terms of population targets, 'Turkey Care and Aging Research' should be made in order to develop a systematic policy based on data and services for the aging population (Ministry of Development, 2019:167). Even though Turkey is experiencing the advantages offered by the demographic window of opportunity with a young population that currently exist; in the coming period, structural measures will have to be taken in the fields of health, social and security to meet the increasing needs and demands of the elderly population (Ministry of Development, 2019:11). In terms of population and aging policies, active aging opportunities should be developed to cover all age groups by increasing the participation of the elderly population in economic and social life (Ministry of Development, 2019:167). Improving the aging process and increasing the quality of life of elderly individuals, in addition to preserving the young and dynamic population structure of the country,

- Improving living conditions for the protection of young and dynamic population structure,
- Enabling elderly individuals to participate effectively in economic and social life,
- The active and independent survival of the elderly population,
- Providing elderly individuals with high quality long-term care, health and other services,
- Access to lifelong learning opportunities of elderly individuals should be facilitated (Ministry of Development, 2019:167).

Based on the active approach of aging towards the elderly population; care models have been developed that aim interaction with the social environment (Ministry of Development, 2019:23). For inclusive growth and strong society; sustainable development should be prepared with an inclusive approach to all segments of the society, such as the disabled and the elderly, that require effective special policy (Ministry of Development, 2019:134). At the same time, it is aimed to create an environment where the elderly take part in economic and social life independently and actively in line with their own preferences and to increase the quality of life of the elderly population (Ministry of Development, 2019:135). While the participation rate of the elderly population to the labor force was 12.22% in 2018, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) data, the expectation of survival and participation in the economic life of the elderly individuals was increased; and it is estimated that this rate will reach 13.7% in 2023 (Ministry of Development, 2019:168). In order to increase inter-generational culture sharing and solidarity, the care of the elderly within the family should be supported (Ministry of Development, 2019:167). Like all countries, revisions are needed in areas such as developing elderly care services, increasing lifelong education opportunities and adapting the elderly to change (Ministry of Development, 2019:11). It should be ensured that child, disabled and elderly care opportunities that should be planned of good quality, economical and more accessible; are expanded (Ministry of Development, 2019:150). Strengthening preventive and therapeutic services for the elderly and expanding home health services, facilitating access to the health services provided to the elderly (especially those living in the countryside) (Ministry of Development, 2019:146), as well as diversifying and expanding services for the elderly who need long-term

care are necessary. Simultaneously delivery of aged care services (including disabled services) should be enabled (Ministry of Development, 2019:167) and both the quality and quantity of the personnel providing these services should be increased with the standards regarding the delivery of this service (Ministry of Development, 2019:160). The quality and quantity of the workforce to work in home and institutional aged care services should also be increased (Ministry of Development, 2019:167). By promoting rural development, in actions to combat poverty in villages priority should be given to households in which people with disabilities, poor and elderly live (Ministry of Development, 2019:182). In the urban area, by protecting the public areas of the city, especially in the open / green areas, and by increasing the transportation and security; the relationship between the more sensitive people and the natural environment should be reconstructed and accessibility should be provided with appropriate plans for the elderly and disabled (also women and children) (Ministry of Development, 2019:172). Mechanisms should be developed to strengthen the ability of elderly people to stay in facilitated conditions or to participate in working life. Ensuring the active participation of elderly individuals in social decision making processes in order to benefit from their knowledge and experience in this regard (Ministry of Development, 2019:167) will support them to create an environment where they do not feel isolated and alone.

### Conclusion and evaluation

People's understanding of well-being and living standards have changed with modern life, technological developments, socio-economic changes and great changes in society and family structure. People's needs also vary in terms of age, capacity, physical, cultural and socio-economic aspects, and these issues also shape the classification of needs. In particular, old age is expressed as a process of adaptation to a new life phase where the individual undergoes physical and spiritual changes, a phase that is caused by environmental, cultural and economic factors altogether. This adaptation process, is a phenomenon that encompasses and affects the elderly individuals as well as their family, environment and the society they live in. Today, with the return from the extended family to the nuclear family, the decrease in family ties and the spirit of solidarity brought by modern life, life is getting harder day by day for the elderly population group. The quality of life of the elderly who have not been able to provide adequate savings during their working life and have not been covered by social security; is somehow dependent on either state security or the power of family ties. In this sense, when all development plans are examined; we see that almost all of them have planning decisions regarding social arrangements, which include policies to improve, restore or renew social life for the elderly population. However, there have been policies that development plans could not meet social needs sufficiently, and occasionally the envisaged solutions were implemented with delays. Some protective and preventive measures should be taken for the elderly population to ensure social and economic sustainability.

- In order to protect the young and dynamic population structure of the country, incentives to increase fertility rates, policies that empower women in employment policies need to be developed; thus, there is a need for

improvements on living conditions in order to protect the 'young and dynamic population structure'.

- Considering that the individual experiencing physical energy and power loss with old age, experiences the most productive period in terms of knowledge, and experience; therefore arrangements should be made to encourage employers for employing people over a certain age, so that age-occupants and retirees should be included in employment. *Labor Law No. 4857 Article 30 regulates employment rate of disabled and ex-convicts who must be employed in workplaces employing 50 or more workers* ' It should be planned to provide a rate for those who retire by taking age such as flexible hourly arrangements; thus the elderly individual should be empowered economically.
- To improve the self-sufficiency and socio-economic power of the elderly; revising the issues regarding the workplace environment appropriate for the elderly, creating potential to work efficiently, providing job opportunities and equal opportunities in employment are necessary. Supporting both economic and social sustainability should be encouraged for the employment of elderly people with flexible working hours to improve hours, wages and physical conditions so that they can work in appropriate conditions if they think about working after retirement.
- The Private Pension System, which is one of the economic improvements and enhancements, enabling the elderly population to actively and independently lead their lives; should be designed with an arrangement in which the state pays more contributions. Both the normal retirement pension conditions and the conditions in the law number 2022, known as the 65-years of age monthly pension, must be stretched. The amount of elderly pensions given under this law should be increased to a level that "meets minimum living conditions"; and it should be ensured that the elderly can participate in economic and social life effectively.
- To benefit from the life and professional experiences of the elderly and to include in employment by means of flexible hours; tax discounts and incentive loans should be available to the consultancy companies in the 'old participation partnership'. A certain proportion of shareholding by young people with older individuals done for these incentive loans will increase the reputation of the elderly and provide intergenerational solidarity due to the opportunity created by the cooperation. This restructuring, which will be the return of the consultation authority in the old social life; will provide the opportunity for young people to open a business with incentive loans, as well as make the elderly respectable in social and business life; supporting social sustainability.
- All kinds of economic and social opportunities that will contribute to the social life of the elderly, opportunities to provide them with a more active life, an increase in their quality of life and attachment to social life; will contribute to improving the quality of life of the elderly, as well as to the social welfare level and sustainability of the society.
- By strengthening the family structure, the services that public and local managements support families in order to care for their elderly should be diversified. Incentives should be made to cover the rent and maintenance costs, strengthening the provision of opportunities for the elderly and their families to stay in the same apartment

and to be neighbors. Elderly individuals who cannot provide this opportunity should be allowed to benefit from high quality long-term care, health and other services.

- Improving the aging process in the social structure, creating active aging environments and ensuring its continuity should be the main objective and protective and preventive policies should be implemented.

Addressing these issues will determine, the importance that the society attributes to the increasing proportion of the elderly in the population segment and their problems, along with social norms and other factors. Therefore, all suggestions that will contribute to the elderly life should be developed as development plans and strategic action plans; contributions should be made to economic sustainability as well as social sustainability. Regulations that increase the level of participation in social life and contribute to social sustainability and social welfare of the elderly population, which has an important share in the demographic structure; should be realized by being supported by both development plans and the private sector, local administrations, non-governmental organizations and society.

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