

GOVERNING AGING IN TURKEY: MUNICIPAL ACTIVE AGING DISCOURSES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DESIRABLE OLDER SUBJECT

A Ph.D. Dissertation

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SUBJECT
Bilkent University 2022

To my *family*
and
Süper Baba



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SUBJECT

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
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by

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ANKARA

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SUBJECT

By Damla Yazar

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

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ABSTRACT

GOVERNING AGING IN TURKEY: MUNICIPAL ACTIVE AGING DISCOURSES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DESIRABLE OLDER SUBJECT

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This thesis examines active aging discourses through the lens of governmentality theory of Foucault. The focus is on how active aging discourses, which primarily promote an autonomous and productive older subject as desirable, are shaped by the broader policy and welfare context in Turkey. In the Western context, active aging functions as a tool of neoliberal governmentality which responsabilize older individuals for managing their own welfare and aging process through specific conducts and self-technologies, mainly reflecting Western middle-class values. This promote the autonomous and productive desirable older subject in response to the negative construction of aging as a demographic ‘crisis’ associated with increasing public expenditures in a neoliberal context of the decreasing roles of the welfare state. In Turkey, neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism articulate each other in a context where the welfare regime historically and still predominantly relies on family; thus, the rationalization of active aging discourses are expected to differ from those in the Western context. Focusing on the municipal discourses on active aging, this thesis looks at how problematizations of aging vary at local level. It considers how

municipalities problematize aging and how those problematizations are addressed by active aging discourses. Based on in-depth interviews conducted with 15 people from 11 municipalities across the country, the research finds that population aging in Turkey is problematized in line with the transformation of families and their decreasing caregiving capacity—namely, as a care crisis. Within this framework, various distinctions and commonalities across the regional and socio-economic development level are observed and overall it is found that Turkish municipal active aging discourses promote an autonomous, self-reliant older subject as desirable in order to compensate for the decreasing welfare potential of families.

Keywords: Active aging, governmentality, desirable older subject, family, municipal discourses

ÖZET

TÜRKİYE'DE YAŞLANMANIN YÖNETİMİ: BELEDİYELERİN AKTİF YAŞLANMA SÖYLEMLERİ VE MAKBUL YAŞLININ İNŞASI

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Bu tez, aktif yaşlanma söylemlerini Michel Foucault'nun yönetimsellik yaklaşımı çerçevesinden incelemektedir. Odak noktası, öncelikli olarak otonom/kendi kendine yeten ve üretken bir yaşlı özneyi teşvik eden aktif yaşlanma söylemlerinin, Türkiye'deki politika altyapısı ve refah rejimi bağlamında nasıl şekillendiğini anlamaktır. Batıdaki aktif yaşlanma söylemleri, Batılı orta sınıf değerlerini yansıtan benlik teknolojileri yoluyla yaşlı bireyleri kendi refah ve yaşlanma sürecinden sorumlu kılan neoliberal yönetimselliğin bir aracı olarak işlev görmektedir. Bu, bağlamda aktif yaşlanma söylemleri refah devletinin kamu harcamalarını artıran bir "kriz" olarak algılanan yaşlanmanın olumsuz inşasına çözüm olarak otonom/kendi kendine yeten ve üretken bir makbul yaşlı özneyi inşa etmektedir. Türkiye'de muhafazakarlığın ve neo-liberalizmin aileye dayanan refah rejiminin fonksiyonlarını ikame etmek üzere eklemelenmesinin, Türkiye'de aktif yaşlanma söylemlerinin resyonelleştirilme biçimlerini farklılaştıracağı düşünülmektedir. Belediyelerin aktif yaşlanma söylemlerine odaklanan bu tez, yerel düzeyde yaşlanmanın sorunsallaştırılmasının

nasıl farklılaştığını ve aktif yaşlanmanın bu sorunsallaştırmalarla nasıl ilişkilendiğini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Ülke genelinde 11 belediyeden 15 kişiyle yapılan derinlemesine görüşmelere dayanan araştırma, Türkiye'de yaşanan nüfusun, ailelerin dönüşümü ve azalan bakım verme 'kapasite'lerinin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan bakım krizi üzerinden sorunsallaştırıldığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çerçevede, bölgesel ve sosyo-ekonomik gelişmişlik düzeyi gözetildiğinde, belediye söylemlerinde çeşitli farklılıklar ve ortaklıklar tespit edilmiş ve genel olarak, Türkiye'deki aktif yaşlanma söylemlerinin, ailelerin azalan refah potansiyelini ikame etmek üzere otonom/kendi kendine yeten bir makbul yaşlı özne inşasını rasyonelleştirdiği gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aktif yaşlanma, yönetimsellik, makbul yaşlı özne, aile, belediye söylemleri

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I am dedicating this thesis to my father. This thesis would not have been possible without his vision as a father who devoted much to me, to us. This thesis is an extension of his empathy and beautiful contradictions which have fed me

throughout my life.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AII	Active Aging Index
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
MoFSS	Ministry of Family and Social Services
EU	European Union
UN	United Nation
UNECE	United Nation Economic Commission for Europe
WHO	World Health Organization
YADES	Yaşlı Destek Programı

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Main Concepts of the Study

This study focuses specifically on the discourse of ‘active aging’ which has gained prominence in 90s (Boudiny, 2013) as a response to the negative portrayal of aging in Western societies and is now a central discourse shaping aging policies in Turkey. Drawing from critical aging studies, this thesis adopts a Foucauldian lens of governmentality for its theoretical perspective. This enables an analysis of active aging policies that goes beyond its normative limitations in a contextual and relational way.

For Foucault (1991), there is not only one rationality in governing. Rather, the rationalities for governing are plural, and governmentality is about the “right disposition of things” which covers power relations at various levels of society and not just the sovereign-subject relationship. Foucault (1991) characterizes the governmentality process as the “conduct of conduct” enabling an analysis of power relations as embedded within society and thus beyond institutions. Hence, governmentality is also about “governing from a distance” (Rose and Miller, 1992), about the conduct of individuals via their internalization of certain constructed ideals—through self-technologies (Laliberte Rudman 2006).

Unlike in Turkey and other developing countries, the problematization of aging has a long history in the West. In Foucauldian sense such a problematization of a phenomenon legitimizes interventions (Katz 2000), providing the moral space for the enactment of political power, which also affects the social construction of the problematized subject.

Assuming this perspective, the early critical studies on aging associated the negative social construction of older people—that is, of dependency—with social and political structures, and basic mechanisms of welfare regimes. They studied aging in relation to the welfare state's retirement and social security systems (Walker, 2008), as well as the commodification of older people's health and care needs, which resulted in the medicalization of aging, intensifying older people's dependency (Estes, 2011). In this approach, the low level of pension payments and limited access to resources are seen as increasing poverty among older people, leading to “structured dependency” (Townsend, 1981).

At global scale governments and international organizations (e.g., WHO, OECD) problematize ageing as a financial risk and burden for public budgets. Thus, especially the caregiving capacity of welfare states is problematized in Western context. Cost efficiency in public expenditures is prioritized, and the dependency of older people is especially problematized due to the ‘burden’ they put on the public budgets through its social security and health systems. Thus, the negative social construction of population aging and older subjects as dependent, was also due to the main functions and structures of welfare regimes. (Walker & Maltby, 2012)

However, welfare regimes are also diversified based on the differentiated level of

interactions between the actors of welfare provision, namely the market, government and family (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Consequently, the problematization of the welfare provider's 'capacity' and its 'potential' also determine mode of intervention in the problematized subject. In Western context older people are problematized through the decreasing welfare capacity of governments.

The problematization of aging based on public expenditures and physical decline of older individual, promoted individualistic neoliberal positive aging discourses, aiming to intervene negative constructions of aging and reconstruct older subjects in new and positive ways (Walker, 2008). Active aging, as one of the most predominant these positive aging discourses, was disseminated by international organizations, and came to dominate aging policies globally—it became the norm, an assumed 'truth' (Lassen & Moreira, 2014)

Although active aging discourses are thus promoted normatively politically—among governments, by transnational agencies, national policy-making bodies, and the like—a scientific truth (Katz, 2000), in critical aging studies, it became considered a tool of neoliberal governmentality. This involved a focus on the disciplinary and exclusionary aspects of active aging, which disseminate a Western and middle-class activities (Katz, 2000) as the basis of an ideal lifestyle in late life for older subjects.

Active aging discourses consistent with neoliberal welfare regimes responsabilize older subjects for their own aging processes and welfare (Ervik, 2006, Marhánková 2011) through promoting an autonomous, self-reliant, and productive older subject as desirable (Moulaert & Biggs, 2013; Marhánková 2011,

LaliberteRudman 2006; Ranzijn 2010) . Consequently, structured activities promoted by active aging discourses have been instrumentalized for the actualization of neoliberal conducts and Foucauldian self-technologies (Marhánková 2011). This process of governmentality, compensate the decreasing functions of welfare states, and the responsibility on welfare provision is transferred to the older individual from the welfare state in Western context. (Katz 1992; Biggs and Powell 2001; Walker 2008)

In the Turkish context, the problematization of aging by policy makers and academicians is still a new phenomenon due to the increase of population aging and life expectancy lately. Thus, only recently problematized in Turkey, aging had not been subjected to a systematic governmentality process as in Western countries. The central government aimed to handle rapid population aging via an eclectic policymaking process as a response to ‘alarmist’ (Katz, 1992) discourses on aging. It is essential to analyse the unique characteristics of how aging is problematized in relation to the primary actors of a welfare system -state, family, market, and individual- as this is necessary for understanding the reasoning and justification behind policy interventions, especially how active aging discourses travel Turkish policy making process.

By late of 2000s the central government attempted to diversify its policy infrastructure which was previously based on the provision of institutional care. Consequently, in line with neoliberal tendencies—to which Turkey, like the West (albeit slowly and piecemeal), had been moving since the 1980s—central government aimed to outsource its responsibilities for eldercare among other actors

of the welfare regime, mainly family.

The conservative Southern European welfare regime, of which Turkey is an example, is characterized by the family serving as the primary provider of welfare (Buğra and Keyder, 2006, p.212; Buğra, 2012, p. 15; Gough, 1996; Saraceno 2002), with familism being the governing approach in welfare policy. In this type of regime, participation of women in the workforce is limited, and there is a reliance on informal care provided by family members and the community. (Kondratowitz, 2015, p.42) In this welfare regime and in Turkey the informal care is performed mainly through women with lower socio-economic status and the burden of care may severely affect the physical and psychological health of these women (Gok Metin, Karadas, Balci & Cankurtaran, 2019).

Traditionally, in Turkey older people's relations with their families are constructed via filial piety, which is an assemblage of traditional norms and cultural instinct enabling children to obey and respect their parents, and guide for taking care of their parents. (Chen, 2008). However, as a result of urbanization and industrialization leading to social transformation, the size of households has been consistently decreasing in Turkey (TurkStat, 2022b). This shift from extended to nuclear families and increasing 'sandwich generations' women exposed to the double burden stemming from care duty and work life (İzdeş-Terkoğlu & Memiş, 2022) further diminishes the 'capacity' for informal caregiving in the country, thereby induce a care crisis.

In response to the care crisis, central government responsabilize families both at discursive and practical level. At discursive level “sacred family” discourses encourage the co-residence of families and older people also as an extension of neo-conservatism (Akkan, 2018). At practical level, the cash-for-care program initiated by Ministry of Family and Social Services (Aile ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı/MoFSS) covering families with low income also responsabilize them for taking care of disabled older people. Transferring a certain amount of money to the family members, and not the older individual (Regulation No: 26679, 2007) this program enhances the dependent imageries of older people (Con Wright, 2020) also enhances the traditional caregiving role of women (Atasü Topçuoglu, 2022; Aybars, Beşpınar, & Kalaycıoğlu 2018).

Although family has always been an important welfare mechanism before the neoliberal transformation of social policies (İzdeş-Terkoğlu & Memiş, 2022), recently the caregiving role of families are especially regenerated via the promotion of three generational families and cash-for-care programs which indicate also the regeneration of family called as the ‘return of the family’ by Yazıcı (2012). Consequently, as the care potential of families is problematized, older people’s relations with their families transformed to a space of governmentality of aging, which transform families into a tool of governmentality (Donzelot, 1979) in Turkey, in line with neo-conservative governing rationality.

Although the responsabilization of families is predominant paradigm within the policy discourses, privatization and localization of aging policies are also important to understand the eclectic policy structure on aging in Turkey. The

privatization of institutional care and the shifted responsibility of care toward market mechanisms reflect that, neo-liberalism is a relevant governing rationality shaping aging policies. At the beginning of the 2000s, the capabilities of state-owned nursing homes were quite limited, and currently, 90% of existing private nursing homes have been established since 2003. (MoFSS, 2022)

On the other hand, MoFSS also initiated a financial program supporting local municipalities in their services for older people that was especially directly to those aiming to ameliorate homecare and active aging services. This *Elderly Support Program (Yaşlı Destek Programı/YADES)* reflects the decentralization of government duties that can be described as a step of government's neoliberal outsourcing of responsibilities in welfare provision. However, it is important to note that this program should not be viewed as a full decentralization process. Instead, the program is managed not through the provincial branches of MoFSS, but rather through the local governerships, which are the local representatives of the central government. Furthermore, YADES program is also instrumentalized for the 'strengthening of traditional family structure' through the provision of homecare and daycare services. (MoFSS, 2019)

Finally, since late 2000s central government strictly embraced active aging at discursive level. Active aging discourses regenerated by international organization in 90s (Boudiny, 2013) responsabilizes the older individual in their own aging process and promotes a new desirable older subject, that is, one who is autonomous, an agent—and also self-reliant and productive (Ranzjin, 2010). It should be noted, however, that although the principles and discourses of active aging are frequently

used and inform public documents and the main agendas of policy meetings—it dominates at a discursive level—its actual practice—even in the main cities and certainly in the country as a whole—remains weak. One of the main initiations of MoFSS on active aging is also conceptualized as daycare services (*gündüzlü bakım hizmeti*) in the legislation (Law No: 26960). Daycare services aim to engage older people living alone or with their families/relatives with social and physical activities for older people. Thus, in the legislation, active aging policies are instrumentalized for care. The primary objective of centers offering daycare/active aging services is to enhance the autonomy of older individuals and to strengthen their connections with their families and community (Law No: 26960). This also reflects how neo-liberal and neo-conservative policies have been articulated to compensate the decreasing role of the state in providing welfare services (Acar & Altunok, 2013). Nadesan (2008) suggests that the way neoconservatism and neoliberalism treat their subjects are different: the patriotic, moralized, and self-sacrificing neoconservative subject partially negates the self-interested individualistic neoliberal subject.

Within this policy context where the family is the main welfare provider and neo-conservatism and neoliberalism are articulated to govern aging in Turkey, two basic questions are addressed in this research:

1. How does the problematization of aging vary based on municipal discourses from different regions, political affiliations and levels of socioeconomic development?
2. How do neoliberal active aging discourses address those problematizations and engage with different governing rationalities?

Methodologically, this thesis is empirically based, employing a qualitative research design involving in-depth interviews conducted with 15 municipal officials from 11 representative municipalities (i.e., in various regions, at varying socio-economic development levels, and with different political affiliations).

Governmentality studies have been criticized for relying on policy documents (Van Dyk, Lessenich, Denninger, & Ritcher, 2013), which prevents them from uncovering the complexity of the social realm (McKee, 2009). Here, the results from the representative municipal official interviews enable a more nuanced analysis of governmentality of aging in Turkey, that is, at a local level and in a relational context.

1.2 Main Argument

Using the concept of governmentality developed by Michel Foucault, this thesis explores the techniques of governing aging through the promotion of an idealized desirable older subject that aligns with the Western based active aging discourses. Governmentality studies are criticized for focusing mainly on neoliberalism (Brady, 2004) and ending to conclude with the production of similar results and techniques of governing (Bröckling, Krasmann, & Lemke, 2010; Brady, 2014). Here, this is taken as the primary main critique of governmentality studies, which opens a space for contributing to the governmentality studies at both at theoretical and practical levels.

Both neo-conservatism and welfare familialism make Turkey a special case that affords to explore diversities and complexities of the governmentality process when compared to governmentality studies focusing just on individualistic neoliberal governmentalities. Within such a context, the main concern of the thesis is to understand how neoliberal active aging discourses promoting an autonomous and self-reliant desirable aging subjectivity are engaged with the current Turkish policy context, namely the welfare regime relying on family in Turkey.

The main argument of the thesis is that in Turkey where the welfare regime largely relies on the family, the population aging is problematized through families decreasing welfare provision capacity due to the shift from extended to nuclear families. Consistently, disciplinary active aging discourses traveling Turkey are strongly embraced by all metropolitan municipalities as a ‘truth’ and as a solution to decreasing caregiving capacities of families in Turkey. Consequently, the responsibilization of families for care shifted to older individuals through promotion of a self-reliant/autonomous older subject as desirable expected to take care of him/herself through the performing active aging practices. This reflect that neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism/conservatism are articulated to overcome the care crisis due to families’ decreasing caregiving potential and Turkish policy infrastructure remain unprepared for an aging population.

Consequently, in cases like Turkey where different governing rationalities articulated, conducts and self-technologies that are accelerated by those rationalities also coordinates to address the primary problematization. The fieldwork I conducted with municipalities makes it clear that familialist concerns forms the basis of the

problematization of aging in Turkey and an autonomous older subject is instrumentalized to decrease care ‘burden’ of families. Thus, familialist conducts such as prioritizing families’ welfare are actualized through the individualistic self-technologies internalized by desirable older subjects promoted by active aging discourses. This enables to analyze how the conducts and self-technologies of different governing rationalities engage with one another contextually

1.3 The plan of The Thesis

The thesis is made up of five chapters in addition to this introduction and the final conclusion. The first two chapters are theoretical, establishing the context and conceptual framework; the third provides the methodology and research design; and the last two chapters are empirical, reporting interview results and analyzing them within the approach outlined, moving from the local to national level.

The second chapter focuses on the development of global active aging discourses in the West. It situates the emergence of these discourses within a neoliberal welfare context and explains their connection to the scientific activity theory of the 1950s. It also examines the key features of the desirable older subject as promoted by active aging in the Western context and explores the reasoning behind the promotion of an autonomous and productive older subjectivity as desirable from a Foucauldian governmentality perspective.

The third chapter analyzes aging policies in Turkey, with a particular focus on the active aging discourses of the central government. It also provides an overview of the welfare context in Turkey as characterized by neoconservatism and familialism,

and it situates aging and active aging policies within this welfare context. Then, providing the methodology and research design, the fourth chapter focusses on governmentality as a methodological approach

The fifth chapter, the first empirical chapter, focuses on the different forms of familism within local government discourses. Firstly, the main goal of this chapter is to assess the level of familization and de-familization in different municipalities, based on three themes that reflect the municipalities' level of responsabilization for eldercare: their attitudes toward filial piety (a traditional source of responsabilizing families for eldercare); their views on living arrangements; and the eligibility criteria for homecare services. Secondly, the chapter aims to outline how desirable autonomous older subjects promoted by active aging engage with municipal discourses on familism. The main argument of the chapter is that all municipalities have a familist approach, but the reasoning behind it differs. This is explicated according to municipalities' level of familism and the hybridity of their approaches to aging and welfare, which also determine how active aging discourses engage with those different levels.

The sixth chapter situates the active aging discourses of local governments within the broader context of aging policies in Turkey, specifically in relation to the discourses on institutional care and 'aging in place'. It is observed that active aging is normatively seen as a 'truth' for late life by all municipalities. However, while active aging discourses in Eastern, Northern and Central Anatolia are stricter and more disciplinary about the global 'standards', Western municipalities are more flexible in terms of the content of the relevant activities and thus more critical of the

disciplinary and exclusionary practices of active aging especially based on class and access to active aging ‘opportunities’. Finally, the conclusion presents the main findings.



CHAPTER II

GLOBAL ACTIVE AGING DISCOURSES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DESIRABLE OLDER SUBJECT

Introduction

This chapter examines the resurgence of the concept of active aging within international organizations and its growing influence in both policy and academic realms in the 1990s and beyond. While active aging is a prevalent idea in global aging discourse, it lacks a clear, agreed-upon definition. Therefore, rather than focusing on specific normative definitions of active aging, the chapter instead considers how aging is problematized and addressed through active aging discourses.

Within this context, the chapter aims to clarify in which context active aging discourses gained popularity and its relation to with earlier aging theories such as activity theory and disengagement theory. Secondly, it focuses on the discourses of international organisations and how they undertake active aging. Later the chapter covers Foucauldian governmentality approach and Foucault's perspectives on neoliberalism. Finally, based on critical aging studies integrating active aging discourses and neoliberal governmentality, the chapter covers how active aging discourses promotes a desirable older subject who is self-reliant/autonomous and productive, thus responsible for his/her own welfare.

2.1 The Problematization of Aging as a Crisis

With the increasing rates of older populations in the world, aging became more visible as an academic area and policy issue. Aging is problematized in general as ‘crisis’, which makes the aging population as a whole and older subjects as individuals the targets of policy discourses and mechanism. Foucault’s problematization concept is crucial for contextualizing the transformation of the ageing and its social construction process (Katz, 2000). Foucault’s *problematization* concept is crucial for contextualizing the transformation of the aging and its social construction process: “There is a relation between the thing which is problematized and the process of problematization. The problematization is an “answer” to a concrete situation which is real.” (Foucault, 2001: 172)

Examining how aging is reconstructed or problematized within academic and policy domains can help to understand the basic characteristics of current social and political realities . Problematization is a process through which governing operates. (Bacchi, 2012) Murdoch and Ward (1997) also emphasize governmentality as the “state” ways of problematization of life and its conduct, enabling a response to the problems through solutions. Katz (2000:137) notes that the problematization process has disciplinary functions that shape everyday life practices related to aging.

For Foucault, a problematization involves a set of practices that transforms a realm of human existence into a crisis of thought...Hence, problematizing practices discipline everyday life by transforming ordinary and sometimes arbitrary aspects of human existence such as adjustment to retirement into universal dilemmas that call for administrative and professional interventions buoyed by a politics of “thought.” (Katz, 2000:137).

Drawing on the insights of critical gerontology, the arguments of Katz and Foucault on problematization, the reconstruction of aging can be understood within its social and political context. Minkler (1996) points out that critical gerontology provides multidisciplinary conceptual tools for this purpose, and notes that aging is not independent of the social and economic positions of older people. There is a significant amount of literature discussing the negative social construction of old age and late life, and how and why older people are often portrayed as dependent and “burdensome” to society (Boudiny, 2013; Walker, 2006). These approaches, that negatively characterize the older population, have been labeled as "alarmist" (Katz, 1992) and "apocalyptic" (Gee & Gutman, 2000) demography. Katz (1992) identifies the specific aspects of this negative social construction thus:

Demographic reports in the media and social policy and professional literature often depict the elderly as a rapidly growing population of needy, relatively affluent individuals whose collective dependence is straining the economies of Western welfare states and creating excessive tax burdens for younger generations. (Katz, 1992: 203)

Many researchers, including Katz (1992), have explored the relationship between the negative social construction of aging and the transformation of the welfare state. According to Walker (2008), older people's relationship with the welfare state has reinforced ageist stereotypes of dependency and the older person as a “passive recipient of pensions” leading to an association between late life and poverty and vulnerability. In addition, Walker notes that the origins of the welfare state itself lie in pension systems and social security mechanisms for late life, and that the expansion of these systems within social expenditures can jeopardize the sustainability of welfare states in the future. As a result, expenditures on aging have become an important factor shaping the dynamics of welfare regimes, leading to

unequal distribution of "welfare state packages" due to pension expenditures (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Walker, 2008). Namely, a relatively large portion of public expenditure is allocated to pensions, compared to other welfare state duties such as unemployment, health, and disability. (Quadagno, Kail, & Shekha, 2011)

In addition to the welfare state, the health domain is another area in which older people are problematized and disciplined. While health is closely related to welfare, it is worth considering separately in order to better understand aging in its social and political context. It is rare to find literature on aging or policy documents that do not address related health issues. In general, policy documents aim to improve the health of older people, often with an emphasis on increasing public expenditure. The fact that aging is often discussed in terms of health is also related to the idea of aging as characterized by biological decline and associated with illness and decreased physical abilities (Ervik 2006). As a result, public expenditure on the health of older people has become a major source of support for the "apocalyptic" demography discourses. Biggs and Powell (2001) argue that health and welfare are instrumentalized to legitimize certain identities approved for older people, while the privatization of health services and the insurance system have expanded the medical "gaze" framing perceptions of aging and enhancing the power of health professionals. Therefore, decline discourses are intensified in the medico-technical domain providing solutions for the problems to be created by the process of aging. This has led to a shift in the focus of aging studies toward medicine, while social gerontology has remained stagnant (Biggs & Powell, 2001).

There have been numerous studies on the changing role of welfare states in the neoliberal era, which is characterized by a focus on individual responsibility for one's own welfare and the privatization of public services including pension and care systems (Laliberte Rudman, 2016). The neoliberal aspect of aging will be further explored in the context of neoliberal governmentality and active aging in later sections of this chapter.

2.2 Contextualizing Active Aging Discourses

Throughout history, various policy perspectives have been developed with the aim of eliminating the “burdens” of aging at the individual and societal levels. To address this perceived “problem” academics and policy makers have attempted to reconstruct the image of old age in a positive light, as opposed to the negative, dependent portrayal of older people as a burden on society. From this perspective, governmental actors have sought to normalize the older subject through “positive aging” discourses. And as a result, in response to negative social construction, active aging policies have emerged (Walker 2006; Stenner, McFarquhar, & Bowling, 2011).

The active aging discourse which gained popularity in the 1990s when it was promoted by the World Health Organization (WHO) (Walker, 2006). While "active aging" became dominant discourse shaping the aging policies of many countries, however, many academic studies pointed to the ambiguity of the concept and the lack of consensus on what active aging and activity actually mean (Boudiny, 2013; Boudiny & Mortelmas, 2011; Katz, 2000; Marhánková, 2017; Ranzjin, 2010; Walker

& Maltby, 2012). Scholars have described the active aging discourses as “catchwords” (Ervik, 2006), “slogans”, “catchy” and “mottos” (Marhánková, 2017), and even as a “paradigm” or “cosmovision” (López-López & Sánchez, 2020) due to its ability to establish common techniques and their widespread implementation. Notwithstanding the lack of a clear definition and agreement on activities that should increase the well-being of the older subject, active aging remains an unquestionable policy discourse (Marhánková, 2017; Sanchez & Hatton-Yeo, 2012). Thus, Marhánková (2017) argues, the combination of the terms “active” and “aging” has become a postmodern ‘incantation’ representing an “idealized” lifestyle in old age.

In fact, the ambiguity of the active aging discourse, together with its emergence as a response to welfare state crises, positively contributes to its attractiveness in social science and policy discourses. According to Davis (as cited in Marhánková, 2017) when a theory addresses a widespread danger and offers hope in relation to that danger it is more likely to become attractive or “seductive.” Active aging discourses also often address the problems associated with population aging and prescribe solutions for older people—or at least a ready-made policy explanation which is particularly appealing to policymakers and older individuals as audiences. (Marhánková, 2017). One of the most frequently cited definitions of active aging, developed by the WHO (2002) also includes solutions to the apocalyptic demography prophecies that highlight the risks and dangers of an aging population.

The focus is placed on active aging discourses in this thesis because they are the most commonly adopted versions of these prescriptions, and their aim is to provide solutions for problematizations of an aging population and the older

individual. By examining active aging through the lens of Foucault's concept of governing through problematization, we can better understand active aging as a policy discourse that advises solutions for the problems of population aging and, thus, the reality of how aging is socially constructed.

At the same time, active aging also provides a conceptual tool for examining the idealized older subject approved for older people in the neoliberal era. While active aging has targets and techniques on activity level, such as increased participation and inclusion, focusing solely on these targets and techniques in a normative way is insufficient for an understanding of the experiences of older people. Analysis of active aging discourses reveals that their main goal is to create an autonomous, responsible, and productive older person (Ranzjin, 2010; Moulaert & Biggs, 2013), which is closely aligned with the neoliberal ideal subjectivity who is free and autonomous (Rose 1990). This relationship should be considered for an adequate analysis of the governmentality process which will be further explored later in this chapter.

2.3 The Happy Marriage of Activity Theory and Aging Policies

The early theoretical perspectives on aging were established on two opposing lines: disengagement and activity theory. Activity and disengagement theory prescribe successful aging via proposing contrasting solutions (Havighurst, 1963; Schulz, 2006). Successful aging is generally conceptualized in contrast with maladjustment to the changes associated with aging, including life dissatisfaction, in addition to

declining health (Lynott & Lynott, 1996). Many scholars have argued that the policy discourse of active aging has its roots in activity theory (Boudiny, 2013; Boudiny & Mortelman, 2011), which was developed as a response to functionalist disengagement theory, as proposed by Havighurst and Cumming in 1961 (see Cumming and Henry, 1961).

Disengagement theory suggests that the social and psychological disengagement of older people is inevitable and functional for society, as it allows them to prepare for death and for society to adapt to their withdrawal without disruption (Marshall, 1999; Lynott & Lynott, 1996). According to this perspective, older people replace the roles and activities they held in midlife with new ones that are more appropriate for late life and characterized by low levels of social relations (Schulz, 2006). From this perspective, disengagement theory proposes social and psychological withdrawal as a model for aging populations and suggests that it is necessary for successful aging (Maddox, 1964). Disengagement theory also shifts the focus of analysis from the individual to the social system, suggesting that as people age, they lose their abilities and social systems respond to this situation through disengagement mechanisms that facilitate mutual withdrawal between older people and society (Lynott & Lynott, 1996).

In contrary, in activity theory, the maintenance of middle-age activities is emphasized strongly. The reason for the insistence on the maintenance of middle age activities in later life is to enable adjustment due the change occurring in older people's definition of self that is based on the characteristics of late life that they experience, such as retirement, role loss, poverty—which, according to activity

theorists, cause “maladjustment” or “unadjustment” in the older individual’s life. (Lynott & Lynott, 1996) At this point, Lynott and Lynott (1996) make an important remark on the nature of activity theory. As it may detect the reason for dissatisfaction in later life, activity theory can also provide the solutions for a “readjusted” later life, and it was activity theorists who came to determine the standards of an appropriate life.

Many theoreticians criticized activity theory for its lack of contextualization of older people's experiences. For example, John (1984) argued that older people should not be studied without considering their social embeddedness. He emphasized the importance of interpreting the lives of older people in connection with the “larger question” that would help to uncover the system within which older people live. Estes (1979) and Olson (1982) representatives of political economy in social gerontology, were also among those who recognized the importance of considering social and political conditions in aging studies and criticized early theories of aging for neglecting these factors. Additionally, Olson (as cited in Lynott & Lynott, 1996) indicated the relationship between the early theories and certain political standings, emphasizing, for example, how their political dispositions highlighted some “facts” rather than others: “The metatheoretical feature of the argument is that the theories are more than alternative formal explanations for the so-called "facts" of aging; their political undertones serve to produce select facts.” (as cited in Lynott & Lynott, 1996: 754)

It is important to clarify the position of activity theory within theoretical categorizations in order to understand its viewpoints and to explore the reasons for its

“happy marriage” with aging policies around the world. Pierce and Timonen (2009) argue that social policies, including aging policies, are based on theory to some extent. Therefore, it is important to consider pertinent questions—“How did activity theory come to dominate the policy discourse about aging and why? Was it a coincidence? Why did activity become the basic tool of policy implementation?”—in order to contextualize active aging socially and politically. As a normative theory (Marshall, 1999), activity theory does not contextualize the emergence of policies related to older people and, therefore, cannot provide a critical perspective on aging policies.

Categorizing aging theories in general, Marshall (1999) places activity and disengagement theories in the normative category, as linking theories between macro and micro perspectives. The fact that activity theory and disengagement theory are considered linking theories suggests that they are related to both structures and individuals and their agency. According to Havighurst (1963), activity theorists accept that there is a disengagement process in late life but hold that it occurs without the consent and desire of people, in contrast to disengagement theorists who argue that the withdrawal is desired and accepted by older people. This indicates that the will of individuals is important for activity theory and that older people have the capacity to shape their own life conditions. The emphasis on the agency of individuals as a “fact” also helps to responsabilize them for their own aging process, autonomy, and productivity regarding their own lives and welfare, which can be seen as characteristic of a neoliberal subject. By attributing agency to individuals and downplaying structural conditions, this responsabilizing discourse feeds into the neoliberal governmentality approach of making older people responsible for their

own welfare—which may help explain why it is activity theory rather than disengagement theory that prioritizes the agency of individuals, which, in turn, has dominated the current policy discourse on aging around the world.

2.4 Active Aging and Other Positive Aging Discourses

Identifying the position of active aging among other positive aging discourses can be a useful step in clarifying the definition or approach of active aging. There are many approaches, such as successful aging, healthy aging, productive aging, and active aging, that prescribe an ideal late life for people in order to eliminate the negatives sides of late life. These approaches all center on “activity” as a tool for promoting the health and welfare of seniors.

Positive aging discourses differ in terms of their targeted “outcomes” but they generally have similar means of achieving these outcomes, namely activity. Active aging is a more sophisticated version of positive aging discourses such as healthy, successful, and productive aging, and it goes beyond their limitations (Álvarez-García, Durán-Sánchez, del Río-Rama, & García-Vélez, 2018). Boudiny (2013) also attempts to differentiate between healthy aging and active aging in terms of the relationship between activity and health. She argues that health is not the ultimate aim of active aging, and that it can rather be a tool that supports activities. For Boudiny (2013), active aging provides mechanisms for a more inclusive society than does healthy aging. This is also the case for Rowe and Khan's (1997) approach to successful aging, which focuses on reducing the risks of illness and disability in late life, as well as for productive aging, which only prioritizes the productivity capacity

of older people in economic terms (Álvarez-García et al., 2018).

2.5 Active Aging and International Organizations

International organizations such as the WHO, EU and OECD are considered the key actors in promoting active aging discourses (Moulaert & Paris, 2013). Hence, understanding their approaches to aging and active aging is another important step in the clarification of active aging. Some scholars note that although many studies refer first to the WHO's popular document on active aging published in 2002, "Active Ageing: A Policy Framework," this actually contributed to a regeneration of active aging as a policy discourse. Moulaert and Paris (2013), for example, mention that although active aging as a concept was not mentioned in the first UN World Assembly, some aspects of the active aging conceptual framework were emphasized there, such as being active and participation.

Lassen and Moreira (2014) also argue that the origins of the regeneration of active aging concept in the mid-1990s go back to the WHO's conceptual framework. For them, this was related to a broader emergence of a network of researchers and policy makers who started to see population aging from a demographic and epidemiological point of view due to unexpected life expectancy extension and its burden on social security and public health systems. Similarly, Moulaert and Paris (2013) state that active aging, as a response to the negative representation of aging as a decline process and dependency, was first indicated at the G7 summit in 1996 to welcome the World Bank crisis alert for aging, which highlighted the decrease of human resources due to population aging. Consequently, active aging policy

discourses have always tended to assume negative discursive constructions of late-life (Sánchez, & Hatton-Yeo, 2012). Additionally, the Second World Assembly on Aging and the 2012 European Year for Active Aging and Solidarity between Generations are considered the first steps in the path of the political institutionalization of active aging (López-López, & Sánchez, 2020).

While these international organizations all advocate for an active life and highlight common issues, their conceptual frameworks for active aging may differ due to their diverse institutional, historical, and ideological backgrounds (Lassen & Morreira, 2014; López-López, & Sánchez, 2020). In many studies, the WHO is considered to have a broader and more comprehensive approach to active aging (Moulaert & Paris, 2013) than the EU and OECD. López-López and Sánchez (2020) argue that although there is not a significant split between the approaches of different international organizations, the WHO approach, which focuses on health and social productivity, has begun to be differentiated from the OECD and EU approaches, which are oriented toward economic productivity and labor. They identify three different themes, which are reflected, to varying degrees, by the OECD, EU, and WHO (López-López, & Sánchez, 2020). As a result, it is observed that the WHO documents on active aging reflect a greater concern for participation and contribution and preventive health interventions. The OECD puts more emphasis on the labor perspective, while the EU prioritizes both the labor perspective and the participation/contribution dimensions. In this sense, while the OECD downplays participation–contribution, the WHO uses the labor perspective less frequently.

2.6 Neoliberal Governmentality and Foucault

2.6.1. Governmentality

Foucault first introduced the concept of governmentality in his College de France lectures between 1978 and 1979. As used by Foucault (1991), governmentality refers to the idea that there is not one single rationality for governing and exercising power. Rather, the rationales for governing are multiple and can take different forms and use different techniques depending on their historical, economic, and social context. The practices of government are varied and can take many forms, involving different types of people, including, for example, families, teachers; it can involve self-control, management of the soul, and more (Foucault, 1991; Lemke, 2002) Thus, governing is not a single activity that only concerns the governor and subject, but rather refers to a complex relationship that involves a multiplicity of practices, contexts, and people (Foucault, 1991).

In his earlier studies, Foucault conceptualizes power around the notion of “discipline” which, differently to brutal sovereign force, operates by organizing combinations of space, time, and the everyday activities of people, especially through the surveillance of bodies and institutions, such as schools, prisons, hospitals, and the military. (Foucault, 1991; Lemke, 2002) However, his conceptualization of disciplinary power was insufficient to capture the power relationships diffused in society. Hence, in his later studies on governmentality, Foucault aimed to revise and “update” his previous analysis of power (Bröckling et al., 2010; Lemke, 2002).

Moving outside the “institutional-centric” approach provided Foucault with many opportunities in terms of observing the extent to which the outside of an institution fell under state operation (Murdoch & Ward, 1997). This perspective enables the uncovering of technologies of power from a broader perspective. Foucault argued that moving outside of institutions to consider their functions enables the analysis of tactics and strategies. Additionally, considering the object of disciplinary power, his new perspective enables analysis of how a field of truth with its objects of knowledge is constituted within a process (instead of the ready-made objects within institutions) (Foucault, 2007: 117–18).

According to Foucault (2007), the concept of *conduct* is a central aspect of pastoral power in Western society, and in his discussions of governmentality, Foucault often refers to the “conduct of conduct” to characterize the way power operates through the regulation of behavior. Conduct as a concept has an equivocal nature that can deal with the specificity of relations of power.

Conduct is the activity of conducting (*conduire*), of conduction (*la conduction*) if you like, but it is equally the way in which one conducts oneself (*se conduit*), lets oneself be conducted (*se laisse conduire*), is conducted (*est conduit*), and finally, in which one behaves (*se comporter*) as an effect of a form of conduct (*une conduite*) as the action of conducting or of conduction (*conduction*) (Foucault 1982: 789).

Davidson (2009) notes that the term “conduct” has a dual meaning, which Foucault refers to as “equivocal.” On the one hand, conduct refers to the activity of guiding or directing someone in a social context, while on the other hand, it refers to an individual’s own behavior or manner of acting. In his article “Subject and Power” Foucault (1982) suggests that conduct also involves managing a range of possibilities

for action within a quasi-open field. This raises questions about how the dominant conduct of certain individuals or groups shapes the conduct of others.

According to Moulaert and Biggs (2012), the dominant conduct imposed by governments for the sake of population security can limit the range of possibilities for individual action; thus, states may seem to “govern less” while still dominating the horizons of personal development. This idea is reflected in the concept of “governmentality,” which Rose and Miller (1992) describe as governing “at a distance,” meaning that the government exerts indirect control over the conduct of its subjects rather than directly interfering with their free will. For Foucault, governments act upon the will of individuals and their way of regulating themselves to control their life. He emphasizes that modern governmentality or “conduct of conduct” is not exercised through coercive power and domination but is dependent on the freedom and activeness of individuals (Pyykkönen, 2015).

Freedom is an important component of Foucault’s governmentality and power conceptualization. He argues that freedom is one of the essential aspects of power because in a situation where the will of the individual is curtailed, such as in slavery, there are no power relations. For Foucault, power and freedom are not oppositional, so they are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, freedom is the condition for the operation of power.

Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments, may be realized. Where the determining factors saturate the whole, there is no relationship of power; slavery is not a power relationship when man is in chains. (In this case it is a question of a physical relationship of constraint.) Consequently, there is no face-to-face

confrontation of power and freedom, which are mutually exclusive (freedom disappears everywhere power is exercised), but a much more complicated interplay. In this game freedom may well appear as the condition for the exercise of power. (Foucault, 1982: 790)

The statement “Where the determining factors saturate the whole, there is no relationship of power” (Foucault, 1982: 789) also indicates an important aspect of Foucault’s notion of power. He appears to indicate a certain kind of resistance, a multiplicity of different forces, a certain level of balance. In a space where there exists only one, pure determinant—freedom or dominant will—there is no power relationship. For Foucault, agonism better characterizes a power relationship, referring to a interaction and struggle between different sides. This agonism creates a constant provocation between the parties rather than stopping each other (Foucault, 1982: 789).

Within this framework, Foucault also interrogated the possibilities of resistances and revolts against the pastoral conduct and developed the notion of “counter-conduct” as a conceptual tool to identify oppositional movements. (Foucault, 2007) However, reviewing Foucault’s lectures of March 1, 1978, one observes that he was very sensitive about defining ‘counter-conduct’. One by one, he eliminated many vocabularies, such as ‘revolt’ and ‘dissidence’, as not reflecting what the counter concept indicates (Davidson, 2009). For Foucault, it was due to the crisis of pastoral power that governmentality emerged, and it was through counter-conducts such as asceticism, mysticism, and eschatology that pastoral power faced crisis. To better characterize *counter-conducts* directed to this new governmentality, he gives examples of conscientious objection and the refusal of a certain type of

medical rationality, which essentially propose another, alternative way of acting (i.e., instead of the conduct imposed) (Foucault, 2007: 194-195).

With regard to Foucault's notion of the way in which modern governments seek to control individuals and their behavior—by regulating their own conduct rather than being directly coerced through the use of force and domination— (Rose & Miller, 1992) , Pyykkönen (2015) emphasizes how this relies on the agency and freedom of individuals to govern themselves. Murdoch and Ward (1997: 307) adds that: “Governmentality allows us to explain how the state is able to regulate spheres of civil society that are not under its direct control. In order to undertake this task successfully a host of indirect mechanisms must be employed to ensure that civil domains are governable.” Thus, modern governments aim to shape and influence the behavior of individuals and groups rather than simply dictating to them.

The governmentality process operate, through “*technologies of self*” which refers to the practices and techniques that individuals use to shape and govern themselves in order to achieve a desired status or outcome (Foucault, 1988). Technologies of the self “permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality”—as distinct from technologies of domination, which “determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject” Foucault (Foucault, 1988: 18)

Foucault (1988:19) states that what he means by ‘governmentality’ is the relation itself between technologies of domination and technologies of the self. Lemke (2002) similarly indicates that Foucault’s studies predating governmentality were based on a “genealogy of state” and “genealogy of subject” and notes that their connections were not explored. For Lemke (2002: 250), there was a missing link between genealogy of state and genealogy of subject that is filled by governmentality. In other words, it is through the governmentality conceptualization that the connection between these two research interests of Foucault is established, and technologies of the self and technologies of domination are meaningfully connected with each other (Lemke: 2002).

2.6.2. Foucault and Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is an influential concept that has had many impacts on various branches of the social sciences. While there are many definitions of neoliberalism and various ways in which it has been understood, a common understanding is that it involves a preference for a smaller state and a greater reliance on markets. Larner (2000a) argues that neoliberalism is generally defined based on the idea of a preference for a “minimalist state” as markets are seen as promoting competition, economic efficiency, and choice, which makes them a desirable way to organize economic activity. As a result, privatization and deregulation became key elements in the restructuring of the state’s role. From this perspective, neoliberalism is characterized by a new political and social as well as economic order, one that emphasizes a redefinition of the state’s role and individual responsibility on the basis

of market relations. (Larner, 2000a) Thus, neoliberalism expanded beyond the functioning of market principles and their effects to permeate society more broadly (Springer, Birch, & MacLeavy, 2016).

Foucault's governmentality approach constitutes a strong branch within current neoliberalism studies. Contemporary comprehensive studies of neoliberalism consider Foucault's approach as basic to and providing new tools for an understanding of neoliberalism. (Cahill, Cooper, Konings, & Primrose, 2018). Neoliberalism discussions in general take on a macro perspective and rarely deal with the local and micro-processes. In this context, Barnett et al. (2008) claim that neo-Marxist perspectives positioning neoliberalism as an intentional program for transforming economics and politics and Foucauldian approach dealing with how neoliberalism operates upon its subjects have a complementary character in terms of integrating micro and macro processes. (Barnett, Clarke, Cloke, & Malpas 2008)

This complementary character of basic approaches has led to studies on neoliberal subjectivities. Barnett et al. (2008, p.3) here emphasize the importance of the methodological devices that Foucault's governmentality and biopolitics notions provide, enabling the analysis of rationalities and techniques of state and non-state actors; thus, through these devices, the subject formation process can be observed at a micro-scale. Lemke (2002: 6–7) also touches upon the contributions of governmentality studies to neoliberalism:

The main problem is that they undertake a critique of neo-liberalism by relying on the very concepts they intend to criticize. They operate by confronting knowledge and power, state and economy, subject and power, and we may well ask what role these dualisms play in constituting and stabilizing liberal-capitalist societies. I think the critical contribution of the

concept of governmentality for the study of neo-liberal governmentality lies exactly in “bridging” these dualisms, trying to analyse them on a “plane of immanence” (Deleuze). By coupling forms of knowledge, strategies of power and technologies of self it allows for a more comprehensive account of the current political and social transformations, since it makes visible the depth and breadth of processes of domination and exploitation. (Lemke, 2002: 6-7)

2.6.3. Origins of Neoliberalism as a Governing Rationality in Foucault

In the “Birth of Biopolitics” lecture series of 1978–79, Foucault referred to mid-eighteenth-century ideas about the emergence of a new reason for government, a new way of governing whose locus was a transformation of market and government dynamics. This new governmentality emerged in tandem with the development of the market, which was no longer a space of jurisdiction as in previous periods, but rather became an area in which truth was produced, an area that determined “who says the truth” (Foucault, 2008, p.61). Foucault conceptualized this through the word “veridiction,” a combination of (the French) “verité” (truth) and “dire” (to say).

Foucault discussed the conditions of twentieth-century liberalism around two forms of neoliberalism: German post-war liberalism (ordoliberalism) and American human-capital theory, associated with the Chicago school (Bröckling et al., 2010, p. 6). Foucault argued that while ordoliberalism is established on the idea of a social market economy supported by political regulation, the Chicago school advocated expanding the economic sphere into the social by eliminating the difference between the economic and social life. In such a context in which principles of economic life are also principles of social life, government as well as individuals act with the principles of an enterprise. (Foucault, 2008)

Ordoliberals supported a state that enables the market to be free by establishing the required legal, moral, and cultural frameworks. Thus, the state as a strong interventionist authority was to regulate the market, and not only the market but also the behaviors of individuals by conducting the ethical, legal, and moral framing considered necessary (Bonefeld, 2012). According to Foucault (2008), the development of ordoliberalism saw a shift toward a new governmental reason that aimed to construct a policy of society, and as a result, the government was charged to act on its new object: the social environment. Understanding how ordoliberals intervene to society, around which principles that are important to identify for a better characterization, informed the governmental reasoning that lied behind this German neoliberalism.

Ordoliberals strongly emphasized competition rather than exchange as a market principle (Bonefeld, 2012; Biebricher, 2011; McNay, 2009)—which essentially reversed the classical understanding of the liberal market (Foucault; 2008). It represented a shift that had major consequences; now, it was not commodification and mass consumption but rather entrepreneurship and production shaped society (Foucault, 2008). As a consequence of this individualization of the social environment, medium-sized enterprises are backed, and risks are individualized. (McNay, 2009)

American neoliberalism transferred the economic patterns of thinking and decision-making to noneconomic, namely social, spheres (Lemke, 2001). It was different from the German expression in scale, no longer protecting the boundaries between the social and economic and directly tackling Ordoliberal's ambiguities about the market–state relationship (Foucault, 2008; Lemke, 2001). In brief,

American neoliberalism reformulated the relation of economics and society, and the logic of the market became diffused, seeping into societal and individual behavior, or conduct.

2.7 Critical Aging Studies, Active Aging and Neo-liberal Governmentality

Besides being influential and ambiguous, active aging discourses and policies developed especially by international organizations have been criticized for being normative. (López-López, & Sánchez, 2020; Sánchez, & Hatton-Yeo, 2012; Stenner et al., 2011; Ervik, 2006). From this perspective, active aging policy discourses are transferred as imperatives depicting the ideal lifestyle for older people. International organizations' active aging discourses explain how to age and the appropriate paths for older people (López-López, & Sánchez, 2020). This is why scholars studying active aging from a critical gerontology perspective, such as Katz (2000) and Moulaert and Biggs (2012), interpreted active aging as a strategy for disciplining old age. Marhánková expresses it thus: "Seniors...have internalized the idea of an active lifestyle as the most desirable lifestyle in old age and use various strategies to ensure that they will constantly be active" (Marhánková (2011:7).

The focus on the normative and disciplinary aspects of active aging policies has led to criticism of these policies, particularly in terms of their potential to create inequalities, ageism, and social exclusion (Boudiny, 2013). Ervik (2006) warns that the paternalistic nature of these policies seeking to influence the choices and behaviors of older individuals in order to increase their level of activity may have unintended consequences and suggests that their moral implications should be

carefully examined.

Many researchers have pointed out that active aging policies often fail to take into account the diversity of older individuals in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and class (e.g., López-López, & Sánchez, 2020; Ranzijn, 2010). This becomes particularly relevant when considering the ambiguous nature of the concept of activity, as different activities may be more or less suitable, efficient, or meaningful for different groups of differently aged older people. Therefore, activity as the ultimate and standard technique prescribed for older people to improve their own welfare may not be suitable or meaningful for heterogeneous aging populations (Boudiny, 2013; Ranzijn, 2010; Walker, 2006). Therefore, it is important for active aging policies to consider the intersectionality of different categories and the ways in which they may make older individuals both vulnerable and privileged with respect to prescribed activities for an 'ideal' life.

One factor that can make active aging policies exclusionary is the assumption that there is a single, "ideal" type of activity that is suitable for all individuals. Katz (2000) points out that this ideal is often based on the values of the middle class and may not be relevant or very meaningful for other class. This can create barriers to participation in active aging programs and contribute to a sense of exclusion among those who do not fit the prescribed model of an "the active" older individual:

Activity studies are often moored to traditional moral virtues; sex, drinking, and gambling, for example, are rarely registered. In- deed, what many activity checklists indicate as appropriate, normal, and healthy activities for older individuals are those which coincide with middle-class moral and family-oriented conventions (Katz, 2000: 143).

Such criticisms about active aging concerning social justice are pertinent to the normative perspective of active aging even as they acknowledge active aging, as an ideal policy mechanism normatively, and they suggest an improvement via inclusionary practices. On the other hand, there is a newly flourishing critical literature that links active aging discourses to governmentality (e.g., Lassen & Moreira, 2014; Van Dyk et al., 2013; Marhánková, 2011; Laliberte Rudman, 2016). Those studies unveil the characteristics of a desirable “mature subjectivity” (Moulaert and Biggs, 2013) shaped through neoliberal active aging discourses promoting an autonomous and productive older subject (Ranzjin, 2010). Thus, the concept of governmentality is useful for analyzing active aging:

Active ageing aims to conduct the conducts by insisting on productive lives as we age; at the same time, its discourse also impacts on the conduct of the self when it supports ‘responsibilization’ of the individuals as they are encouraged to internalize wider social risks. (Moulaert and Biggs, 2013: 33)

Marhánková (2011) also incorporates the concept of governmentality into her analysis of active aging. She aims to outline how active aging discourse affects older people’s experiences of late life by conducting qualitative research with participants of active aging centers and posits active aging as constructed as a form of proper civil responsibility and therefore functioning as a disciplining mechanism. Additionally, Marhánková (2011) suggests that active aging represents a technique of neoliberal governmentality that encourages self-management practices in order to mitigate the risks of aging and further asserts that the aging body is disciplined through activity and the active aging process since this involves ongoing self-surveillance (in a Foucauldian sense), leading to the creation of an ideal aging subjectivity.

Van Dyk et al. (2013) also use a governmentality perspective to outline the connections between the discourses of official documents and older people on active aging in order to thus observe the differences. This is a rare perspective of research in terms of its focusing not only on public discourses but also on older people's own, subjective perspectives on being active, especially through adopting a governmentality perspective. The study revealed that the public documents' active aging discourses highlighting productivity and restlessness did not, in fact, match with the views of older people, who favored a deserved rest along with leisure pursuits.

This study by Van Dyk et al. (2013) also made an important, arguably even more basic, contribution to the definition of 'activity' by distinguishing between activity for active aging and activity for the "maintenance of life itself." The introduction of activity for the maintenance of life itself allows for the older individual to attribute meaning to activity as a simple requirement of life, which is beyond the scope of active aging discourses. This type of activity is a historically and culturally embedded way of living, as opposed to the reproduced and structured one of active aging discourses. He clarifies as:

Along with this focus on (individual) personality, we find a more general recourse to activity as a *modus vivendi*, as a simple matter of being (and keeping) alive, nourished by the counter-image of dependent advanced old age as rejected life – or, in post-structuralist terms: as "abject" (Kristeva, 1982). The interviewees talk about their (extremely negative) vision of advanced old age very vividly, often using a vocabulary of contempt and disrespect ("vegetating"), actually equating life close to death with a state of post-humanity. This abysmal imagery helps to clarify people's activity claims not so much in terms of "active ageing" but rather in a much more basic, vitalist sense – as a tribute to « life as the highest good » (Arendt, 1998:399). To put it as Ms Gerhard does – « Homo Faber: humans have to do something » – amounts to a fundamental claim that being active is part of *conditio humana*. After talking about his friends who travel a lot, one interviewee

emphasizes: « This is not restless age, but normal consumption of positive things and active participation in life » (Mr Pfarr) – basically a matter of « keeping up with the world » (Van Dyk et al., 2013).

Similarly, Katz (2000) and Moulaert and Biggs (2013) emphasize how older people can challenge the dominant conducts of active aging and suggest counter conducts as ‘anti-activity’ (Katz, 2000). Van Dyk et al. (2013) develop a further important critique through studies that integrate active aging and governmentality. In revealing public discourses on active aging without the subjective experience of older people, they argue, governmentality studies will tend to strengthen the normativity of active aging policies.

2.8 Active Aging Discourses and The Social Construction of Desirable Older Subjects

As active aging lacks a universally accepted definition, making it difficult to operationalize in research, many studies of active aging have focused on behavior. Again, however, the specific activities that are considered most beneficial are not consistently agreed upon. This research goes beyond the behavioral and normative approaches of active aging that discuss activities in terms of the best tools for aging. Instead, it employs critical studies that take active aging discourses to promote a desirable older subject and idealized late life in relation with the governmentality of aging:

It appeared that, under the rubric of ‘active aging’ a new identity for later life had emerged and had been recognized at the highest of international levels. This new settlement held the promise of continued fluidity of lifestyle choice and a multiplicity of social contributions that could be made. (Moulaert & Biggs, 2013: 29)

Within this framework, two basic themes are foregrounded. These become apparent within the literature, promoted especially by international organizations' active aging discourses to encourage a desirable older subject; that is, people are expected to be autonomous and productive.

2.8.1 Active Aging Discourses and Desirable Autonomous Subject

As mentioned (above), the autonomy and independence of older people is considered a basic pillar of active aging policies (Sánchez, & Hatton-Yeo, 2012). Both the academic and international organization approaches to active aging prioritize the independence and autonomy of older people. In its active aging policy framework, the WHO (2002: 12–13) set the goals of active aging as “maintaining autonomy and independence as one grows” and determined autonomy and independence as a precondition for the quality of life. Autonomy and independence were defined thus:

Autonomy is the perceived ability to control, cope with and make personal decisions about how one lives on a day-to-day basis, according to one's own rules and preferences.... Independence is commonly understood as the ability to perform functions related to daily living – i.e. the capacity of living independently in the community with no and/or little help from others. (WHO, 2002: 13)

To better understand what active aging policies want to solve as a problem via rendering older people autonomous, it is important also to characterize the conditions in which older people are considered dependent. The perception of a welfare state crisis constructs older people as dependent. This construction has two dimensions: economic and physical. The first occurs due to the pension system,

which leads to the characterization of late life as a time when there is no work, thus as unproductive and poor (Walker, 2008). The second, physical decline, which has always been considered a risk in terms of increasing health and care expenditures, equally feeds the demand for physical autonomy as a solution for older people in active aging policies. Physical health enables independent living. It is in this context that the WHO defines autonomy with respect, especially with reference to self-care and the capacity to perform daily activities, while the EU also emphasizes the financial autonomy of older people. (WHO, 2002)

Autonomy is considered necessary for the functioning of neoliberal governmentality and thus a basic character-definition of neoliberal subjectivity. Rose and Miller (1992: 173–74) note that a regulated autonomy is essential for “governing at a distance” and that neoliberal governmentality regulates through freedom rather than restraint. Heathcote (1990) reflect on autonomy in a way that recalls Foucault’s notion of self-technology:

Autonomy, closely associated with well-being and empowerment, was held to imply control over one's life, opportunities to make choices, and feeling comfortable about developing and using one's personal resources (Heathcote, 1996, 1997). These desirable processes or states, summarized as self-determination, self-government, a sense of responsibility and self-determination. (Heathcote, 1990: 14)

Laliberte Rudman (2016) considers techniques promoting autonomy with respect to aging. She states that the individualization of solutions through self-reflection, self-improvement, self-fulfillment, and self-reliance is fostered by newspapers in Canada to cope with the risk of aging:

For example, the ‘age-defying consumer’ should craft his or her ‘dream’ lifestyle so as to maximize personal freedom, physical capability and appearance, and the ‘age-defying producer’ should work towards self-fulfilment and social inclusion. Those who are unable to overcome problems or avoid ‘oldness’, specifically the ‘vulnerable seniors’, are framed as non-ideal, dependent, powerless and inactive. (Laliberte Rudman, 2016:194)

Kağıtçıbaşı (2005: 403) observes that autonomy is generally counter-positioned with “relatedness, surrender, communion, union, fusion, dependency.” At this point, active aging is criticized for neglecting the reality of individuals as social beings. Gon (as cited in Sanchez and Hatton-Yeo, 2012: 286), argues that the insistence of active aging on independence criteria is devaluing the “cooperativity” between people and emphasizes that daily relationships are an essential part of an individuals’ life. Thus, he warns of the risk that active aging policies may promote loneliness—which is inconsistent with the active aging emphasis on participation, thus interaction.

In this sense, one may note an inconsistency between the aims in respect of participation and engagement and the means of active aging that insist on living without the help of others. Ervik (2006) similarly mentions that international organizations such as the WHO and the EU overemphasize dependency and warns that being dependent on others should not be associated with vulnerability.

Active aging discourses on an autonomous older subject also underline the responsabilization of older people for their own welfare. As a technique of neoliberal governmentality, responsabilization is a mechanism that enables an individual to produce the ends of government through self fulfilment rather than obedience (Pyysiäinen, Halpin, & Guilfoyle, 2017). Lemke (2001) indicates the relationship

between responsabilization and the roles of the welfare state and mentions that:
“Neo-liberalism is a political rationality that tries to render the social domain economic and to link a reduction in (welfare) state services and security systems to the increasing call for ‘personal responsibility’ and ‘self-care’”. (Lemke, 2001: 203)

Thus, neoliberal subjects are also responsible for their own success and failure; there is no-one to blame but oneself in any case of failure (Türken, Nafstad, Blakar, & Roen, 2016). Considering the discussion with respect to the welfare state crisis, it can be inferred that older people are required to be responsible for their own welfare, health, and aging process and that activity operationalizes this responsabilization. Pyysiäinen et al. (2017) provide a useful approach in terms of this functioning of neoliberal responsabilization:

The ‘successful’ working of neoliberal responsabilization and governance may significantly depend on a complementary mechanism we call ‘responsibilization through threat to personal control’. [...] Indeed, governmentality scholars – and Foucault himself – have noted that striving for security and controllability, on the one hand, and culture of danger and stimulation of fear, on the other, are intrinsic, complementary aspects of liberal governmentality (Pyysiäinen et al., 2017: 217).

Combining these points with the idea of alarmist or apocalyptic demography, it can be argued that older people are made responsible for addressing the perceived dangers and fears associated with later life characterized by risks of dependency and physical decline which, in turn, risks societal collapse. Insofar as this process of responsabilization involves fear and danger as a means of motivating individuals to engage in behaviors deemed necessary for maintaining their health and independence in later life, the responsibility for welfare is shifted from the state to the individual. In

the neoliberal era, older individuals are rendered responsible for their own and their society's welfare. Thus, neoliberal subjects become responsible for success and failure (Türken et al., 2016).

2.8.2 Active Aging Discourses and Productive Older Subjects

One of the most highlighted characteristics attributed to older people through active aging is productivity. In its simplistic terms, this productivity is associated with an extension of the working life and prevention of an early exit from it. Besides this, productivity discourses are diffused across a wide range of life domains through the active aging discourses, which can be directly related to neoliberalism.

Considering the productivity of older people, it is important to understand how neoliberalism transferred the economic patterns of thinking and decision-making to noneconomic spheres, specifically, the social (Lemke, 2001).

Neoliberalism reformulated the relationship of economics and society, and the logic of the market became diffused through society and individual behavior conducts. Active aging policies commonly associated with neoliberalism also intend to diffuse this market mentality within the social context of older people's lives. Facing the apocalyptic demography imaginary maintained as the economic burden caused by older people, the solution of active aging is to promote the economic or noneconomic contribution of old people to society.

In this sense, older people's economic potential is not limited to work and ordinary economic production; rather, it spreads across a widespread domain, such as care and voluntary activities. Voluntary activities are intensively highlighted—to the

extent that they can be considered key mediators in the transfer of economic logic to the larger domain of social life:

When labour market, employment, education, health and social policies and programmes support their full participation in socioeconomic, cultural and spiritual activities, according to their basic human rights, capacities, needs and preferences, people will continue to make a productive contribution to society in both paid and unpaid activities as they age. (WHO, 2002: 43)

As can be observed here, ‘activity’ is the accelerator of productivity. Participation in activities spanning a wide range—socioeconomic, cultural, and spiritual—is assumed to result in productivity. Additionally, older people are characterized in terms of ‘resources’. They can be called upon or expected to contribute to their family, communities, and economy and hence contribution is capitalized and engaged with market mentality. For this, of course, health is essential (WHO, 2002). Thus, maintaining one’s health through activities enables the older person to *contribute* to the economy and society.

Neoliberal governmentality enforces a reorganization of social relations around the notion of enterprise, and individuals are encouraged to see their life and identity as a type of enterprise (McNay, 2009). Thus, it can be said that through neoliberal governmentality, being productive is blessed. The fact that everybody is the enterprise of themselves impacts enormously on the way that one acts upon oneself and on other selves. Hence, neoliberalism offers a new subjectivity, that of a free, autonomous, self-regulating actor, a source of capital seeking to increase one’s self-value rather than pursuing one’s own self-interest; thus, the individual becomes an entrepreneur of him/herself (Türken et al., 2016: 34). Here, to understand the logic of the entrepreneur self, the human capital notion becomes important.

The idea of human capital is a concept that facilitates comprehension of the diffusion of the economic ‘grid’ to noneconomic domains. Foucault exemplified how noneconomic domains, such as child-parent relations, marriage, and law (crime), function around the principles of the market. For example, a mother’s time to give care, the affection that she shows to her children, is considered by neoliberals as an investment that will eventually be realized in the added value of a child, that is, their human capital. Hence, the simple relation between mother and child is employed in the nexus of investment, capital, costs, and profit and loss (Foucault, 2008: 244)—which is evidence of how the market mentality reveals itself through the basic dynamics of human relationships:

Homo œconomicus is an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself. This is true to the extent that, in practice, the stake in all neoliberal analyses is the replacement every time of homo œconomicus as partner of exchange with a homo œconomicus as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings.” (Foucault, 2008: 226)

At this point, the issue of aging self-investment becomes a basic form of conduct that shapes the neoliberal older subject. Active aging policies emphasize training, lifelong learning, and skill development programs to improve the capacities of older people. Similarly, grandparenting, a basic indicator of the Active Aging Index developed by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE, 2018), can also be seen from the perspective of productivity as human capital, counting even emotional labor as an investment and thus capital.

2.9 Conclusion

Active aging being one of the main positive aging discourses, dominated especially global policy discourses on aging and promoted an idealized way of aging responsabilizing older people for their own aging process and delaying aging in a disciplinary way. Constructing a ‘truth’ on ideal way of aging, active aging discourses promoted an autonomous and productive older subject as ideal and desirable. Thus, a self-reliant and productive older person who is responsible for his/her own welfare and the risks of life, is promoted in line with a neoliberal governing mentality aiming for a ‘minimalist’ state transferring its responsibilities on social security and healthcare to individual older subjects. Consequently, the major conducts aligned with neoliberalism such as self-improvement, self-management and self-investment were actualized for the performance of self-technologies such as physical and social activities.

The autonomy and independence of older people is considered a key pillar of active ageing policies, as highlighted by both academic and international organizations such as WHO. WHO defines autonomy as the ability to make personal decisions about daily life, and independence as the ability to perform daily living functions without the need for assistance from others. The emphasis on autonomy in active ageing policies can be understood in relation to the construction of older people as dependent subjects in the context of the welfare state crisis. It is also in line with the principles of neo-liberal governmentality, where autonomy is seen as necessary for self-regulation and self-governance. However, it is important to note that some critics argue that the focus on autonomy in active ageing policies neglects

the social and relational aspect of aging, and that daily relationships are an essential part of an individual's life.

On the other hand, the discourse of active ageing commonly associated with neoliberalism promotes the productivity of older people in a wide range of life domains. This can be understood in relation to how neoliberalism has transferred the economic patterns of thinking to spheres that are not strictly economic, such as social realm. As a result, older people are expected to continue making a productive contribution to society in both paid and unpaid activities as they age. The human capital notion is an important concept for understanding how this market mentality is diffused across society and shapes the behavior and conduct of older individuals, and capitalization of their knowledge and experience. The idea that older people are valuable resources that should contribute to society, rather than being seen as a 'burden', is central to active ageing policies.

Active aging discourses, while promoting the autonomy and independence of older people as ideal, have been criticized for promoting middle-class and Western values, which can have a disciplinary effect and open space for power relations. The focus on certain structured activities, which are often associated with middle-class lifestyles, can also risk excluding low-class older individuals. Additionally, the emphasis on autonomy and independence may challenge collectivist cultural values and practices.

CHAPTER III

THE WELFARE CONTEXT IN TURKEY AND AGING POLICIES

Introduction

Aging is a socially constructed phenomenon that varies in meaning and attributes across different historical and social contexts. However, there is a tendency to ignore the potential diversity of aging experiences based on social status, geography, history, and ethnicity, leading to a ‘static’ perception of aging as a context-independent process. International organizations like the WHO and UN have contributed to this perception by defining aging on a chronological basis and promoting disciplinary policy approaches— such as active aging. Gorman (as cited in Kowal and Peachy 2001) argues that each society has its own process for defining and making sense of aging, and thus that aging policies should be specific to each country rather than based on a universal framework. This is also relevant for Turkey, as Duben (2013) indicates:

No doubt, Turkish intergenerational and gender relationships and the Turkish experience with the elderly have their own social, political, and cultural dynamics and these will very likely come into play as the society ages. (Duben, 2013: 9)

There is growing recognition among academic researchers that the aging population is diversified, and that the characteristics and experiences of older people can vary significantly based on factors such as lifestyle, access to services, age, education, and ethnicity. However, policy making process in Turkey often fails to take these differences into account and tends to ignore or dismiss the intersectionalities of older individuals' identities and experiences (Arun, 2016; Arun, 2020).

In Turkey, as in other countries, there has been a rise in the popularity of apocalyptic narratives about aging that focus on the perceived risks posed by an aging population, such as increased health care costs and a shrinking workforce. Many policy documents, like the 11th Development Plan (2019), specifically identify those risks and calls for the implementation of policies that promote healthy and active aging (Aging Council/*Yaşlılık Şurası*, 2019). However, it is important to also examine the political and economic context in which these policies are being developed. Some research suggests that active aging policies may have emerged as a response to these negative narratives and the decline of the welfare state, and understanding this welfare context facilitates an appreciation of the active aging discourses in Turkey.

3.1 Contextualizing Aging Policies in Turkey

Aging as a policy domain has recently been problematized by government and academia in Turkey, especially with reference to statistics showing a rapid increase in the number and proportion of older people. With 9.7% of its population characterized as older (+65) (TurkStat, 2022b), Turkey is now an “old” country according to the UN classification (Çuhadar, 2020). The proportion of the older population in the total population in the country is increasing due to a combination of a decrease in fertility rates and increase in life expectancy at birth. Turkey’s basic indicators, including crude birth rate and mortality rate, project the population to continue to increase aging in the coming years (TurkStat, 2022b). This demographic can be expected to intensify the problematization of aging in Turkey in the future, which will thus gain in priority among policy discourses and practices.

The significant increase in the proportion of the older population in developed countries has significantly impacted the fundamental dynamics of their economy and welfare regimes, including their current labor markets and health and social security systems. This has caused aging to become a heavily problematized priority area, resulting in a well-developed intervention and policy framework. This has also enhanced the systematic functioning of the governmentality process of aging in those countries.

Whereas developed countries experienced the societal effects of the aging process over a period of approximately 100 years, today's developing countries are going through a much sharper change and Turkey will experience this process within approximately 20 years (Arun, 2009). Additionally, developed countries completed the demographic transition process as they reached a certain level of development; in Turkey, these two processes are occurring simultaneously (Active Aging Specialization Commission Report, 2018). Consequently, like other developing countries, Turkey has been relatively 'late' to develop a policy agenda and framework on aging. (Arun 2009) In a context where there is not a strong policy framework on aging policies, the governing of aging is more problematic and complex. As a result, active aging operates as a 'post-modern' incantation (Marhánková, 2017) imported from global discourses to solve the problems on a local scale in Turkey. This is also an extension of neoliberalization in Turkey, specifically the neoliberalization of aging policies.

Global discourses of active aging have become dominant in the development of aging-related policies in Turkey. Many public policy documents on aging in Turkey are based on the 'universal' and disciplinary principles of active aging disseminating middle-class values and stress the importance of adopting this approach in accordance with the policies of other countries and international organizations.

In order to better understand how and why active aging discourses have spread within the Turkish policy context, it is also necessary to examine how aging is problematized in Turkey. In the first chapter, it was noted that the connection between welfare regimes and how aging is socially constructed is especially related when considering social security systems and the dependency of older individuals. Therefore, it is crucial to assess the features of the welfare regime in Turkey and its effects on the problematization of aging in order to understand the social construction of aging in Turkey and the motivations behind the adoption of active aging discourses.

3.2 The Welfare Regime and The Social Construction of Dependent Older

Subjects

Turkey is generally associated with the Southern European welfare regime typology identified by Ferrera (2005). This is characterized by the dominance of the family in welfare provision, a fragmented and hierarchal social security system that prioritizes formal sectors, and unequal health system coverage (Buğra, 2012, Buğra & Keyder, 2006; Gough, 1996). Also considered as basic characteristics of this welfare regime are high fertility rates, a low level of female employment, and nonprofessional family and community care (Kondratowitz, 2015), while for many scholars, it is also characterized by self-employment and the informal sector, along with welfare clientelism. Buğra (2012: 16) elaborates on the characteristics of the Southern European welfare state thus:

These distinct characteristics pertain, first, to labor market structures given the significance of self-employment, small and medium enterprises and the informal sector. The rudimentary character of unemployment insurance or social attire schemes also required the family solidarity to substitute for the absence of a strong welfare state. In spite of this weakness of social safety net, welfare clientelism' also appears in the list of specific features of the South European model and the type of state-society relations it incorporated. (Buğra, 2012: 16)

A more recent study of the Turkish welfare regime conducted by Aybars and Tsarouhas (2010) argues that Turkey, unlike its Middle Eastern counterparts, is integrated into the Europeanization process and thus constitutes a hybrid welfare model with both Middle Eastern and South European characteristics. These researchers do not directly associate the Turkish welfare regime with South Europe and instead argue that Turkey should make some qualitative progress to be classified in the South Europe welfare regime type, (especially with regard to rates of social expenditure, female employment, etc.) (Aybars & Tsarouhas, 2010). Analyzing the historical origins of the welfare regime, they note that social policies were initiated top-down, not based on demand, as in the case of other (developed) countries. This is why the governmentality of aging is particularly problematic and complex: active aging assumes the agency of older people; or freedom and autonomy (Rose, 1990). Additionally, unlike in Europe, the formation of a working class and history of class conflict was absent as a constructing element of the welfare state. Thus, the image of the state as 'father' (*devlet baba*) was transferred to the new Republic from the old Ottoman state (Aybars & Tsarouhas, 2010).

Those characteristics of the welfare state in Turkey as based on the caregiving role of family and the ‘father state’ (*devlet baba*) image of government enhance the social construction of older subjects as dependent. The instrumentalization of the family and the father state image of government also determine the relations between policies and older individuals in the country. Within the policy documents and legislative frameworks (Taşçı, 2013), older individuals are characterized as ‘deserving’ (*muhtaç*) people. Considering the discourses embedded within the legal framework enabling cash transfers for care, it can be observed that the discourses promoting older people as deserving enhance the social construction of them as dependent. This legal frameworks responsabilizes both families and the kins of older people for care. (Law no: 26679, 2007) The main tasks for which the caregivers are responsabilized are called “personal care services” which again underscores the dependent image of older people within the family, as argued by Con Wright (2020). Those tasks are listed in the legislation thus:

Bathing, assistance with toileting and cleaning if needed, nail care, dental hygiene, providing meals and drinks, hand, face, and foot hygiene, beard shaving, removal of unwanted hair, dressing and undressing, cleaning of the nose and ears, cleaning and straightening of the bed, cleaning of the room, laundering clothes. (Law no: 26679, 2007)

In a similar way, another cash transfer for older people profiting from institutional care is called “pocket money” (*harçlık*) in the legislative framework, which also characterizes the relationship between the state and older people (Law No: 28539 2013). The culturally embedded meaning of *pocket money* is that money that the father/or older people in the family gave to their children. Thus, the ‘father state’

notion and its paternalistic character are reflected in the pocket money concept given a place in the legislative framework. Meanwhile, in the legislation for nursing homes, an older person is defined in a way that explicitly incorporates dependence, as a “person over the age of 60 who is socially and/or economically disadvantaged and in need of protection, care, and assistance” (MoFSS, nd).

The aging population is similarly considered a financial burden in the policy documents due to health and social security expenditures, which again, formally and on the national scale, enhances the social construction of older subjects as dependent:

In societies experiencing aging, the number of individuals in the working age population decreases while the number of retirees increases. This leads to an increase in the burden on social security systems and public finances. Additionally, as individuals age, their healthcare expenses increase as they suffer from chronic illnesses and require longer-term and more frequent use of medication. (Aging Specialization Commission Report, 2014).

3.2.1 Family, Welfare Regime and Aging in Turkey

In order to properly appreciate Turkey’s welfare provision, it is necessary to focus on the role of the family and the interaction between the dynamics of older people’s relations with their families and active aging discourses. In Turkey, families and older individuals have a culturally close relationship, mainly defined by traditional cultural codes based on filial piety. Filial piety is a traditional cultural value that involves showing respect for one’s parents, particularly through financial and emotional support as necessary to ensure their wellbeing (Lai, 2010). This

determines the relations between families and older people in Turkey (Ar & Karancı, 2019).

Taşçı (2013) argues that within these traditional family ties, the strong social status of older people is maintained for men, who act as decision-makers, and for women, who have “authority in housework.” This contrasts with the situation in the modern nuclear family, where older people are losing their status. The ongoing transformation of family structures in Turkey from extended to nuclear linked especially to urbanization (but also other factors; see Chapter 4) has resulted in the portrayal of older subjects as “problems,” in sharp contrast to their prior portrayal as strong and ‘responsible’ figures in the community and household. Thus, there is a direct, causal correlation between the problematization of older subjects and the transformation of family structures (Taşçı 2013).

Statistics and researches also indicate that the structural aspects of Turkish family is changing, especially regarding household size. The average size of households in Turkey decreased from 3.69 to 3.35 just in the years 2012 to 2019 (TurkStat, 2022a). Additionally, the share of extended family within the total household decreased from 16.7 to 15% between 2014 and 2019, while the share of nuclear families increased from 13.9 to 16.9% during the same time period. Similarly, although just under a quarter of all households in Turkey have an older person living in them, only a little over a quarter of these consist of extended families (23.5 and 27.7%, respectively) (TurkStat, 2022a).

The transformation of the family and decrease in household size indicates that living arrangements are also transforming in Turkey. Co-residence is nevertheless still very common as a social norm. As widely noted, institutional care is negatively perceived as a ‘shame’, especially for the children, who are responsabilized for caregiving. (Kalaycıoğlu, Tol, Küçükkural, & Cengiz, 2003) Transactions between older people and their families and communities in Turkey remain quite fluent and traditional extended families used to be one of the basic solidarity mechanisms within which older people could maintain their traditional status and cooperate economically and emotionally with the other members of the family. (Kalaycıoğlu & Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2000) However, considering the transformation of the traditional family structure , as Kalaycıoğlu at al. (2003) explain, in Turkey alternative living arrangements emerge, such as living in the same district, same street and same building which can maintain the functions of traditional family within an urban context. Additionally Kalaycıoğlu and Rittersberger-Tılıç (2000) mentions that:

In recent years, family life in Turkey has been changing as a result of a gradual shift toward living arrangements that are based on nuclear families and of migration from rural to urban areas... However, it is still common for the household of the nuclear family living in the urban setting to be composed not only of parents and their children, but also of kin being accommodated on a temporary basis (e.g. for a period of vocational or formal education, or until regular employment is found). (Kalaycıoğlu and Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2000: 523)

The problematization of older people and their relations with families opens a space for policy intervention. Consequently, the family institution as a traditional welfare mechanism is transforming into a tool of familialism. This has been

reinforced by the policy discourses and conditional cash transfer programs aimed at supporting the caregiving roles of families (Akkan 2017). On the other hand, the central government's sacred family discourses promote extended families and older people living with their families as ideal and desirable. (Akkan, 2017). The responsabilization for care is hierarchically structured, and the older subjects, family, and community are responsabilized respectively:

The care priorities for older individuals with care needs should be arranged such that their care is provided first by themselves, then by their family and relatives (informally/voluntarily), and if that is not possible, by professional caregivers. If these options are not feasible or insufficient, institutional care services should be provided as a complementary, rather than an alternative or opposite, option to home care. Care services for older individuals in advanced stages of dependency or in special circumstances such as the older people suffering from Alzheimer's should continue to be provided through institutional care. The care should be tailored to the individual needs of the older person (Ministry of Family and Social Services 2018).

The responsabilization of families for eldercare by central government via the cash-for-care program indicates that familialism in Turkey has shifted from what Paradis-Gagné and Holmes (2021) referring to Donzelot, 1979) called “*governing through the family*” . Thus, the natural, traditional functioning of families based on filial piety is intervened in and instrumentalized as a tool of governmentality in Turkey. Within this context, the traditional role of the family in welfare provision, especially in caregiving, is being reconfigured in line with conservative norms; the family is being instrumentalized for the care task, especially via the cash-for-care program targeting low-income families (Yazıcı, 2012), wherein the governmentality of aging in Turkey converges with neo-conservatism (Acar & Altunok, 2013;

Akkan, 2017; Yazıcı 2021)

Turkey is also considered to be a country where neoconservatism and neoliberalism are articulated with each other. Acar and Altunok (2013) argue that the family is instrumentalized as a tool of both these rationalities for sustaining the “desired moral order” in a neoconservative context and, at the same time, functioning as a welfare and social security apparatus that replaces the government services weakened by the neoliberal transformation. Within the context of aging policies, it can be argued that the moral code of care, which already existed in the Turkish family structure, has been further fostered and enhanced through the neo-conservative responsabilization of families. Writing in the British context, Larner (2000b) similarly comments on how the principles of neoliberalism and neoconservatism intersect with each other through families:

The multifarious nature of Thatcherite discourse... managed to articulate new doctrines of the individual and free market with more traditional right-wing themes of tradition, nation, and family. Like-wise, albeit in a slightly different register, it can be argued that family provides a nexus for the articulation of neoliberal and neoconservative formulations in the code. Yet while both neoliberalism and neo-conservatism are hostile to social welfarism and mobilize the family as a solution to ‘state dependency’, each is premised on a different understanding of the concept. In turn, these differences generate significant contradictions within the code. Neo-conservatism aims to revalue women’s place within the family, particularly as mothers. It assumes the pre-political social bond of earlier formulations, rather than one chosen by individuals on the basis of their own self-interest. Neoliberalism, by contrast, no longer requires women to enter a sexual contract and sees familial relationships as a matter of ‘lifestyle choice’(Larner, 2000b, 256).

Familialism is a basic feature of the Turkish welfare regime, but familialistic approaches may also have differences based on the level of familialization of services. In the literature, the familialistic tendency of the Turkish policy context is generally discussed alongside neo-conservatism, but differentiations within familalism should also be considered for a more nuanced analysis.

Leitner (2003) introduced a typology of familialism based on countries' familialization and de-familialization levels. In this scheme, explicit familialism strongly responsabilizes families for welfare and does not develop opportunities to release families. This reflects a strong level of familialism as it responsabilizes families for welfare provision. Optional familialism, on the other hand, is a form of familialism enabling mechanisms that assist families. Table 1 summarizes this typology.

Table 1 Combinations of Strong/weak Familialization and Strong/weak De-familialization

Familialization	De-familialization	
	Strong	Weak
Strong	Optional familialism	Explicit familialism
Weak	De-familism	Implicit familialism

(from Leitner, 2003)

Aybars, Beşpınar and Kalaycıoğlu (2018) explain that although policies and services supporting families still remain inadequate, Turkey is no longer classified among implicit familialism but rather as shifting toward explicit familialism and this situation leads the Turkish care regime to rely more on women in a conservative way due to weak supporting mechanisms. Buğra (2012) and Acar and Altunok (2013)

also emphasize the feminization of care as a characteristic of neo-conservative tendencies. Aybars et al. (2018) note that the unit for cash transfer being determined as the “household” tends to enhance the invisibility of women’s informal labor as caregivers.



3.3 Aging Policies in Turkey

Turkey's five-yearly national development plans are important documents performing various functions, one of which is to reflect the various public policy trends prevalent at the time. Since the very first such development plan, prepared for the 1963–67 time period, the issue of aging has been addressed as a policy concern related to social work and institutional care. It is noteworthy that, since that time, civil society organizations have been encouraged to take on responsibilities in the implementation of these policies, and the need for the establishment of coordinating institutions to facilitate the interaction between civil society organizations and public institutions has been emphasized. Until the Sixth Development Plan, prepared for 1990–94, similar concerns about institutional care, private care, and coordination among stakeholders were emphasized. However, in the 6th Development Plan (1990–94), for the first time, the role of family care was prioritized over institutional care. In this plan, Article 911 stated that the family would be considered the basic unit for the transmission of social services and social aid (State Planning Organization, 1990: 306).

In the 7th Development Plan, prepared for the 1996-2000 period, the increasing share of the older population was given attention for the first time. Again, the responsabilization of the family was emphasized (under the “family” title) through training mechanisms for eldercare:

Regulations will be put in place to develop a system to assist in strengthening the family's income [...] during crisis situations; the family will be educated and supported in the areas of child-rearing, eldercare and disabled members. (State Planning Organisation, 1996)

While in the 8th (2001–05), 9th (2007–13), and 10th (2014–18) Development Plans, the role of the family in eldercare was absent, in the 11th Development Plan, it was reemphasized. Within all the development plans, older people were considered to be a subject of social work; in the more recent ones, a wider range of sectors was mentioned in relation to aging policies—from health through social work and poverty to rural development and urbanization. This also indicates how the governmentality of aging will cover different sectors and domains of life in the future.

Alongside the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Family, Employment, and Social Work is one of the main public institutions that coordinate policies on aging. The General Directorate of Elderly and Disabled People (*Yaşlı ve Engelli Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü*) functioning under this ministry coordinates both public and private care institutions. The public services for aging are not very diversified and have been mainly limited to institutional care until very recently.

In line with the involvement of active aging discourses in the Turkish policy context with the National Action Plan on Aging in 2007, a new trend was also initiated for the privatization of institutional care. Reflecting the neoliberalization tendency of aging policies and care in Turkey, by 2022, there were 267 private nursing homes in the country, 237(90%) of which were opened after 2003 (Ministry of Family and Social Services, 2022). It is worth noting that the majority of nursing homes are located in metropolitan cities, where market dynamics are more developed rather than in the smaller cities and provincial towns. However, the care crisis is likely to be more apparent in these larger cities as the transformation from extended

to nuclear families is more widespread in these areas, leading to a decrease in the care function of families and potentially driving demand for institutional care.

Additionally, the central government has initiated the financial support program YADES for municipality projects on aging, including active aging and home-care services (YADES legislative framework, 2022). In line with neoliberal active aging discourses, the YADES program aims to increase the autonomy and independence of older people. While aging in place is another concern of the program, active aging is set as an eligibility criterion for municipal projects. The aim of the program is outlined as follows in the legislative framework:

Under YADES, projects that aim to create and operate a service model that includes protecting and supporting older individuals over the age of 65 and providing necessary bio-psychosocial care to those in need in their living spaces or day centers in order to support their independent living and facilitate their daily lives will be supported (Yades Framework, 2022)

The YADES program aims to provide support for municipal projects providing homecare services for older people, including social, physical, and psychological support to improve their living environment and assist with daily activities, psycho-social support for caregivers and those living with older people, and technical support for home maintenance and repairs, mobile teams for delivering services, along with coordination centers to receive and organize requests and provide necessary guidance; day care services and database construction on older people are also supported. (YADES legislative framework, 2022)

Although the localization of social services is common in Western contexts, Turkey has a strong level of centralization that prevents municipalities from actively participating in social service provision. Turkey has a historically centralized administration system and a strong central state tradition that has undermined local government development. (Tan 2020, Polatoğlu 2000, Çiner and Zengin 2019) As a consequence, the relationship between local governments and the central administration has generally been based on the principle of tutelage, disabling local governments as strong, efficient institutional structures (Tan, 2020; Çiner, and Zengin, 2019; Polatoğlu, 2000). Thus their capacity for service provision remained weak.

However, with recent legislation—Law No. 5393, Article 77—local governments have been given new roles, including the scope of social services, including for older people:

The municipality; carries out programs that aim to increase the participation of volunteers in order to provide services such as health, education, sports, environment, social services and assistance, library, park, traffic and cultural services to older people, women and children, disabled people, poor and disadvantaged people in the district, and to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness in these services in order to promote solidarity and participation in the district. (Law No. 5393, Article 77)

Municipal services are provided to citizens in the nearest and most suitable places and methods. Appropriate methods are applied in the provision of services taking into account the situation of disabled, older, disadvantaged and low-income people. (Law No. 5393, Article 77)

Studies indicate that local government reforms generally target the consolidation of political and socioeconomic crises in Turkey and the alignment of the Turkish economic structure with neoliberalist policies has brought about a transformation of

the relationship between local governments and the central state due especially to the need to improve local government efficiency for the recovery from crises deepened by the new socioeconomic structure. (Bayırbağ, 2013; Polatoğlu, 2000) This tendency has increased since the early 2000s, thus, in turn, supporting the transformation of local governments through fundamental legislative reforms (Tan 2020, Çiner and Zengin, 2019).

The instrumentalization of municipalities (through the YADES financial support program) as a tool of governmentality for the increasing needs of the aging population can also be considered an attempt at recovery in the ongoing aging ‘crisis’. Overall, the policy documents on aging strongly emphasize its importance in place as a policy discourse. Many documents mention that the central government’s aim on aging policies is to supporting older people in their place.

3.4 Active Aging Discourses and Practices in Turkey

The discourse of active aging, which emphasizes the active participation of older people in social, working, and political life, has been present in Turkish policy documents related to aging since the 2007 National Action Plan on Aging. This emphasis has continued in the 2010s, as seen in the 10th and 11th National Development Plans and documents from the Ministry of Family and Social Services. In 2019, the Ministry organised a Council on Aging (*Yaşlılık Şurası*) with a focus on promoting active aging. Active aging also featured in the 2020 National Annual Program.

The discourse of active aging in Turkey is similar to that of other Western countries and does not reflect any specific national characteristics.

The main aim is to preserve the young and dynamic population structure, to enable older people to participate effectively in the economic and social life, to continue their lives actively and independently, to benefit from high-quality long-term care, health and other services, and to create environments for active aging in order to improve the quality of life of older people. (Presidential Annual Program, 2020: 323)

The 2020 Annual Program quoted here highlights the importance of maintaining independence in old age, but also aims to promote active aging by increasing older individuals' opportunities for participation in economic and social life. To accomplish this, the program suggests expanding opportunities for lifelong learning and creating policies that allow older individuals to continue working for longer periods of time.

Despite the emphasis on active aging in Turkish policy documents over the last two decades, there has been a lack of concrete, practical measures in place to support this goal. Moreover, an examination of policy documents emphasizing the importance of active aging policies, such as the national action plans published in 2007 and 2012, reveals that, in line with global trends, there is no consistent definition of what active aging means—although the concept of being active is consistently portrayed as desirable. It is interesting that active aging discourses challenge the traditional status of older people within society, which is assumed to decrease the awareness of active aging, as indicated in the 2007 National Action Plan on Aging:

When we think of older people in society, we might think of individuals who are dependent on care, having walking difficulties, who are resistant to change, unhappy, alone with weakened social relationships. The positive aspects of aging, such as experience and wisdom, are often overlooked, and a constant emphasis is placed on the negative aspects of aging. Many older people who go through the process of healthy and active aging are not considered in these evaluations. The adoption of these negative values by older individuals can lead to a loss of independence and a negative impact on their lives... In our country, it is important to go beyond the traditional values of respect and protection for aging and to promote the awareness of active aging. (SPO, National Action Plan on Aging, 2007:1)

Policy documents on aging in Turkey tend to focus on two aspects of active aging, similar to other countries and international organizations: participation in society through work and voluntary activities, on the one hand, and physical activity to improve health, on the other. Many studies have quantitatively analyzed the levels of physical and social activity among older people in Turkey. (Karabulut, 2022; Özmete, 2016) However, these studies and policy documents have not examined the specificities of being active in Turkey in terms of social, cultural, and economic factors. Active aging policy discourses in Turkey consider older people as homogenous.

International organizations are also crucial in the adoption of the Western-centric active aging discourse neglecting diversities in a national or local context, such as in Turkey. UNECE (2018) has developed the Active Aging Index (AAI), which is used to classify countries based on their active population and active aging capacity. This index functions as an extension of the international governmentality of aging, motivating countries to adopt the principle as a universal truth based on its statistical variables. It strongly emphasizes the productivity side of active aging and promotes and enterprising older self:

It measures how much of older men and women's potential to contribute to the economy and society is used and to what extent their living environment enables them. They contribute by working, volunteering, providing informal care, living independently, and staying healthy. (UNECE, 2018)

Structured to reflect the different dimensions of aging in EU countries, the AAI, is based on four different areas, where each reflects a different aspect of active and healthy aging. The first three areas—employment, participation in society, and independent, healthy, and safe living—express the actual experiences related to active aging, while the fourth area expresses active aging as a capacity determined by personal and environmental factors (UNECE, 2018). The AAI takes the informal caregiving labor of family members for their older parents or grandchildren as a productive activity and indicator of an active aging process, which reflects the diffusion of market mentality within daily social life. Although the index covers European countries in general, Turkey was later included, and a special issue was published for measuring the active aging level of Turkey in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services and TurkStat (UNECE, 2016).

The Ministry of Family and Social Services is also a member of UNECE's working group on aging, and an active aging strategy document has been prepared in line with the decisions of this working group (Karakuş, 2018). The main strategies and priorities in this strategy document follow the Western active aging discourses, principally advocating active participation in the labor market, participation in social life, independent living, and a suitable environment and the capacity for active aging (Karakuş, 2018).

In order to understand the potential variations of active aging policies in Turkey, it is important to consider the cultural context in which older individuals often maintain close relationships with their families and communities, and in which the state supports caregiving through various discourses and financial mechanisms. This cultural context may shape the ways in which active aging is understood and engaged in policy making processes in the country.

Considering that the active aging policy discourses in Turkey do not reflect any peculiarity of the Turkish people, it is unsurprising to see that policy documents on active aging characterize the desirable older subject as autonomous and productive. As mentioned, in line with Western discourses, autonomous older subjects in Turkey are promoted as desirable and active aging is regarded as a means for attaining this—as mentioned in the Aging Specialization Commission Report of the Ministry of Development (2018).

The preservation of independence and autonomy of older individuals and the promotion of a healthy and high-quality aging process are the main goals of active aging. Opportunities that allow older individuals to continue working, participate in employment, maintain an independent, autonomous and healthy lifestyle, and continue to contribute to society are targeted (Ministry of Development: 32)

On the other hand, the same report set the goal below that of active aging:

Increasing awareness among older people about the fact that active aging will enable them not to become burden to their family and state during the aging process (Ministry of Development: 36)

This indicates that, in fact, active aging discourses strongly engage with familialistic care norms. Unlike Western individualistic concerns, familialist concerns may

formulate the rationalization and functioning of active aging discourses in Turkey, reflecting also the articulation of conservatism and neoliberalism in welfare provision.

Like their Western counterparts, these documents indicate a generally discussed productivity based on the extension of the working life and the frequency of voluntary work. From this perspective, the contribution of older people to society is important. However, this productivity may not necessarily have an economic value, which is why the word ‘contribution’ is important; it tends to legitimize the existence of older people within society. They *contribute* despite the *burden* they represent. Below are two quotations from different policy documents, respectively, the 11th and 10th Development Plan, Aging Specialized Commission Reports:

The approach of "active aging", which is accepted worldwide is the main goal for the healthy aging and maintaining a quality life of older people. While the goal is to enrich the quality of life of the older person and the community through lifelong health, it is also important to continue participating in social life and being productive. (Ministry of Development, Ageing Specialized Commission Report, 2018: ix)

It is important to remember that the term "active" in the concept of active aging is not limited to the labor market, and it is necessary to enable the older people in our country to actively participate in social life through work and voluntary activities based on their needs, preferences and capabilities. Establishing a structure that encourages and increases the productivity of the older people in the workforce and in voluntary activities is extremely important in achieving this goal. (Ministry of Development, Specialized Commission Report on Ageing, 2014: 23-24)

3.5 Conclusion

The rapid increase of the aging population in Turkey is becoming a significant policy concern for both government and academia. Turkey's older population is increasing due to decreased fertility rates and increased life expectancy, and this trend is projected to continue in the coming years. The aging process in Turkey is happening at a faster pace than in developed countries, and the country has not yet developed a comprehensive policy framework to address the challenges of an aging population. The lack of a strong policy framework has made the governing of aging in Turkey more problematic and complex, where many actors are 'quickly' engaged for the alleviation of 'problems' of a population aging. Active aging, is one of the dominant policy discourses that is mobilized as a response to population aging through central government's main policy documents aligned with Western middle-class values and international organizations discourses on active aging. The active aging discourse imported from international organizations' discourses to solve the 'problems' of population aging at local scale is also an extension of the neoliberalization of social policies in Turkey, rendering older people responsible for their own welfare.

The type of the welfare regime that a country is classified effects also the way aging is problematized, thus the way older subjects are socially constructed. Turkey, classified among the Southern European welfare regime mainly relying on family in welfare provision experience transformation of family structures from extended to nuclear which has resulted in the portrayal of older subjects as "problems," in contrast to their prior portrayal as strong and 'responsible' figures in the community

and household. Thus, there is a relation also between the problematization of older subjects and the transformation of family structures, as nuclear families lose their capacities in caregiving.

The problematization of older people and their relations with families opens space for intervention. The traditional welfare mechanism family has been transformed into a tool of governmentality, reinforced by policy discourses and conditional-cash-transfer programs that aim to support the caregiving roles of families. Thus, an ideal life for older people is also determined through living arrangements which expect older people to live with their families in 'their place' which is legitimized through neo-conservative 'sacred family' discourses as a maintenance of traditional filial piety. As a consequence, home care services are increased and active aging centers which are officially named daycare centers are opened to assist both older people as well as their families in their place. The legislative name of active aging centers-daycare center- is also a sign how central government instrumentalize active aging as a solution for care crisis.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

The study recognizes that governmentality is a complex process that should be studied in a relational context, and that it's important to analyze it from the bottom up, starting with local features of governing rationality. Instead of just focusing on municipalities' texts and programs on active aging, this research uses interviews with municipal officials to understand how they internalize and rationalize active aging and turn it into a governing tool. It also considers that governmentality studies that focus only on official papers may overlook resistance and social inequities, and that critical aging studies warn that focusing only on policy documents may reproduce and enhance their discourses. For this reason, the research focus on in-depth semi-structured interviews with the municipal officials in charge of aging programs in social services departments, which are mostly social workers with a close relationship with the "field" and regular visits to older adult's homes, as a way to understand the "lived experience of subjection" and the construction of aging as a 'problem'.

This research examines the approaches and policies of Turkish municipalities towards active aging. The study was based on purposive sampling, and focused on 30 large municipalities that were more likely to have well-developed policies and

attitudes related to aging compared to smaller municipalities. The data collection method included a combination of online meetings, in-person meetings at participant offices, and phone calls. Thematic analysis of the data was done by identifying repeated issues throughout the interviews and the meanings attributed to them, incorporating with discourse analysis to uncover power relations embedded within the governmentality process. The study included municipalities from different regions of Turkey, representing different socio-economic development levels and political affiliations. However, due to the COVID-19 curfew, it was not possible to interview older people.

4.2 Governmentality as a Methodological Approach

The governmentality approach is a “perspective,” a “manner of looking” that does not have a particular, consistent methodology (Bröckling et al., 2011). Governmentality is about “the right disposition of things” (Foucault, 1991); thus, its relational and decentralized nature should be considered in research design. A bottom-up approach, starting from the local features of the governing rationality, which focuses on details at the micro level, is essential in order to avoid a reductionist analysis of the governmentality process (Bröckling et al., 2011).

This study recognizes that governmentality is a complex process that should be considered in a relational context. One complexity in this case was quite specific: interviewing older people was planned, but due to the COVID-19 curfew could not be conducted. Focusing only on the central government’s discourses would not have been sufficient to uncover this relationality. The metropolitan municipality (*büyükşehir belediyesi*) is the institution that represents large cities in Turkey—in a

variety of regions, with varying levels of socioeconomic development and different political stance—which thus offer an understanding of governmentality processes within their spatial embeddedness.

Metropolitan municipalities afford opportunities to discover multiple rationalities for governing aging in a relational way—which is why, rather than focusing solely on their texts and programs on active aging, this research is grounded on interviews of municipal officials aiming to learn how they internalize and rationalize active aging and transform it as a governing tool. Governmentality studies concentrating on official papers (Brady, 2014; Teghtsoonian, 2015) may disregard empirical research, social inequities and resistances, which creates a gap between the discursive analysis of policy texts and the actual social realm (McKee, 2009). This, in turn, may lead to a reductionist analysis of power relations (Barnett et al., 2008). Methodological critiques of governmentality indicate that the analysis of governmentality as a process mainly occurs at the discursive level based on government documents; what is lacking is precisely the “lived experience of subjection” (McKee, 2009:474).

Critical aging studies has a similar concern. Van Dyk et al. (2013) draws attention to the differences between macro and micro-level constructions of aging and criticizes governmentality studies for exclusively focusing on the macro level on the premise that they affect older people’s subjectivity. On the other hand, he warns that studies focusing only on policy documents may merely reproduce and even enhance their discourses, which may transform an analysis of governmentality to a tool of power relations. This is why instead of focusing solely on municipalities’

texts and programs on active ageing, through interviewing municipal officials this research aim to analyze how they internalize and rationalize active ageing and transform it to governing discourses.

In the present case, even an analysis of municipal documents on active aging would not be possible as their reports only very weakly touch the aging issue (Con Wright, 2022). Municipal officials' discourses, however, reflect a strong acknowledgment of active aging, which shows the inadequacy of focusing on policy documents, especially in countries where reports and documentation are not internalized within the local institutions themselves but are, in general, prepared as a central legislative requirement (such as Law No. 5108).

Aiming at a nuanced analysis of the governmentality of aging in Turkey, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the municipal officials in charge of aging programs in social services departments. These were mostly qualified social workers closely related to the 'field', paying regular visits to homes through which they could more actively intervene in the older adult's lived experience. This research thus also focuses on how aging is problematized by municipal officials, which, in turn, provides a picture of how aging is socially constructed and intervened in. Problematization processes are inherent to governmentality processes, which legitimize interventions for solutions (Katz, 2000). For Foucault, the way a reality is problematized indicates also the nature of this reality:

There is a relation between the thing which is problematized and the process of problematization. The problematization is an 'answer' to a concrete situation which is real. (Foucault, 2001)

Initially, within this framework (in order not to intervene), participant discourses questions were not directly asked about problematization. During the course of the interviews, however, specific questions were added to better characterize the rationale behind the problematizations covering various themes, including care, structural transformation of the family, public expenditure, and the dependency of older individuals. However, a basic question to pick up on the respondents' problematization of aging and their interventions for solutions was asked: "Do you think that the aging process can be delayed?" The neoliberal rational of active aging relies on the idea of delaying aging and maximizing health and youth via responsabilizing the individual for self-intervention through self-technologies. Thus, this question is important to both understand the interviewees' approaches to and levels of problematization and intervention.

The governmentality process cannot be studied through well-known dichotomies of social theory but should focus on consistent connections between the technologies of governments and various rationalities, including the embeddedness of the knowledge production process with power relations (Bröckling et al., 2011). Thus, an emphasis was placed here on how the 'truths' of active aging are introduced. In order to outline the extent to which knowledge production processes engage in the dissemination and reproduction of active aging within municipal discourses, questions were asked to gain information on the officials' relations with (local) universities, and special attention was paid to the activities and municipal rationalities where universities play a crucial role during the data analysis process. As Foucault (2002: 201) states, "there is no knowledge without a particular discursive practice; and any discursive practice may be defined by the

knowledge that it forms ” hence, the research also aimed to discover how knowledge systems discursively produce ‘truths’ about aging and being a desirable subject, specifically with respect to the officials’ relations with universities.

Additionally, the mechanisms used by municipal officials’ to produce knowledge and their engagement with data, a subject addressed in the interviews. As the participants were working in social work departments or their equivalents, their connection with the field, so information on how they intervened in the field, was also analyzed. Furthermore, as social workers, their knowledge production mechanisms and the way they interacted with older people within the context of the social work discipline were considered.

Another criticism of contemporary governmentality studies is that they do generally focus on neoliberalism, which produces similar results especially on neoliberal subjectivities (Brady, 2014).) with reference to Reckwitz (as cited in Bröckling et al. 2011) states as following:

A homogeneity of rationalities and technologies of government on the one hand, and of forms of subjectification on the other hand, is presumed both in the effort to reconstruct a single modern history of governmentality and in that to define, through analyses of micro-regimes, its totalizing contemporary form. The result is an inability to account for the constitutive hybridity of discursive patterns and mechanisms of power. (Bröckling et al, 2011: 16)

As a country where neoliberalism and neo-conservatism engage with each other as different governing rationalities (Acar and Altunok, 2013), Turkey represents a fruitful case with which to capture specificities of this engagement and thereby characterize certain hybridities of the governmentality process. Here, the research was designed to consider the engagement of those different rationalities by focusing

on municipalities in various regions, at varying socioeconomic development levels, and with different political affiliations. Moreover, specific questions were asked to get at municipal engagement with both neoliberal and neo-conservative discourses. To better characterize their affiliation with neoconservatism, officials were asked about older people's relations with their families and how they rationalize their relations. In order to ascertain and understand their tendency to promote individualistic neoliberal discourses and whether they prioritize the individuality of older people, specific questions were asked, such as 'What would you think about older people living alone, by themselves?'

It was also the intention to ask about municipalities' aging discourse affiliations with Islamic discourses; however, during the first interview, the question on this subject received a serious reaction and a request to stop recording. As municipal officials are already very concerned about the confidentiality of their response, it was clear that this question could damage trust, so it was avoided thereafter. However, efforts were made during the interviews to understand whether Islamic discourses affect the governmentality of the aging process in order to better characterize municipalities' engagement with neo-conservatism as a governing rationality.

An inquiry into counter-conducts is important in the Foucauldian conceptualization of governmentality in order to unveil resistance to the dominant conducts promoted by the governmentality process. Thus, this is also a conceptual tool enabling analysis of municipal officials and older subjects' agency. For this reason, their possible counter-conducts were observed insofar as these become

apparent within the discourses of the officials as challenges to active aging and its neoliberal rationalizations. In this context, Bröckling et al. (2011) make an interesting point about analyzing and unveiling counter-conducts via analysis of the governmentality process:

Are we left, then, with the aporia of either remaining silent about forms of resistance since speaking about them would mean making them accessible to governmental intervention, or speaking about them since silence would mean playing into the hands of those hoping to keep resistance invisible?
(Bröckling et al: 2011)

Such ambiguities were also observed here while considering the counter-conducts of municipalities and older people—as if the research was calling for intervention to make older people more governable and thus more exposed to power relations. Also, however, it was adjudged that it needed to be noted if basic policy mechanisms on aging were not functioning in many parts of the country since this could deepen inequalities and enhance the vulnerabilities of older people. The compromise settled on was to approach the importance of outlining spaces of possible counter-conducts as an opportunity to tackle the exclusionary practices of the neoliberal rationality (Reininger and Castro-Serrano, 2021). In fact, as this thesis does not assume to normatively propose and affirm active aging policy discourses as the best policy mechanism, it may convince policy-makers to move toward alternative approaches that are less disciplinary.

Governmentality studies generally rely on discursive analysis (Teghtsoonian, 2015). This was used to discover the governing technologies promoted for an ideal late life and the major conducts that lead older people to desire and transform themselves into desirable subjects. Instead of relying on a linguistic approach, which

is assumed to reduce the efficiency of discourse analysis (Torring, 2005), ‘discursive formations’ were emphasized, referring to constituted statements and thematic choices reflecting correlations and regular patterns (Foucault, 2002).

4.3 Empirical Research

This research is based on the interviews conducted with 15 municipal officials, from 11 municipalities in 11 of Turkey’s 81 provinces. A total of 16 municipalities were initially contacted, mostly via personal and professional networks, although two, Bursa and Izmir, were contacted ‘cold’ (through the contact information on their websites). Of the 16 municipalities contacted, two, Istanbul and Muğla, declined to participate, while the interviews at another two, Ankara and Manisa, could only be very short and were thus insufficient for an adequate and systematic data analysis. It was not possible to interview more than one or two officials from the same municipality due to participants’ strong confidentiality concerns and reluctance to make further introductions within the municipality on behalf of an outside researcher.

Of the 15 individual participants, seven were women and eight were men. In Mersin three, in Adana two, in Erzurum two respondents were interviewed. Seven of the 15 were university graduates from a social work department, and two from a psychological counseling and guidance department; one was a psychologist, one a political scientist, and one a sociologist. All of the participants were working in the municipal departments charged with social work, social aid, and aging. Two of these were working in municipality nursing homes, but they were also knowledgeable

about the various municipality services related to aging. Although the names of the relevant department in each municipality were different, they performed similar tasks on social issues and frequently used the tools and technologies of social work as a profession. For example, all the municipalities used social analysis reports to analyze situations and develop specific modes of intervention, a technique within the curriculum of social work departments.

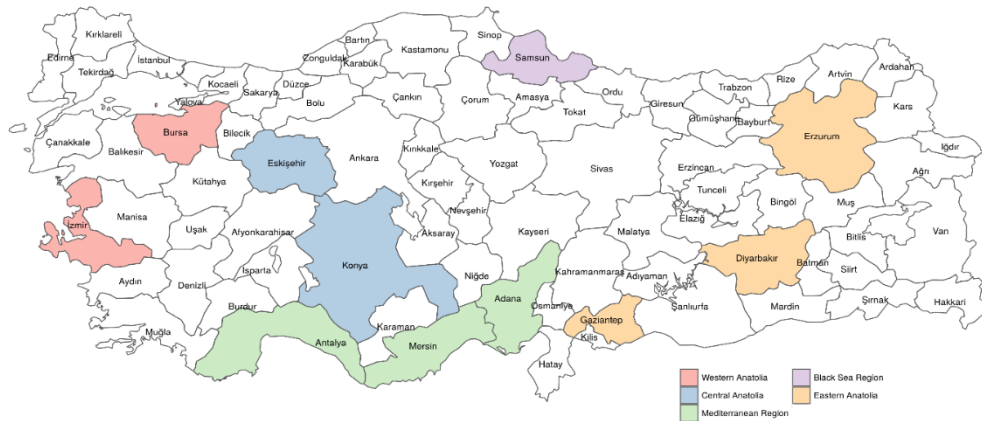
The interview data collection method for this research comprised a combination of online meetings, in-person meetings at participant offices, and phone calls. Each interview lasted approximately one to one-and-a-half hours and was recorded with the participant's consent in accordance with ethical standards. The recorded interviews were subsequently transcribed. A thematic analysis of the data was made by identifying issues that repeatedly arose during the interviews and the meanings attributed to them (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis was also incorporated with the discourse analysis to uncover the power relations embedded within the governmentality process.

This research examines the approaches and policies of Turkish municipalities toward active aging. As aging is a phenomenon only recently problematized by policy-makers in Turkey, active aging policy discourses may not be of interest everywhere. The study was thus based on purposive sampling (Patton, 2002) and focused on 30 large municipalities, which were considered more likely to have well-developed policies and attitudes related to aging (i.e., as compared to smaller, more rural municipalities). The three biggest cities in Turkey (Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir) were of particular interest, but only Izmir participated. Istanbul indicated that they

did not have specific policies for older people and did not make distinctions based on age. As mentioned (above), the interview with Ankara was brief and did not provide sufficient information for a comprehensive analysis, so it was not included in the study.

Specific attention was paid to regional disparities. The study included municipalities from different regions of Turkey: Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, and Erzurum from the Eastern and Southeastern Regions, Antalya and Mersin from the Mediterranean Region, Izmir and Bursa from Western Anatolia, Eskişehir and Konya from Central Anatolia, and Samsun from the Black Sea Region (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 The Regional Distribution of The Cities



Those municipalities also represent different socio-economic development levels. Based on a recent six-level classification made by the Ministry of Industry and Technology (2017), Bursa, Eskişehir, Izmir, and Antalya were in the first rank, Konya was in the second, Adana, Mersin, Gaziantep, and Samsun in the third, Erzurum the fifth, and Diyarbakir sixth.

Table 2 Socio-economic Development Level of Cities

Region	Metropolitan municipality	Socio-economic development level (1-6)
Western Anatolia	Bursa (Marmara Region)	1
	İzmir (Agean Region)	1
Mediterranean Region	Antalya	1
	Mersin	3
	Adana	3
Central Anatolia	Eskişehir (West-Central Anatolia)	1
	Konya	2
Eastern Anatolia	Gaziantep	3
	Erzurum	5
	Diyarbakır	6
Black Sea Region	Samsun	3

Ministry of Industry and Technology, 2017

Political affiliations of municipalities were also considered. Gaziantep, Bursa, Political affiliations of municipalities were also considered. The Gaziantep, Bursa, Erzurum, Konya, and Samsun municipalities were run by the governing JDP (Justice and Development Party/ *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*); Antalya, İzmir, Mersin, Adana, and Eskişehir municipalities were run by the main opposition party, the RPP (Republican People Party/ *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* and Diyarbakir municipality, was governed by a trustee (*kayyum*) appointed from by the central government.

4.4 Limitations of the Research

Although the main concern was to represent the heterogeneity of municipalities, an attempt was made to cover meaningful differences in analyzing the municipal active aging discourses. Indeed, as heterogeneous institutions, municipalities and their

employees may not all reflect the same ideological political stance of the political parties they are affiliated with. In Antalya and Diyarbakır, for example, the respondents had worked for the municipalities for many years, during which the political affiliations of the municipalities had changed. In contrast, the respondents from Mersin and Eskişehir had previously worked for central government departments focused on social work, which may have prevented them from fully internalizing the local discourses of their municipality. Additionally, the gender and age of participants may also be pertinent, potentially leading to contradictions with the political positions of the municipalities. For example, the respondent from Eskişehir municipality expressed this ambiguity about their personal stance and the political affiliation of the municipality as follows:

Sometimes it seems that, despite being a public institution and locally managed, people can have the impression that we're affiliated with a political party, but I'm a public employee [*kamu personeli*].

This study had a methodological limitation in that only a few municipal officials were interviewed and taken as representative of their municipalities. That, of course, is not at all unreasonable in what is an exploratory study employing a qualitative methodology. In order to overcome this limitation in future studies, however, it would be useful to utilize the opportunities provided by institutional ethnography (Teghtsoonian, 2016)) to better understand the heterogeneity of municipalities.

In normative research looking for ideal programs and projects for older people, the researcher's age would be another limitation if they have not themselves experienced the difficulties of late life; the limits of empathy may be expressed as a gap between the researcher and the theme researched. However, as this research only

aimed to understand and analyze the rationale behind the policies and not to make any policy recommendations, there was no normative stance that would inevitably result in such a gap.

Interview Questions

- What are your thoughts on the older population within the boundaries of your municipality? Is the older people's profile within your boundaries different from the older people in Turkey, or is there no difference?
- What kind of projects does your municipality have for older people? What do you aim to achieve with these projects?
- Is there a specific age group that you are targeting with your projects?
- Do your projects on aging differ for women and men?
- How do you communicate with the older people who benefit from your projects and services?
- How do you decide which services and policies related to older people will be implemented?
- What do you think of the YADES program of the Ministry of Family and Social Services?
- Do you cooperate with other institutions/individuals for the services you provide to the older people? What kind of collaborations do you carry out?
- What can you say about the government's policies on aging?
- In your opinion, what should an ideal project for older people be like? How close/far is your municipality to/from these ideals? Why?
- In your opinion, who is an older person?
- How should the relationship between an older person and their family be?

- What can you say about older people living with their family?
- What do you think about an older person living alone?
- In your opinion, how should an older person spend his/her daily life? Is there a lifestyle that you think is good for older people?
- What can you say about older people's participation in work life? Are you working on this issue?
- In your opinion, is aging a process that can be postponed? Can aging be delayed, or should it be delayed?
- What do you think of active aging?
- In your opinion, what are suitable activities for older people?
- What kind of work do you do in the scope of active aging?
- How would you describe your municipality?

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research utilizes a governmentality approach to understand the complexities of aging in Turkey by focusing on the perspectives and discourses of municipal officials in charge of aging programs. The governmentality approach, as highlighted in the literature, emphasizes the need to consider the relational and decentralized nature of power relations when studying the governing.

By conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with these officials, the research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how active aging is internalized and rationalized by these officials and how it is transformed into a governing tool. This research also addresses the limitations of previous governmentality studies which have been criticized for their exclusive focus on macro-level analysis of policy texts and for disregarding the lived experiences of older adults. By focusing on the perspectives of officials who have a direct connection to the older people through their regular visits to homes, the research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the governmentality of aging in Turkey by considering the social inequities and resistance that shape the experiences of older people. The study also highlights the importance of considering the relational and decentralized nature of governmentality in research design and the need to move beyond a reductionist analysis of policy texts.

In conclusion, this research examines the approaches and policies of Turkish municipalities towards active aging through conducting interviews with 15 municipal officials from 11 municipalities. It uses a thematic analysis approach incorporating discourse analysis to uncover the power relations embedded within the

governmentality process of aging. The municipalities were selected through purposive sampling, focusing on 30 metropolitan municipalities that were more likely to have well-developed policies and attitudes related to aging compared to smaller municipalities, and also represent different regions and socio-economic development levels.



CHAPTER V¹

MUNICIPAL ACTIVE AGING DISCOURSES' ENGAGEMENT WITH FAMILIALISM

Introduction

As stated, Turkey as a country is classified in the South European Welfare regime, which relies on family for welfare provision. The familialism of Turkey, instrumentalizing family for welfare is also apparent within the discourses of municipalities. Regardless of region, socioeconomic development, and political party affiliation, familialism is advocated by all municipalities even though the way they rationalize and instrumentalize it differently.

In order to clarify municipal discourses' varieties on familialism, Leitner's (2003) classification expressing differences of familialism in conservative welfare states was used. According to this system, conservative welfare states' familialism can be classified as optional, explicit, or implicit familialism or de-familism based on their familialization or de-familialization level (Table 1). This chapter will focus on how municipalities problematize aging based on family and consider their familialist positions in accordance with Leitner's classification. Later, how discourses on

¹ Sections from this chapter have been published as an article in the Journal of Critical Policy Studies, entitled "Shifting Responsibility in Governing Aging: Municipal Active Aging Discourses in Turkey." (Erman & Yazar, 2022)

autonomous desirable older subject and active aging engage with municipalities' differentiating familialisms in line with Leitner' classification will be analysed.

Municipalities' familialist discourses and practices can be different. While a municipality's position can be associated with optional familialism at a discursive level, for example, its practices may reflect a strong level of familialization, thus explicit familialism. The way aging is problematized also affects how municipalities position themselves concerning familialism. Municipalities problematize older peoples' relations with their families, especially through the transformation of families due to urbanization and social changes. This causes a care crisis for them, and they attempt to adapt their discourses and practices to the structural transformation of families.

Municipalities claim that urbanization, economic development, industrialization, and women's participation in the labor force are all contributing factors to Turkey's changing family structure, which has a significant impact on older people's engagement with their families. That the traditional extended family is now largely replaced by the nuclear family is acknowledged as a fact by municipalities, which also determines their position with regard to different types of familialism. A respondent from Antalya explains the transformation of family and its effects on older people's families thus:

In traditional society, older parents are unconditionally part of the family. All their needs are met by the other family members until they die, they are looked after, they are paid great respect, they are consulted. But this cannot

happen today in the city. The wife and the husband have their own problems to solve, they cannot carry an extra burden. Working outside the home and taking care of the parents can be too much, producing fights in the family (Antalya, Mediterranean, SED:1)

Although all municipalities prefer older people to have a strong relationship with their families, there are certain differences in their rationalizations. Broadly, Eastern and Central Anatolia' municipalities rely on traditional explanations responsabilizing families for eldercare, especially emphasizing family's importance for the maintenance of Turkish culture and society as an institution. On the other hand, although municipalities from Western and Mediterranean regions also generally favor a strong relationship between family and the older person, they hold a more neutral discourse concerning traditional and religious explanations. They rather acknowledge that the traditions determining older people's relations with their families are the necessary reality of Turkish society. The maintenance of this relationship is important, because it is functional especially for older people as municipal officials in those regions characterize late life with dependency and health degradation.

This chapter aims to identify municipalities' discursive and practical tendencies with regard to optional and explicit familialisms. Municipalities' discourses in Turkey do not reflect a complete de-familialization, or anti-familism; thus, de-familism is out of the analysis. In fact, all municipalities' discourses were observed to shift between explicit and optional familialism. Thus, although their responsabilization is based on different rationalities, they all instrumentalize family as a tool of governmentality. The implicit familialism category, which would be neutral in terms

of governmentality, is rare among municipalities. Only Adana municipality can be categorized within the scope of implicit familialism.

In this chapter, the differences between municipalities' discursive and practical approaches will also be identified where relevant. A municipality's discourses and practices may contradict each other, producing a hybrid or ambivalent familialism via the convergence of explicit and optional familialisms. Familialistic approaches will thus be analyzed in terms of the municipalities' discourses and practices on *living arrangements, filial piety, intergenerational contract, and home-care services*. These were found to reflect the municipalities' level of discursive familialization and de-familialization, which is the basic criterion for the detection of varieties of familialism.

If a participant challenges filial piety and favors the independent living of older people at a discursive level and then provides home-care services facilitating families' care duties, that municipality is classified within the optional familialism category as an ideal type. On the other hand, if an official strongly advocates that an older individual should live with their family, responsabilizes families for self-care tasks, such as cooking and cleaning, and justifies the intergenerational contract as a source of filial piety, this municipality is classified within the explicit familialism category. Those officials and their municipalities that indicate an ambivalent position will also be discussed within each category based especially on their regional, socio-economic development level.

5.1 Explicit Familialism versus Optional Familialism

5.1.1 Living Arrangements

According to the results gained from the interviews with officials conducted in this study, the municipalities of Municipalities from Northern (Samsun), Central (Konya) and Eastern (Erzurum, Gaziantep) Anatolia can be associated with explicit familialism both at discursive and practical levels. Considering the approach to living arrangements, Samsun (Northern Anatolia/Black Sea Region) municipality unreservedly favors older people living with their families—for the maintenance of society, as a religious necessity, and as a welfare mechanism that protects family members from the negative effects of loneliness and degeneration associated with European societies.

Only the officials from Samsun and Erzurum municipalities of Eastern and Northern Anatolia didn't mention the transformation of families, and they responsabilized families for care more strictly than other municipalities, and with a more intensive rationalization based on religion (Samsun) and tradition. The engagement of the Samsun and Erzurum officials' discourses with neo-conservatism was stronger than that of other municipalities. While Samsun municipality emphasized the importance of family via religious explanations, Erzurum emphasized the importance of family as the backbone of society. The respondent from Samsun mentions:

We are a Muslim society. We have sayings like 'paradise lies at the feet of the mother' or 'the father's blessing is above everything else.' If our society

is not morally degenerated and if we are not assimilated into the European or American way of life, this is because of the family structure that brings its members under one roof. The unity of the family, that matters [...] In the Black Sea Region families are sensitive about taking care of their parents culturally, this is a crucial issue (Samsun, Northern Anatolia SED: 3).

Municipal official from Erzurum mentions:

I think every person, healthy or not, financially well or not, in any situation, should be with their family. Because the family is the most basic building block of our society. They must be with family. Being together does not necessarily mean living in the same house. That is, people can't distinguish it. Being together, that's not it. But it has to be a strong communication. (Erzurum, Eastern Anatolia, SED: 5)

The intergenerational contract is also a crucial rationalization for living arrangements. Those municipalities favoring the co-residence of older people and their families can be classified within explicit familialism. An official from Samsun municipality, while emphasizing the importance of co-residence, criticizes families placing their children in kindergartens and responsabilizes families for childcare. He mentions:

Now I don't remember exactly where I read it, but let me give you an example. I think it was forty-five percent of the parents who raised their children in kindergarten are left by their children in nursing homes. So that's a big percentage. The child says, so you put me in kindergarten when I was a child, and I'm going to put you in a nursing home when I grow up. He sees it quite normal, so he says there is nothing unusual about it. Then s(he) says not intervene my lifestyle, not interfere in my life. Then, it sounds normal for them (Samsun, Northern Anatolia SED: 3).

Officials Konya and Erzurum municipalities strongly emphasized the responsibility of families in supporting their parents, especially with cooking, cleaning, and self-care tasks. While Konya and Erzurum are more flexible about co-

residence, they strictly criticize family members who don't fail to take care of their parents:

We always say, 'you don't have to take care of your parents in your home. But at least you should visit them every week, asking if they need anything. 'Let me give you a bath, let me shave you'. [...] There are older people who raised seven children, and now none of the children visits them even during a religious fest day. I ask you if it is okay to abandon them? Definitely no. If your parents do not live with you, even if they might be ill-tempered, you should visit them at least once a month. If you don't, they fall into depression because of loneliness (Erzurum, Eastern Anatolia, SED: 5)

The respondent from Konya mentions:

We would prefer that family members maintain the ties between them. This is also a result of our family culture. For example, a woman who lives alone and has children. For example, her children come in turn and clean her house. We are happy when we encounter such things. We like it, we want it like this. You know, we want her children to be with her when she needs something, for example, if her child is cooking in his home, s(he) should take it to his mother or father. (Konya, Central Anatolia, SED: 2)

The spatial proximity of family members to their parents is also a crucial factor in responsabilizing the family for care. The respondent from Konya can tolerate family members who are living in another city and open space for an autonomous desirable older subject, but s (he) thinks that those who are within the same city should take care of their parents. Thus, spatial proximity transforms into an instrument for explicit familialism. She explains as:

I mean, it happens, for example, an older person says, I have children but they never knock on my door, but one is in Istanbul and the other is in Ankara. They say they only talk on the phone, they can't even see their grandchildren. This hurts us. Of course, every person has a standard of life, a social life after all. Those children built a life in Istanbul and Ankara. Here they have their own children going to school. So, they have their own reasons to stay there and I can understand this. But we can't approve children living in the same neighborhood or even in the same building, not meeting their parents' house

cleaning needs, who do not cook for them, who do not knock on their door. We're trying to encourage them, let them go, and do it. (Konya, Central Anatolia, SED: 2)

The official from Samsun municipality also responsabilizes families at this practical level as well, especially those living in the same building as their parents (a common living arrangement in Turkey). In this regard, the Samsun municipal official mentions the criteria of eligibility for their services. S(he) says:

We do not provide these services [self-care and cleaning] to those who live with close relatives, with their families, or in a family apartment. We provide them with psychosocial support services, health services or they can benefit from other social and cultural activities. (Samsun, Northern Anatolia SED: 3)

5.1.2 Homecare Services

Samsun (Northern Anatolia), Erzurum and Gaziantep (Eastern Anatolia) and Konya (Central Anatolia) provide home care services for older people. Erzurum municipality mentioned that those who benefit from home care services are those who do not have a family, which implies an explicit form of familialism. The respondent from Erzurum municipality mentions that the main criteria for benefiting from their services are the physical capability of the older person and whether his/her needs are met by their family. Thus Samsun, Erzurum and Konya municipalities do not have a claim for easing the caring role of families. The official from Konya municipality mentions their eligibility criteria for benefiting from homecare services:

Well, first of all, we pay attention to the fact that s(he) lives alone. Because we don't want that, you know, the state takes care of the older person, as their children can take their hands off and give up taking care of their parents. If they have children, we evaluate them based on many criteria. I can say that

we make a personal assessment. If their children are out of the city, out of Konya, okay, we take care of that old person, but if they are in Konya and in the same district, if the economic situation of the child is good, we do not take care of that old person. We want their child to take care of them. You know, if there is such a very specific situation, if they don't really have any communication with their child, you already understand this. We evaluate them according to what kind of a family life with their children they have. (Konya, Central Anatolia, SED:2)

Samsun municipality instrumentalizes the central government's cash-for-care program to responsibilize municipalities. This reflects how central discourses and practices responsibilizing families for care intervene and transform into a criterion within the discourses and practices of local municipalities.

First of all, the government pays a care fee for this older person, mostly. Or he has a salary for himself. Now, if children receive their salary but they do not look after their parents is morally problematic. We are trying to encourage the family, look, you live close to your parents, in the same building, you should come and meet your mother's needs. This is important in terms of family ties. We explain this to people, and they often understand us. [...] In other words, we do not have the opportunity to reach all Samsun. We are working with 40 people. That's why we put some criteria. (Samsun, Northern Anatolia, SED: 3)

5.1.3 Filial Piety

Filial piety is another component of those municipalities' discourses, which generally acknowledge the status of older people, and warns families not to enter into conflict with their parents. This also contributes to the explicit familialism of Samsun (Northern Anatolia) and Erzurum (Eastern Anatolia) municipalities, as their warnings on filial piety are also for facilitating the co-residence of older people and families. As at Samsun and Erzurum; the Gaziantep municipal official prefers

families to handle the difficulties of living with older people within the same home.

He mentions:

I think families should spend more time with their elders as much as possible. Instead of leaving them behind, we need to spend more time with our elders and benefit more from their knowledge and experiences. We should not let them to sit in a corner or in their own house, see their house as a place to visit only during religious festivities. They need to be in our lives. There are older people who are aggressive or more ill-tempered; that's why I think that families, younger people have a greater responsibility. Children, daughter, and son-in-law, and grandchildren have greater responsibility. (Gaziantep, Southeastern Anatolia, SED: 3)

Although the Gaziantep and Konya municipalities with high level of socio-economic development and industrialization emphasize the importance of traditions and culture for their municipalities, their discourses and practices also shift toward optional familialism, as they opened a space for the independence of older people. Gaziantep municipal official mentions that they try to adapt their services to the transformation of families, and to ease care function of families:

But also, as you know, families are getting smaller. Everyone is in a nuclear family. Husband and wife are working. People are struggling to make ends meet on their own. They are struggling to raise their children. And older people, they too want to be more independent. Therefore, depending on the situation, we, as a metropolitan municipality, have also begun to adjust the services we provide in this direction (Gaziantep, Southeastern Anatolia, SED:3).

The Konya municipality is challenging the conventional roles and status of older individuals within families, particularly in rural areas, through active aging discourses. The participant from Konya municipality advocates for older individuals to strive for self-actualization rather than being primarily focused on their familial relationships.

Therefore, the municipality deems an older individual who is able to detach themselves from the family and exhibit autonomy as more ideal.

Now, it's not exactly what the West means by an active lifestyle here. But in our country, for example, an older person going out for a walk in the park or joining a tour program and going on a trip... Even these can be considered as requirements of an active lifestyle. Because we need to see more of these things. We do see it in the city center, but that's because of the city's development. For example, an aunt in a steppe wouldn't say "I want to go on a tour, see new things, travel, have fun. She would rather be concerned about her grandchildren being well, her daughters-in-law being well, her children being well, and she's fine already. But it will take some time for this profile to change (Konya, Central Anatolia, SED: 2).

Considering Gaziantep with increasing migration from other Eastern regions, and Konya with relatively higher soci-economic development level witnessing the transformation of the family in the field may have contributed to their shifting discourses towards optional familialism. Gaziantep municipal official still prefers an older person to live with his/her family, but he is ambiguous about this as he is witness to the preferences of older people about living alone in his professional life. Thus, he states that his municipality does not encourage older people to live independently of their families but if older people prefer that, the municipality will support them in living alone. He justifies the ambiguity of his position in the conflict emerging between the older person and his family with words that, on the one hand, responsabilize the family through filial piety and include the term 'senior' (aile büyüğü), and yet, on the other hand, include the term 'older individual' (*yaşlı birey*) when criticizing families that did not consider the individuality or personality of older people:

The family is trying to adapt his older individual to himself. The family is trying to build his own life. But they forget that until that age, this person was an individual, he had a life of his own and is still considered himself as the ancestor of the family. He thinks that he should govern the family, at least want the approval of his decision. This exist especially in men. Women are more moderate ... That's why... This issue is also not very clear. (Gaziantep Southeastern Anatolia, SED: 3)

Respondent from Diyarbakır municipality as well challenge the ‘imageries’ of filial piety, who imply that it is a “social construction” and demands too much devotion to maintaining a relationship based on filial piety. Contrary to Erzurum and Gaziantep municipalities the official from Diyarbakır municipality take off the responsibility to manage the difficulties brought up by aging from the other household members. On the other hand, unlike other municipalities promoting the difficulties that nuclear families experience in eldercare, she indicates that extended families should also be the concern of policies, as it is difficult to survive within a heterogenous household structure.

I can't describe an imaginary picture of the relationship between older people and their families. In other words, I can't say that they should be very respectful, deferent towards older people as it seems like a fantasy to me. Because the older people and old age have their own characteristics, difficulties, and stages. For other people to understand this, their empathy should be highly developed. But especially in this region, older people do not only live with their spouses. In other words, there is daughter in-law in the house, there are grandchildren, even sometimes there are children of other relatives. There are young people, old people, adolescents, women, and children in the same house. There can be a lot of such mixed structures, and I can't say that all family members should be respectful towards older people, and should be tolerant towards them. It's definitely a difficult life. That's why the ideal is for everyone in the house to protect their own space and live with a positive and supportive approach that supports other people in the house without causing a lot of harm and distress. Of course, we must value older people and understand and empathize with the difficulties and obligations brought by old age, but this may not always be as correct as in the books. At this minimum level, everyone should protect their own environment and not

disturb others, respect them. I think this is the ideal way. (Diyabakır, Southeastern Anatolia: SED: 6)

5.2 Optional Familialism versus Explicit familialism

Eskişehir (West-Central Anatolia), İzmir (Western Anatolia-Aegean Region, Mersin Western Anatolia-Mediterranean Region, Antalya (Western Anatolia-Mediterranean Region) municipalities' discourses also revealed familialistic aspects. Although they acknowledge the importance of older people's relations with their families, however, the way in which they rationalize this is different from Eastern and Central Anatolia's municipalities. 'Western' municipalities' discourses are more distanced from religious and traditional explanations, and they consider the traditional relations between the family and older people as a functional reality of Turkish culture and society. On the other hand, their discourses can also move from optional familialism toward explicit familialism. As in the case of explicit familialism the discourses on living arrangements, filial piety, and home-care services are used below to demonstrate this tendency among the Western municipalities approaches.

5.2.1 Living arrangements

The de-familialization within the discourses of the Western and Mediterranean Region's municipalities is more obvious when contrasted with the Eastern, Northern and Central Anatolia municipalities such as Samsun and Erzurum which represent the strictest form of explicit familialism among the municipalities. In

general, all the Western and Mediterranean Region's municipalities agreed that there should be a strong relationship between older people and their families. Their approach responsabilizing family through living arrangements can even be more intense than the Eastern, Northern and Central Anatolia as they also more frequently favor co-residence (Izmir, Antalya, Mersin). However, while the Eastern municipalities instrumentalize older people's relation with their families for the maintenance of traditions, the Western and Mediterranean Region municipalities' approach tend to be rationalized by more functional explanations as they associate late life with older people's dependency and decreasing health. The respondent from Izmir municipality mentions:

Old age is a period when someone is needed, a time when someone should be with you. Of course, an older person living with his family is preferred, always preferred because old age is a period when someone is really needed. When they are sick, they can't go to the hospital by bus, they can't go out to buy bread, they need support. I mean, in the earlier part of late-life they can live alone. We have young and old people, as long as they can do their own work, of course, they can live alone. It is an individual choice, but, well, family support is absolutely necessary in times when they can't afford their tasks. (Aegean Region/Western Anatolia, İzmir)

Similarly, the respondent from Eskişehir municipality emphasizes the importance and function of the strong relations between families and older people. As an "external" observer of traditions embedded in Turkish society that enable this relation, he acknowledges that traditions can be beneficial, especially for older people.

There should definitely be strong communication between them. This relationship should be built on a collaborative structure. For this, the model should be designed from childhood, instead of just working on it at the time. I also worked in a nursing home before. Their basic need is the visit of their grandchildren or relatives at the weekend, and spending time together. Not

having enough time together, their main problem is that. Their children may be abroad, but they want them to call often. That relationship is indispensable for them. So the stronger it is, the more beneficial it will be. In fact, I have't seen any damage of the traditional structure, the structure that connects people to each other. (Eskişehir, West-Central Anatolia, SED: 1)

While acknowledging the benefits of tradition, however, this official has some reservations. He criticizes the lack of gender sensitivity and the religious affiliations which for him prevent older people from going to live in a nursing home. This brings about a strong sense of de-familialization within his discourse which moves the responsibility of caregiving from families and prioritize both the individuality of the older person and the family members as caregivers. He also emphasizes that the relationship between older people and their families can be designed within a welfare state, which also implies that the family can be transformed into a tool of governmentality, through which aging can be governed. He explains as follows:

But within the traditions, if there are restrictions, extra problems and consequences that aren't gender-sensitive, we can have some problems... If the older person grows up in a very closed religious infrastructure, they may not want to go to a nursing home. Or, they might want to go to a nursing home, but their children don't let them go. The children say "What would people [elalem] think about it? I have to take care of my parent." However, the children then take things from their own lives, they renounce some things and can't take care of their own child so well... In fact, when you think about it all, all this can be designed in the welfare state. The most important thing is strong communication. [...] If there's no communication between the family and the older person, it becomes a very serious problem. (Eskişehir, West-Central Anatolia, SED:1)

Unlike Eskişehir and Izmir, Mersin municipality emphasizes the maintenance of cultural transfers via the co-residence of the family and older people. Both participants from Mersin put a strong emphasis on the independency of older

individuals. One still responsabilizes families with a rationale different from that in Eskişehir and Izmir, which converges Mersin's optional familialism toward the explicit form. The other instrumentalizes older people's relations with their grandchildren to maintain a gerontocratic perspective and thoughts for the coming generations. He mentions as follows:

Of course, I think it's important for children to be with their grandparents and learn some values from them. It's important for children to be with their grandparents in terms of gaining their positions, thoughts, and perspectives. We think this is important when raising children, which can contribute as much as their parents. Grandmothers can overcome the inexperience of mothers at some points because they'll be a bit more experienced both in terms of life and child-raising. They can make some contributions (Mersin, Mediterranean Region, SED: 3).

Similarly, the other respondent from Mersin municipality criticizes the 'selfishness' of families who strategize about living arrangements to facilitate their duty of care. Thus, the respondent's discourse reflects a strong familialization on eldercare, which converges with explicit familialism. She mentions:

The relations between the older people and their families should be inclusive, but unfortunately, we've all become selfish individuals today. We have no tolerance for a third person in the house. Especially if this is someone in need of care or attention, we're very impatient. We see all around us that when the old mother or father is getting sick, the children pass the buck to each other. One says you go to take care, the other says you do it. When it's like this, it speeds up the collapse of old people. After all, they don't easily ask their children for anything. They're ashamed. They're embarrassed. (Mersin, Mediterranean Region, SED: 3)

Although the first municipal official from Mersin, instrumentalize older people's co-residence with their families to maintain cultural transfer between generations, he also recognizes the transformation of the family, which he thinks should be supported by municipalities. He also considers cooking a task of the

municipality, and aim to replace the ‘absence’ of the woman at home with municipal services:

I think they should live, that is, they should be able to live with their families. Of course, apartment life interrupts this, but if we don’t see anything negative in their co-residence, of course they should. If something is lacking, for example, as we said, these processes can be supported either with personal or with state facilities. In other words, if her daughter is working and the [older] woman cannot cook at home by herself, when the government takes a bowl of food at noon, everyone’s problem is solved. An old person should not go to a nursing home just because there isn’t anyone cooking for them at home. Old people living with their children can be maintained with some support. (Mersin, Mediterranean Region, SED: 3)

However, this tendency for optional familialism is not independent of economic concerns, and municipalities aim to find cost-efficient alternatives for eldercare. As the quotation above indicates, optional familialism enables municipalities to avoid the expenditure on nursing homes, which municipalities find expensive. Consequently, aging in place emerges as an alternative policy approach to overcome the budget deficit, and familialism, but mostly optional familialism, becomes an extension of aging in place. The officials from Gaziantep, whose discourses shift from explicit to optional familialism, also strongly emphasized the costs of nursing homes for older people and proposed an economically more affordable model based on aging in place. Municipality discourses on aging in place instrumentalizing the family, the older subject and the community for assisting older people are commonly observed within the optional familialism category, including the hybrid one. Gaziantep municipality mentions:

Here, when we talk about day care, our people don’t want to go to a nursing home. They want to spend the rest of their lives in the neighborhood where they were born and grew up, in their own home. Our first priority here is to

increase the quality of life in their home and surroundings and, if necessary, support them in continuing to live in this area. For our healthy older people who can go out and continue their daily lives, we have what is called a day care center, but we named it the ‘Active Life and Education Center’ to avoid negative misunderstandings. (Gaziantep, Southeastern Anatolia, SED: 3)

Within the discourses of municipalities, it can be observed that active aging is also instrumentalized for aging in place. While in the case of optional familialism, home care services transform into an apparatus to relieve the care responsibility of families, active aging as an extension of aging in place is offered to maximize the responsibility of care on older individual subjects.

The respondent from Antalya (Mediterranean Region) municipality encouraged services facilitating the care duty of families; thus, his discourses reflect a certain level of de-familialization. He strongly emphasizes that families should be supported as a whole, and municipality services should help families to stay together. He also favours co-residence as the best way of life for older people and their families and relies on the intergenerational contract which approximates his discourses as explicit familialism. He mentions as follow:

I mean, after all, they're human, we're human. People need each other too. So, one should look from an ethical point of view, as a value. As parents, you've raised those children, there should be loyalty. So, in return, you know, the relationship shouldn't break. In other words, these relationships shouldn't be harmed, shouldn't be damaged due to the changes, social changes. (Antalya, Mediterranean Region, SED: 1)

5.2.2 Home-care services

A municipality's approach to homecare services may be an important indicator of its position in the familialization versus de-familialization dichotomy or range. The

Western municipalities' official interviewed partially de-responsibilized families for eldercare, regarding it as an expert task and a professional domain that exceeds the capabilities of family members. The discourses on homecare services from Eskişehir reflected the highest level of de-familialization in this regard. When asked whether older people living with their families or within a family building are eligible for homecare services, he responded as:

Sure, sure, sure. Being with his family... That's not a criterion for us. The main criterion is, can the family meet this need? Can [the older person] do this alone? Because this [eldercare] is a job with some expert requirements. The patient can have bedsores, etc., they're informed about it. It's actually a medical team. We directly employ those who have graduated from eldercare departments in this field, so they're already competent in caregiving. They directly implement the training they've received, and the area we have perhaps never been criticized for seems to be home-based personal care services. (Eskişehir, West-Central Anatolia, SED:1)

When a question on the criteria for house-cleaning services, whether these are regarded as a municipality provisioning duty, is asked explicitly, he continues as:

Sure, of course, so that person has to live his life somehow. We encounter this situation in any case as well. It's also relevant for social aid. They might live in a family building, but the woman could be divorced and excluded, so wouldn't we support this woman just because she lives in a family building? No, that person has to survive in some way, to be able to stand on her own feet. The same goes for older individuals, as for young adults. This is standart for anyone who applies. (Eskişehir, West-Central Anatolia, SED:1)

Thus, Eskişehir municipality does not responsibilize families for house-cleaning. It only considers whether the needs of older people are being met by their families. If not, the responsibility for house-cleaning is assumed by the municipality; officials do not demand care-work from the family. Similarly, a municipality from Western Anatolia also considers eldercare a professional field with requirements that families

may not efficiently perform. However, similar to the municipalities of explicit familialism, it does not provide house-cleaning services if the family and older person are living in the same building. In this regard, it makes a distinction between cleaning services and self-care services. For this municipality, house-cleaning is not a professional task that cannot be performed by, typically, daughters or daughters-in-law, giving the older person a bath is considered one. This also reflects the gendered character of care duty, with mainly women in the family being responsible.

Providing bedsores dressing services is not a task that everyone can perform. It's something that really requires professionalism. For example, we did not demand any income certificate from older people for bedsores dressing. Rather, we provide it to those who will not abuse, for example, if we are cleaning the house, we consider that his/her daughter-in-law or children don't live downstairs (in the same building) and s(he) is really unable to do this with the support of family members. But it can be very difficult to give a bath to an older person, take them to the bathroom etc. [...] For example, her daughter downstairs can come and clean the house, but she can't dress bedsores. We don't have any criteria for bed sore service, as her daughter or child can clean the house, but can't do bed sores. Our criteria also depend on the support he can get from the family. We don't give it to someone who can get support. (Western Anatolia, SED:1)

Bursa (Marmara Region) municipality emphasized that municipalities should help the families in their caregiving role via day-care opportunities for older people and respite care and promote strongly an autonomous self-reliant older subject. S(he) mentions as follows:

Daycare enables the relatives of older people in need of care to rest and relieve the stress on relatives because sooner or later the relatives feel guilty, like they're neglecting the older person, which also creates stress for them. They'll carry on taking care of the older relative, and the municipality will also support them at certain times. Here, the caregiver can go to the

hairdresser, maybe shopping. The aim is to give them a breather to make sure they can still stay with their parents (Bursa, Marmara Region, SED:1).

The discourses of respondent from Bursa, reflect the tension between traditions and ‘modernization’ while indicating that their municipality would prefer a close relationship between older people and their families. S(he) tries to combine her position with the municipality’s more ‘traditional’ position which for her the municipality would prefer an older subject living with his/her family. When she was asked for clarification about the reason for the municipality’s preference for this close relationship she mentions:

So, we emphasize tradition. Yes, we’re looking to the future, but we also emphasize traditional values. Bursa is indeed a very old city, a very deeply rooted city, it has many layers and layers of history. Bursa already has a separate history in itself, in the history of Turkey and in Ottoman history. Even our nursing home goes back to the Ottoman Empire, our municipality has its roots in the periods of the Ottoman Empire. So, an emphasis can be made in terms of tradition, we shouldn’t think of traditional values as iron laws ruling our lives. It’s useful to modernize things a bit... because Bursa is not that traditional anymore. (Bursa, Marmara Region, SED: 1)

5.2.3 Filial Piety

The respondents from Western municipalities are more prone to criticize filial piety and its emphasis on respect and serving older people, which is also the main source of traditional responsabilization of families for eldercare in Turkey. Also, filial piety is criticized for causing an obstacle to the active aging process of older people by serving their daily tasks, preventing them from engaging in life as their needs are met by family members as a requirement of respect. Bursa municipality from Western

Anatolia, which also reflects an optional familialism has challenged filial piety for the same reason. The respondent mentions as follows:

Our culture dictates we serve family members. Adult children feel obliged to serve their older mother and father. In our culture, you show your respect to your parents by offering them your service. We have the habit of not letting our parents do their own errands out of our respect for them. They are not allowed to go shopping or carry out their daily duties. Then they lose their competence and age quickly (Marmara Region, Bursa, SED: 1).

Similarly, the respondent from İzmir municipality associated filial piety with active aging. S(he) responsabilizes older people for their daily tasks, and taking responsibility for the activities of their daily life. S(he) explains as:

Well, first of all, old people should definitely not isolate themselves from life. They should be able to do their shopping and go to the market and hospital by themselves. When another person from their family or household meets their needs, they get older and become more dysfunctional. Even going to the hospital or the shops is an activity, it's about being in life. They shouldn't think that other people should do everything and "My child should bring my bread." It's better for them to do these things by themselves. If not, they'll quickly break away from life. (İzmir, Aegean Region, SED:1)

Municipality discourses on family seem to engage with active aging discourses. Active aging discourses engaging with older individuals' relations and their families, challenge the traditional responsabilization of families for eldercare based on filial piety and promote a new morale value of self-care through active aging activities, especially, in the discourses of İzmir, Eskişehir, Bursa, Konya, Antalya municipalities. These discourses may be said to promote an individualistic older subject in the neoliberal sense, but this is not necessarily a simple issue given the family-based welfare context of Turkey. Although there is not a consistent pattern, it can be observed

that Antalya, Bursa, Adana, Mersin and Gaziantep municipalities, mainly those with a hybrid familialism position, instrumentalize active aging discourses on self-care to assist the care burden of families.

The official from Antalya put the difference between being self-sufficient within the family and being independent from the family very strictly. As respondent from Mersin, Adana, Gaziantep, Bursa, Konya municipalities he underlined a desirable older subject who is not a burden on his/her family. He mentions as follows:

Self-sufficiency doesn't mean independence, but while living with the family it means easing the functioning of the family. Self-sufficiency and being independent of the family are different things. In other words, self-sufficiency eases the family system. As long as an older person can meet his/her own basic needs, s(he) eases relationships in the family, so, s(he) won't be a burden to the family. As a result, the family will be more content. Our municipality prefers a self-sufficient older person living with his/her family (Antalya, Mediterranean Region, SED: 1).

Bursa municipality, when considering the health benefits of performing activities, s(he) emphasizes how the burden of healthcare on families can be alleviated through preventive active aging practices:

First, protection from dementia. Second, protection from bone loss. What could be... depression, at the very least. I mean, old age depression is a very hidden depression. We have already talked about cognitive loss. [...] By preventive, I mean we don't know at this moment, I don't know our health expenses at what stage we have such information, but I know that these diseases are much more expensive and troublesome for the state, for families, and for relatives after they appear. We think the more we can prevent, the better it will be. I say I think, but we think it happens. (Bursa, Marmara Region, SED: 1)

Similarly, when the respondent from Mersin municipality is asked whether performing activities is beneficial for older people he associated the benefits of being active with welfare of the family, which for him is equates to the welfare of society:

It definitely will, definitely, definitely. Being able to go outside, making visits, traveling, right? We come across people who are 80 years old and come from Finland and Norway who are on vacations, visiting different areas. If one day our own retirees and our own citizens of that age can go to Norway, Japan, America, Greece, etc. in large groups, or even if they can just visit places like Mugla, Antalya, Izmir and Ankara, if we can get our retirees and workers to this point, it will definitely have a positive effect on the happiness of society. People will be glad in seeing their older parents happy. (Mersin, Mediterranean Region, SED: 3)

Additionally, the Gaziantep, Adana and Bursa municipalities instrumentalize active aging as an extension of aging in place to assist with the absence of family members at home. Gaziantep municipality mentions:

There's a group that tries to live with their old relatives and take care of them. It's definitely shameful to leave them in a nursing home, it's shameful to leave them alone. But also, families are getting smaller these days. Everyone has a nuclear family. The husband and wife work. People are struggling to make ends meet on their own, they're struggling to make ends meet with their children. Our older people are a little more on their own, our older people also want to be a little more independent. That's why, depending on the situation, we've also started to separate our services in this direction as a metropolitan municipality. We have a service that we've been offering since 2015 under the name of daycare [the active aging center]. It has about 800 active healthy members. (Gaziantep, Southeastern Anatolia, SED: 3)

Conclusion

Municipal officials' discourses reflect that familialism can no longer be considered as an 'implicit familialism' in Turkey. Rather, for all municipalities (except Adana), familialism has been transformed into a tool for governing aging in a way that

has shifted local policy on aging in Turkey from ‘governing the family’ to ‘governing through the family’ (Donzelot 1979, Pestaña 2012). Both explicit and optional familialisms transform families into a tool for governing based on a variety of rationalities and criteria, while municipal officials’ region and socioeconomic development level may determine outlier discourses that create hybrid forms of familialism.

Although all municipalities reflect familialism, and different types of familialisms can converge—even within the discourses of officials representing the same municipalities—the rationale behind their familialism gains a consistency based on regional differences. The Northern, Eastern and Central Anatolia municipalities studied (Samsun, Konya, Erzurum, Gaziantep) rationalize older people’s relations with their families based on tradition and (for Samsun) religious explanations. While these municipalities strongly responsabilize families for eldercare, their discourses may also reflect some contradictions. For example, while the Konya (Socio-economic development level: 2) municipal official expressed a strong level of familialization and responsabilization of family for eldercare, she also advocated an independent life for older people.

Western municipalities, on the other hand, adopt a distanced position with regard to traditions and religious explanations when rationalizing the relations between older people and their families. They acknowledge traditions as ‘beneficial’ for older people and argue that a strong relation between them is essential. One of the outliers of optional familialism is found to be Mersin municipality, whose respondent

discourses rationalized co-residence for the cultural and traditional transfer between generations. Another outlier from Western regions responsabilized women for eldercare and house cleaning (this thus converged with explicit familialism). Finally, the Antalya municipality respondent's discourses shifted to explicit familialism as he rationalized co-residence through intergenerational contract.

In Eastern, Northern and Central Anatolia's discourses, neo-conservatism as an ideology transforms into a tool for governing and *conducting* families. Municipalities' neo-conservative discourses aiming to foster traditional, national, and religious feelings among families form the basis of the responsabilization of families for eldercare. Although only the Samsun municipal official insisted on co-residence, they generally responsabilized families for an intensive caregiving relationship. The spatial proximity between family members and older people is another source of responsabilization. Filial piety and the intergenerational contract remain the basic sources of families' responsabilization for eldercare in those municipalities.

On the other hand, the Aegean, Marmara and Mediterranean (Western regions) municipalities which are more prone to optional familialism more frequently consider family capacity in caregiving. The abilities of families to care for their older relatives can be understood in two ways. First, most of the municipalities (except Samsun and Erzurum) acknowledge that families are transforming from extended to nuclear families, which then transforms into a care crisis in their discourses. Women's labor participation brings about the loneliness of older people, left alone at home with their unmet needs. Thus, the spatial absence of women at home is understood to have

diminished the capacity of families for eldercare—which is acknowledged as a fact and has opened a space for optional familialism within the discourses of some Eastern and Central Anatolia municipalities (e.g., Konya, and Gaziantep).

The second point related to the caregiving capacities of family in Western municipalities concerns the professionalization of eldercare, which engages new actors in the governmentality of aging. Especially Izmir and Eskişehir municipal officials offered as their main rationale for de-familialization of care tasks that eldercare constitutes a professional domain that can only be properly performed by experts—who, in terms of policy-making, are mainly graduates from the eldercare departments of universities. The fact that they consider eldercare a professional task enhances the optional familialism of these municipalities, which releases the responsibility of caregiving from families.

However, it should be also considered that not all tasks are thus ‘professionalized’, especially house cleaning. Thus, the care task is divided into components. While giving a bath, for example, is considered to require a certain level of skill and knowledge, house cleaning remains a family’s and women’s responsibility as an ‘easy’ task. This divide between the nature of care tasks converged municipalities’ discourses from optional familialism toward the explicit one, constituting one of the main reasons for hybrid forms of familialism.

One of the main mechanisms employed by municipalities to assess family caregiving capacity is the social analysis report. This is a standard tool of the social

work department curriculums for depicting social problems at the micro level and intervening. All the municipalities studied mentioned that they analyze each case deeply with field research into the older person's needs. Within this process, older people's relations with their families are also analyzed and used as an input for the intervention model to be designed at the end of the process. Thus, social analysis reports function as a 'gaze' that both problematize older people's needs and determine the standards and norms applied to older people's relations with their families. Finally, therefore, an intervention model is designed for each specific case to enable the adjustment of older people and their families to the standards and norms determined by the social analysis report. All the municipalities, regardless of region, political affiliation and socio-economic development level stated that each social analysis report (including photographic evidence) is submitted to an evaluation commission, which decides who will be prioritized for service provision. Clearly, the norms of social work and the way social analysis reports are prepared are also feeding and shaping the dynamics of familialism in Turkey.

Future studies can focus on, whether social analysis reports have a homogenizing effect on the familialistic approach of municipalities or whether, contrarily, political affiliation or regional differences has a differentiating impact on how social analysis reports are conducted. It is quite apparent that older people's relation with their families will be a fundamental locus for the governmentality of aging in Turkey in the future.

CHAPTER VI²

MUNICIPAL ACTIVE AGING DISCOURSES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DESIRABLE OLDER SUBJECT

Active aging is a policy discourse that suggests aging can be postponed through an individual's own efforts and lifestyle choices. This concept is based on the idea of self-governance and is in line with neoliberal ideology that prioritizes individual responsibility for one's own welfare. The field research conducted for this thesis outlined that most of municipalities embraced active aging as a normative truth, acknowledging that the aging process can be delayed through active aging opportunities. This reflects how neoliberal rationalization is influencing municipalities' policies on aging by placing responsibility on older individuals for their own aging process. The respondents from the municipalities had different opinions on this topic, some shared the responsibility between the state and the older individuals, while others challenged the idea of delaying aging and saw it as a natural process that should be accepted. This also reflect how municipal discourses problematize aging and to what extend active aging activities and desirable older subjects that it promoted is internalized by municipalities which will be discussed in this chapter.

² Sections from this chapter have been published as an article in the Journal of Critical Policy Studies, entitled "Shifting Responsibility in Governing Aging: Municipal Active Aging Discourses in Turkey." (Erman & Yazar, 2022)

6.1 Municipal Rationalization of Active Aging Discourses

The main idea promoting active aging as a legitimate policy discourse is that the aging process can be postponed through someone's own efforts and outsider intervention—or, in Foucauldian terms, active aging discourses promote an older subject through the self-technologies enabled by its deployment as a tool of governmentality through the biopolitical conduct delaying the individual's own aging process. This legitimization process is an extension of neoliberal ideology responsibilizing the individuals for their own welfare.

In order to observe the engagement of this basic neoliberal rationale of delaying aging, municipal officials across Turkey were asked whether the aging process of an individual can be postponed and, if so (or to the extent that it is so), whether this is the responsibility of the older individual. Officials from all municipalities embraced active aging as truth in a normative way. Except for Konya and Bursa and one respondent from Mersin municipality, they all acknowledged that the aging process of an older subject could be delayed via the 'opportunities' of active aging. This reflects how neoliberal rationalization has already engaged in the municipalities' policy framework on aging through active aging discourses responsibilizing older subjectivities for their own aging process:

It can be delayed; it should be delayed. The content of our conversations with you is about this. Finally, we reach this result. I mean, all of the services for older people also mean delaying aging. (Mediterranean Region, Antalya, SED:1)

When he is asked about the responsibility of older subject in delaying aging, he emphasized the importance of the willingness of older people to accept and receive services. He also indicated that services should be designed in such a way that older people could find a meaning for participating:

Yes, they're responsible. They must be willing. They must be resolved. They should accept and should be accepted. They should take responsibility. In other words, you provide the service, but if the older person doesn't receive it, you can't help them. But if you define the service and the old person receives that service, takes responsibility, and can find a place in that service, they can continue to work and delay aging. (Mediterranean Region, Antalya, SED: 1)

On the other hand, the municipal official from Eskişehir municipality shares the responsibility between the state and the older individual. He emphasizes the structural opportunities of delaying aging and indicates the unequal distribution of those opportunities even among the world's countries.

Delaying aging is very closely related to an individual's consciousness, it is directly related, but the older individual is not the only one responsible. It is also about the opportunities provided by the social state. Today there are several countries where access to clean water is restricted. In those countries, you can see how the active life expectancy has decreased (West-central Anatolia, Eskişehir, SED:1).

On the other hand, the respondent from Mersin municipality, who developed a counter-conduct as a policymaker towards the disciplinary policy discourses of active aging, challenged the idea of problematizing the aging process by also objecting to the idea of delaying aging. His response again, is quite compatible with Foucault's phrases on problematization. He mentions as follows:

Well, if you see old age as a bad thing, you will see it as something that needs to be delayed. But aging is a natural thing. You just have to wait for the ripening like the fruit on the tree. Of course, in that sense, it is not something that can be delayed and postponed, it just needs to happen naturally. If everything happens naturally, I think we don't look at such things in that way. If someone gets to the age of 85-90, within its natural process, the flow of life, the family, these will be out of our agenda both in a material and spiritual sense (*madden ve manen*). I don't think it is necessary to make it a big problem. No need. Otherwise, we see it as a problem area again and try to solve it, but if you observe where the natural processes are disrupted and where it is blocked and if the measures are taken accordingly, the problem will end by itself. (Mersin, Mediterranean Region, SED: 3)

While Bursa municipality took the idea of delaying aging and its promotion as a consequence of the “consumer society,” which glorifies beauty and youth; the aging process, she opined, cannot be postponed. She was also critical of active aging discourses, like Mersin, quoted above. One respondent from Konya municipality similarly rejected the idea of delaying aging but for a different reason. S(he) gave a more religious explanation, indicating that aging cannot be delayed and should rather be the decision of God (Allah). She mentions as follows:

A person can take very good care of himself but goes out the door and has an accident. We've seen this so many times, even during the Corona period. For example, a woman or a man has Covid, then they have a stroke, for example, but the person has taken good care of himself until then. It's not something that happens according to one's own responsibility. This is divine destiny [*takdir-i ilahi*]. (Konya, Central Anatolia, SED: 2)

Samsun municipality, combine religious explanation with neoliberal rationale and responsabilize older people for their own aging process. Konya and Samsun municipal officials strongly advocate active aging in its Western form. This indicates that religious explanations are compatible with and thus not confronting active aging discourses as a diametrically opposed worldview, which may be understood as

reflecting the globalizing strength of neoliberal active aging discourses. The municipal official from Samsun mentions as follows:

Of course, in the end it is Allah who decides, we have nothing to say against it. However, it is the individual who has influence over the conditions of their aging (Samsun, Northern Anatolia, SED: 3)

The way active aging discourses engage with municipal aging policies as expressed by the individual officials varied according to two dimensions considered (region, level of socioeconomic development). In Western municipalities (Izmir, Eskişehir, Mersin) with high socioeconomic development levels, municipal officials emphasized that older people have an active lifestyle in their cities at the very beginning of the interviews. Those cities are attracting older people and receive a high level of older migrants; they are popularly known as retiree cities. Officials from Eastern cities, such as Erzurum and Diyarbakır, were also asked the same question about the basic characteristics of their older people living, and the older people's lifestyles in eastern cities were compared to those in the western cities.

Participant from Erzurum municipality, made the following comment:

I mean, Erzurum is a city in Eastern Anatolia. In these eastern regions, as you know, the lifestyle is not like in the West. In general, especially the group over the age of 65, which we call the older people, 90% of them were housewives in the past. Many of them have migrated from the village to the city. Their lifestyle as a group, I cannot define as very social. (Erzurum, Eastern Anatolia, SED: 5)

In the western cities, the older population is more eager to engage with active aging practices. Thus, the western municipalities are more prone to design and adapt their

active aging services considering the preference of their constituency, as their level of interest in them is relatively high. Western municipalities, value the willingness of older people to benefit from active aging services. Municipal official from Mersin municipality mentions:

Well, I'm interested in the more elite section of the older people. I'm interested in the older people who are retired and members of a retirement home. They're already at a certain level. They're literate, they have a high level of awareness, they have a high level of consciousness. For example, there are those who write poetry, those who write books, those who play and sing folk songs. I would say they're somewhat above the middle level. They express themselves comfortably. When there is entertainment, their participation is high. They can easily express their demands. They can voice their complaints. Or they can easily voice a social problem. Recently, for example, a pensioner said that the sidewalks for the disabled were inadequate. You know what I am saying, their awareness is high. (Mersin, Mediterranean Region, SED: 3)

A participant from the (Eskişehir) also emphasized the importance of demands from the older people in terms of both investments in active aging in their city and the efficiency of the services provided. For him, the establishment of the Refreshment University (Tazelenme Üniversitesi) in Eskişehir is not a coincidence. This type of institution, focusing on older people, is a new development in line with active aging. S(he) believes that his city was specifically chosen for this investment due to the demand potential of the older people there. An efficient implementation of services is only possible via the preferences and desire of the beneficiaries of the services. Thus, the freedom of older people in participating in active aging services transforms into an instrument of governmentality and, in this Foucauldian sense, makes the governmentality process possible. The municipal official explains that the

municipality has to consider the desire and tendencies of older people in order to attract older people's attention—which thus renders possible the actualization of activities and makes the demands and desires of older people a tool of governmentality. The Eskişehir official specifically promotes participation and active citizenship as a model for governing that relies on the will and agency of older people. He mentions as follows:

We especially care about participation. Therefore, if we are together, we can ensure governance together. What do I mean? Okay, there is a significant difference between having a structure where individuals can directly convey their demands here and not conveying them at all. Then the services change. Like what? Now, I know that there are aging individuals in that region. Therefore, I can organize courses, centers, living spaces, parks, etc., in that region to improve their health problems or in line with their own demands. But when this demand does not come from them, I actually take these services there with the truths I know. I mean, I say that the older people actually need this. I can open courses, but there may not be any demand for those courses. Therefore, so, this lifelong learning we are talking about, their participation in the work of our municipality... Actually, the main word is 'participation' (West-Central Anatolia, Eskişehir, SED: 1).

While, in Western municipalities, active aging discourses emerge and function as a response to the demand of their constituency, which makes older people more governable via active aging discourses, in Eastern, Northern and Central Anatolia municipalities, active aging programs and projects are generally supported via the YADES program. Consequently, top-down diffusion of active aging discourses in those cities experience some difficulties in getting the attraction and demand of older people, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The municipal officials were asked when active aging discourses first entered their municipal policy agenda on aging. Table 3 reflects their responses. While municipalities' engagement with active aging discourses is dependent on their regions and the demands of their constituency; academic affiliations, universities, international networks on aging, and international organizations are also important actors in the dissemination of active aging discourses across municipalities in Turkey. This also reflects the hegemony of neoliberal active aging discourses, which is diffused to the policy discourse and practice via multiple channel.

Table 3 Involvement of Active Aging Discourses in The Municipal Policy Agenda

Regions	Metropolitan municipalities	Involvement of the active aging discourses in the metropolitan municipalities' policy agenda
Western Anatolia	Bursa	
	İzmir	Via personal interest of the mayor's wife
Mediterranean Region	Antalya	Via Ministry of Family and Social Services
	Mersin	Via Age Friendly Cities Network
Central Anatolia	Konya	Via YADES Program
	Eskişehir	Via YADES Program
Eastern Anatolia	Erzurum	Via the YADES Program
	Diyarbakır	Via YADES Program
	Gaziantep	Via academic research
Black Sea Region	Samsun	Via academic research

Source: Interviews conducted with municipalities

6.2 Municipalities' Problematization of Aging and Situating Active Aging

Discourses

In line with global trends, municipalities' discourses on both older individuals and an aging population are negatively constructed. The 'apocalyptic demography' discourses seem to dominate municipal approaches considering population aging as a crisis. While Adana (Mediterranean Region) municipality characterizes an aging population as a 'disaster' due to the economic burden on the public budget, Bursa municipality (Marmara Region) warns about the needs of older people based on her futuristic concerns. Thus, the discourses on "near future" remarked by an imaginary increasing aging population dominate the discourses of municipalities. The respondent from Adana (Mediterranean Region) municipality mentioned:

The increase in the older people population is a social disaster (Respondent 1, Adana, Mediterranean Region). Just providing cash transfers is also a burden that does not help, because it does not solve the problems for the future (Respondent 2, Adana, Mediterranean Region, SED: 3).

Similarly, respondent from Adana municipality, emphasizes the 'burden' of the aging population, especially those who are not included in the social security system:

Those (older people) without social security are a financial burden. It is not possible for municipalities to respond to this burden. Provincial social solidarity foundations may be a solution. (Adana, Mediterranean Region, SED: 3)

The official from Bursa (Marmara Region) adds that:

Because right now, women, children, and especially disabled people are more prominent among the disadvantaged people, they seem more in need. Also, the older people aren't making much noise as a disadvantaged group yet, so their burden on the economy isn't that much currently. Look, after 2030,

we'll be seeing this burden very clearly. That's when this group will start shouting. Some preventive activities should be planned. We're aware of this now, but the upcoming projects are very busy with women, children, and disabled people. But older people will start to show up in twenty years, so I think we're going slowly. I don't think it's given enough attention (Bursa, Marmara Region, SED: 1)

Both the Eastern and Western municipalities acknowledge that population aging puts a burden on the public budget due to institutional care and health expenditures.

Municipality officials problematization at the state level generally addresses institutional care, which for them is costly for both the government and older individuals. As the variety of the government's services for older people is limited, and the basic model for eldercare is institutional care, they in general, criticize both the financial and functional disadvantages of institutional care. Following the problematization of the financial burden of institutional care, they immediately suggest 'aging in place' which is economically more affordable for their municipalities and more comfortable for older people to live in the environment that they are a part of.

Although none of the participants were asked questions about aging in place, İzmir (Aegean Region, SED:1) Eskişehir (West-Central Anatolia, SED: 1) Mersin (Mediterranean Region, SED: 3) Bursa (Marmara Region, SED: 1) , Gaziantep (Southeastern Anatolia, SED: 3) municipalities' discourses, mainly with high level of socio-economic development levels had it as a repeated theme. The official from Gaziantep municipality expressed it as:

When an older person stays in a nursing home, s(he) is not happy, and s(he) is restless. On the other hand, considering the economic dimension of the issue, the monthly cost of a person living in a nursing home was 10.000 TL as of 2019. But this person is unhappy and restless. However, s(he) is happier when s(he) stays in his/her own home because s(he) does not leave his/her own living space (Gaziantep, Southeastern Anatolia, SED: 3).

All the municipalities embrace active aging discourses. However, some official's active aging discourses are not independent of 'aging in place' which covers a broader policy context. Those discourses instrumentalize active aging as an extension (component) of aging in place. Active aging discourses embedded in 'aging in place' address the loneliness of older people at home, itself stemming from the transformation of families, whose members, including women, are now outside the home, leaving older people both in need of care, and facing 'problem' of loneliness.

The loneliness of older people is a frequently highlighted theme, which for municipalities, harms older people's physical and psychological health. This rationalization aims also to replace and substitute the absence of family members at home. The majority of municipalities emphasize the relation between the increasing labor force participation of women and families and decreasing capacity for eldercare. This indicates the gendered patterns of caregiving in Turkey. Thus, active aging in Turkey engages with the very structural aspects of the welfare regime at different level.

The Gaziantep (Southeastern Anatolia, SED: 3) municipality is asked about his municipality's aim in establishing active aging centers. His response reflects the inherent relation between active aging and aging in place. He replies as follows:

So... if I don't take care of people, their quality of life will decrease. When they sit at home all the time, the men go to coffee houses or the women get depressed because they are inactive or do not socialize, and a rapid decline begins. Also, families, or rather individuals, don't want to leave their own living spaces. Especially in our Southeast Anatolia region, they don't choose to stay in a nursing home or in another area but want to continue their lives in their own living space. We wanted to create an area [i.e., the Active Aging Center] where they can continue their lives in their own living space, but they can also come here to communicate with their peers and engage in different activities. (Gaziantep, Southeastern Anatolia, SED: 3)

The respondent from Bursa (Marmara Region, SED: 1) municipality is asked about the reasons for their plans to open an active aging center. In her response, she mentions the difficulties of living in a nursing home for older people as, justifying the efficiency of aging in place. Relying on her experience at the municipal nursing home, she indicates the conflict between the daily habits of older individuals and institutional care. She justifies aging in place for the comfort that it brings for older and also argues that aging in place will keep the older individual more active, as institutional care restricts their movement of older people. She replies as follows:

I can always find an older person or a relative of an older person in front of me who can complain about anything. And I know that they don't complain about the same thing at home. It's a bit like that they want to be with their own people –“I want my own people, my own family, my own village” – so, while they may not have a problem with these things there, here, they become a problem. For example, there are certain types of people who find the adaptation to institutions very difficult. Eighty-year-olds who come here because they think they're dependent can't stay here because they're looking for... the food they cooked, they want to go out and take a walk whenever they want, at three in the morning. At 3 a.m. When all my floors are asleep, when the aunt goes out for a walk, the security is on full alert. Institutional care is not an attractive thing for them. Aging in place is both less costly and can make them much more socially active. The whole world is now turning to on-site care [aging in place]. We should do that too. So, let's follow it, let's not miss it (Bursa, Marmara Region, SED: 1)

Like other municipalities, she suggests a policy designed on a neighborhood scale and instrumentalizes the project of active aging that they are planning to establish in various neighbourhoods of Bursa, as a component and extension of aging in place. Thus, space emerges as an instrument of the governmentality of aging, which also affects active aging discourses' spatial scale of implementation.

Therefore, we don't want to separate them from their home, their place, their neighborhood, their family, the shops that they're familiar with. [...] So institutional care is no longer preferable. If it's going to be smaller, it may be possible to incubate it in smaller, more minimal—in the form of a cell—in neighborhoods such as old people's apartments, old people's homes. As I said recently, we proposed the Life Flow Center Project [a type of active aging center]. (Bursa, Marmara Region, SED: 1)

The financial burden of health expenditures is another source of problematization that municipal officials frequently emphasize. Most, regardless of their regional, socioeconomic, and political position, associate aging with health problems and health expenditures. On the other hand, they generally acknowledge that diseases can be prevented via an active lifestyle. The respondent from Mersin municipality mentions:

I think if precautions were taken in advance, so much money wouldn't be spent on treatment in old age. Because every older person takes at least two kinds of medicines. In other words, the older people compete according to the color of their medicines. So, I honestly don't think there is a need for so many medicines. If healthy nutrition and sports had entered their lives at an earlier age, they wouldn't need so many medications. For example, most older people take cholesterol medication. Why? Because of not having a healthy diet and inactivity. You see, abroad, the older person also does some sort of sports. My cousin's next-door neighbor was a 90-year-old German woman who mowed the grass in front of her door. And the woman was dressed so elegantly, hair blow-dried, nails with nail polish, if you saw her here, you'd think she was going to a wedding, the wedding of a close relative. But she's keeping on in life. (Mersin, Mediterranean Region, SED:3)

This indicates that in the future, the medicalization of aging will dominate policy discourses and the sources of problematization. On the other hand, late life is not only associated with physical dependence but also a degradation in the psychological health of older people. Thus, the psychological state of mind is also highly considered and medicalized by municipal officials. Considering the family-based welfare context in Turkey, municipalities' responses may also reflect the fact that the health problems of older individuals may also be defined as a burden for families, as well as the state.

I don't know what our health expenses are at the moment, but I know that the processes after these diseases occur are much more costly and troublesome for the state, families and relatives. I think the more we can prevent this, the better it will be. (Marmara Region, Bursa, SED:1)

At the individual level, the dependency of older subjects is problematized based on their capacity for self-care or self-reliance. Thus, the solution is to promote self-reliant and autonomous desirable subjects. When asked about their municipalities' definition of an older person, officials reject a numerical definition of age. Gaziantep, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Konya, İzmir, and Antalya municipal officials all defined an older person as someone who cannot meet their own needs.

For our municipality, there's a definition of the older person that fits the general definition of the older person. I mean, maybe not everyone expresses it this way, but we think that people who can't be self-sufficient, who have difficulty in self-sufficiency, caring for themselves, meeting their own needs and who are over 60—that is, the older people in need of assistance or who need to be served—as individuals who need to benefit from older people services. (Eastern Anatolia, Erzurum, SED: 5)

The official from İzmir, while acknowledging the self-reliance of an older individual, indicates that the numerical standards on the idea of older age in society are changing. He mentions that 60 should no longer be a definitional threshold:

The older people are people who can't move very comfortably independently of someone else, who can't do their own work very much. Now, in one of our nursing homes, there are people who are 60 years old, that is, people who are over 60 years of age, but who we can never call 'old'. I mean, for example, they can easily continue their lives outside for another twenty years. You know, I can't call them 'old'. I mean, in my opinion, 60 years old should never be the line for old age. It should go up to 70, 80. My understanding of old age is of people who need support. In other words, people who have difficulty in sustaining themselves in their lives, so it should go much higher than 60 years old. The perception of old age in our nursing home is like that—that is, we can't call a 60-year-old in very good physical health 'old'. Sometimes they are 65 years old, we can't call them 'old'. They're only legally old. So, the perception of old age is also changing in society (Aegean Region, İzmir, SED:1).

Mersin, Bursa, and Eskişehir municipal officials offered rather a different definition when asked to define an older person. Official from Eskişehir emphasized the structural restriction that older people experience; thus, he defines an older person as someone whose access to services is restricted or decreased as a result of their age. He referred to the lockdown implementations for older people during the COVID-19 pandemic:

So, actually, there is a little bit more restriction. In other words, I can say that this is a person who has less access to services than normal citizens. You know, maybe it is useful to identify it with limited access. Because it can somehow be limited by age. Entry and exit can be prohibited. It says, "no one over the age of 65 can enter," "there is a pandemic," etc. Therefore, I can explain it in terms of being prevented, or they have problems in transportation, there is no elevator in their apartment... Again, we can talk about being limited. Therefore, I can consider them as a group that has problems in accessing services (West-Central, Eskişehir, SED:1)

The respondents from Mersin municipality made a special effort to define the older person in a positive way. One of them, started to define older individuals like other municipalities, as based on dependency, but then she renounced her position and replaced her discourse on dependency and health problems with more positive notions, such as wisdom, experience, and knowledge. This reflects how positive aging

discourses intervene in negative ones as a solution, as an effort to construct a positive status for older people. “For me, s(he) states, “an older person is a model for society with their humanity, experience, and wisdom.” The official from Bursa municipality, however, criticizes the idealization of older people as wise and neglect of their personal characteristics, and she criticizes the promotion of older people as sacred:

So, an older person is older than you, who has lived longer than you. They’ve been in this life longer. So, what does old age mean? I’m old, you’re old, according to who, according to what? ...I mean, we don’t attach much importance to wisdom, but now we sometimes approach the older people with the expectation of wisdom. Sometimes we’re surprised when we see funny or inappropriate behavior from the older people that we never expected. We tend to sanctify them in this way. They’re also a human being, they have certain needs, they have weaknesses, they have bad sides and good sides. So, we shouldn’t forget that they’re a human being, just a human being who has lived longer in this life. I think the emphasis on experience is important here. I mean, this isn’t a child, they’re old, yes, but they’re a normal human being who can think like you, get angry like you, fall in love like you, have sexual desires, aggression

The negative problematization of population aging and the older subject observed in municipal officials’ discourses in Turkey is in line with global discourses. It enhances the construction of a new desirable older subject, of someone who can overcome the negative associations with aging, including dependency and loss of health. The use of positive aging discourses, in the form of active aging, becomes a solution for the negative social constructions of aging and promotes a new desirable older subject who is self-reliant, autonomous, and active. Within this context, municipalities’ normative discourses on active aging engage with traditional narratives, which, for them, prevents older people from being active. The traditional

construction of older subject, as associated with passivity, is seen as an obstacle to older people being active.

6.3 Municipal Active Aging Discourses

Municipal active aging discourses, in line with global discourses, promote middle-class values and activities as ideal. Izmir, Gaziantep, Mersin, and Antalya municipalities all have active aging centers; they use different names but have similar functions. The Bursa, Konya, and Eskişehir municipality respondents mentioned that they are planning to open an active aging center. The Konya and Eskişehir officials, moreover, indicated that they organize special activities for older people in their cities. Table 5 presents this information on the active aging centers of municipalities along with their YADES program support.

Table 4 Municipalities' Active Aging Centers and YADES Program

Region	Metropolitan municipality	Active Aging Center	Supported by YADES Program
Western Anatolia	Bursa	No*	No
	İzmir	Yes	No
Mediterranean Region	Antalya	Yes**	Yes
	Mersin	Yes	No
Central Anatolia	Konya	No*	Yes
	Eskişehir	No*	No
Eastern Anatolia	Erzurum	No	Yes
	Diyarbakır	No	Yes
	Gaziantep	Yes**	Yes
Black Sea Region	Samsun	No*	No

*Planning to open an active aging center

** Opened with YADES Program support

Municipality discourses and practices reflect that space and time, structured activities, and the knowledge transfer of universities have become transformed into tools of neoliberal governmentality that enhance the implementation of active aging in line with Western global discourses. This makes it a disciplinary mechanism stimulating new power relations.

6.3.1 Active Aging and Space as a Tool of Governmentality

In the urban context, active aging centers are envisioned as a part of a holistic policy discourse of aging in place in which the centers are scaled on a neighborhood level, where older people can be supported by their families, their communities and the active aging centers within the same neighborhood, with minimum state support, in contrast to institutional care.

The centers operate as disciplinary institutions where a desirable, right way of aging is imposed as a ‘truth’ on older people. The respondent from Izmir municipality mentions:

In other words, we are trying to teach them how to age in a healthy way, to tell them that aging is also a beautiful thing, and how to age in the right way. We provide trainings, courses, and seminars there (in active aging centers) (Aegean Region, İzmir, SED:1).

Active aging facilities are increasingly prominent in Turkey, offering training programs across various fields, including physical and social activities, health, the arts, and spirituality. In certain centers, health services are frequently available. Older

people patients can benefit from psychology services and have their health conditions managed through various surveillance mechanisms:

Our dietitians regularly check the weight of our members. They provide consultancy services. Professors from the geriatric departments provide seminars on a different subject for one-and-a-half hours every day, every week. Also, we regularly take our members to the municipality hospital for health screenings (Southeastern Anatolia, Gaziantep, SED:3).

At the level of the (national) state, the official legislative name of active aging centers is “daycare centers” (*gündüzlü bakım merkezi*). However, the municipalities give their own names to them to attract older people and enhance the governing potential of active aging centers by acting on the motivation of older people. They assume that positive names will be more successful in motivating older people to participate in the centers—and the names also reflect the way municipalities rationalize and position active aging in their policies. Official from Gaziantep municipality mentions:

We generally gave all the units that we established more positive names so that there would be nothing wrong with the names. This one is called ‘Moral House’. Well, now, for example, when we say ‘active aging center’, it’s normally called a ‘daycare center, but when an older person says “I’m going to an active living center” when they’re with friends or their family, they say it more proudly, so they won’t say “I’m going to a daycare center” or “I need care” or something like that. They say they go to the Moral House instead of the Alzheimer’s center. If people said they take their father to the Alzheimer’s center, most patients wouldn’t accept it... “I go to the Moral House. What’s going on? I find morale there.” They joke about these things (Southeastern Anatolia, Gaziantep, SED:3).

On the other hand, these names of centers also reflect municipalities' approach to the aging phenomenon and their expectations of older people. For example, the center in Bursa expects older people to neglect the idea of retirement and perceive life as a continuous process of working and production. The respondent was inspired by the Japanese Okinawan concept to name their center the Life Course Center (*Yaşam Akışı Merkezi*), which also overlaps with active aging productivity discourses:

You know, there is an Okinawan concept. There are old people who live very long, in certain places, in Siberia, in Japan. They're very fond of the concept of life course. So, there is no such word as 'retirement' in Japanese. There is no retirement in their vocabulary because they have no such logic. They do what they love until they die. I mean, if a man makes a broom, he does it until he dies. They don't cut this continuity somewhere, so they don't experience very major transformations. Actually, this has been found in the research conducted (Bursa, Marmara Region, SED:1).

Active aging centers reproduce several activities of midlife and import the functions of many institutions, including schools, hospitals, gyms, and cafés. Within a single space, they thus aim to respond the disengagement process of older people as multifunctional structures. Some of the municipal officials likened their centers to a retirees' "mansion" or "coffee house" (*emekli konağı, emekli kahvesi*). Within this context, active aging centers are places where tools for governing older people intersect. Thus, they become a multifunctional spatial mechanism that enables the coexistence and combination of diverse activities with different targets in the same location.

In terms of governmentality, this spatial integration of functions concentrates the exercise of power over older subjects. Older people are exposed to multiple

disciplinary mechanisms targeting their bodies and minds at the same time in the same place. The spatial concentration also functions as an economy of scale and centralization, decreasing the financial burden on the state through an efficient facilitation of the operational process of governing aging.

Related to the transformation of families and the absence of family members at home, especially with the increasing labor force participation of women, municipalities problematize older people staying at home. They associate it with a loneliness that leads to the psychological and physical degradation of older people as the result of the retirement process. By way of a solution, municipal officials' discourses promote a life in outdoor spaces, which they see as enabling a social life with physical activity and, thus, a healthy psychology, which will, in turn, benefit the physical health of older people. The home, in contrast, is the place of isolation and loneliness, depressing older people: "If they stay at home all the time without socializing, they get depressed and have a rapid mental breakdown" (Southeastern Anatolia, Gaziantep, SED:3). Spending time outdoors is promoted by municipalities to keep older people physically active and in touch with life:

In a [coastal] city like Samsun, they should take a walk on the waterfront, breath in the fresh air, and enjoy themselves. They should go to cafes, satisfying their need to socialize. This will bring them psychological support. (Samsun, Northern Anatolia, SED:3).

Eskişehir Municipality also embedded active aging within its discourses on aging in place, which promotes services focusing on the 'home' as a space. Besides home-care services, house modification services that aim to increase the comfort and

mobility of older people in their homes are also commonly provided by municipalities:

Because among our plans, of course, there's a long-term plan for a nursing home, but beyond the nursing home, we're actually planning a service where the older people can spend their active time during the day, not for direct care services, but for care in their own homes. This will probably be a long-term project because it has many criteria and budgets. We need to calculate them all, so another model, a model in place... It can evolve into different things, like the modification of houses, providing internet access, and making them benefit from the courses we give online within the scope of digital literacy. (West-Central Anatolia, Eskişehir, SED:1)

The engagement of aging in place and active aging may also increase the spatial proximity of activities for older people and can change the relation between space and activities. Samsun, Gaziantep, Mersin, and Eskişehir officials mentioned that they organized some online activities that can also be performed at home. Thus, the spatial distance between activity and the older person can be minimized via the full integration of aging in place and active aging at home via online activities. Especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, the shifting space of activities from outdoor spaces to the home via online activities may have promoted new forms of activities challenging the relation between space and activities in the future.

6.3.2 Rationalization of Structured Middle-class Activities

In order to draw out from them information on how the global discourses promoting structured middle-class activities engage with local, cultural activities performed by older people, participants were asked whether more traditional or

‘cultural’ activities—such as (mostly men) going to the mosque, going to coffee houses, and (women) organizing gün (informal gatherings in the home)—could also be considered as activities of active aging. While the municipalities that can be classified as optional familialist—the Western municipalities (Bursa, Eskişehir, Izmir, and Antalya)—were less strict about the performance of active aging in its strict sense, those categorized as explicit familialist were more insistent about structured activities in this regard.

The respondent from Mersin municipality who was also critical about the problematization of aging as a problem (see above), acknowledged the importance of physical and social activities but challenged the ideal and disciplinary versions of active aging. He mentions as follows:

What is active aging, I don’t understand? Should they become suddenly old? What can we do? Should old people be in constant activity? Why should they be in something all the time? Whatever they want normally, in this sense... But when I say ‘whatever they want’, it should be easy to access what they want. I just think there are some problems. They want it but can’t get it. Then there’s a problem there. Yes, they want it, but yes [also], they should have the opportunities. The financial requirements we just mentioned should be in a better situation (Mersin, Mediterranean Region, SED: 3).

The respondent from Bursa (Marmara Region) municipality also challenges the idea of structured activities and defines a more flexible package of activities including both daily and routine activities. On the other hand, s(he) acknowledges the positive impact of activity on the health of older people and argues that women are more disadvantaged as they are mainly staying at home. S(he) elaborates as follows:

What we mean by active isn't necessarily that they should go and make relief from morning to night. Men are actually much luckier in this regard—such as going to cafés (kahveye gitmek) ... In other words, women are more troubled because they're generally at home, especially in terms of loss of cognitive ability. In this way, older men who go to the mosque or the café have a big advantage. This is actually what we mean by 'activity'. Knowing real life and not being disconnected from it, still being able to use certain functions. (Bursa, Marmara Region, SED: 1)

Some respondents were more flexible (Bursa, Mersin, Antalya), and some not, but ultimately they all promoted an ideal type of structured activity as desirable, one that also contributes to the actualization of the self-reliant and autonomous desirable older subject. In order to promote the desirable older subject, they encourage self-care and self-improvement as the conducts for the actualization of active aging self-technologies, such as physical activity, healthy eating, and getting out the home. For example, the respondent from Gaziantep associated the autonomy and self-reliance of older people with physical activity. He mentions:

As a result, as we get older, people retreat a little more into their own shells. When they're more active and feel young the more connected they are to life, the more physically active they are, that is, the more they do sports, the more they walk... Even if they don't do any sports, even if they don't walk, when they are engaged in an occupation in the physical sense, they are mentally, spiritually, and physically vigorous, which gives that person a longer opportunity to act more independently, to manage their life without being dependent on anyone, as long as health conditions allow. (Gaziantep, Southeastern Anatolia, SED: 3)

On the other hand, an important neoliberal middle-class conduct is embedded within discourses on ideal activity, as expressed by respondents from Samsun, Izmir, and Antalya. The respondent from Samsun, for example, indicated that desirable older

subjects perform activities that enable them to improve themselves both physically and socially, which thereby promotes self-improvement conduct:

Now, one of the most important elements of active aging is regular nutrition and sports. It should be appropriate for their age, of course. Regular nutrition is very important, especially in people with diseases, especially in people with diabetes, blood pressure, heart, and liver problems. First, healthy nutrition, vitamin-based nutrition, and protein-based nutrition rather than carbohydrate-based nutrition is very important, even regular sleep. As well as the movements to improve themselves physically in the morning, they should also engage in movements that'll improve themselves mentally, like reading newspapers, reading books, solving puzzles, solving *sudoku*. I think *sudoku* is a very useful thing, for example, so they should pay attention to these. (Samsun, Northern Anatolia, SED:3)

The responsabilization of older subjects is also inherent to the municipal discourses of those desirable structured activities. Activity transforms into a tool for responsabilizing older individuals for their own health and even for their *recovery* process. A desirable older subject is typically characterized as someone who can challenge and even 'fight' with the negative effects of aging and so continue with life. Thus, the psychological condition of older subjects becomes a space intervened in by municipal discourses, and the neoliberal conducts engage with not only the physical but also the psychological status of older people. Discourses of municipal official from Izmir reflects on how older subjects are responsabilized for their health and aging via various psychological conducts:

So, if we don't move, we get disconnected, we can stop, we can get depressed, so there's so much to take from us. If we don't fight for something, if we don't try, we go down. They're the same thing, it's just declining more quickly. An older person lying in hospital with a hip fracture can give up and become bedridden just like that, thinking they'll never recover again. But another older person who I know, he's broken his hip for the third time, and if he's determined enough he can get up and walk around

for the third time. So, they shouldn't lose that determination inside themselves and struggle for life. (Izmir, Aegean Region, SED:1).

6.3.3 Productive Desirable Older Subjects

Municipal active aging discourses also promote a productive older subject as desirable. Their discourses on productivity aim to alleviate the negative status of older people within society and transform their negative image, especially on the coming retirement process, to a positive one. To this end, these discourses promote and praise the knowledge, experiences, and know-how of older people.

In practice, the municipalities organize activities to improve intergenerational solidarity, where old and young people come together. Older people are expected to transfer knowledge, experience, and wisdom, while young people are expected to provide their youthful energy to the older individuals. Within this context, the experience and knowledge of older people are considered a type of capital from which the younger generation especially should profit. In this sense, the knowledge and experience of older people are instrumentalized for the diffusion of neoliberal ideas across the social realm. An economic mindset seems to be integrated into the older person's relationship with society through the Foucauldian conceptualization of capital.

In order to understand how productivity discourses of municipalities are rationalized within the scope of active aging discourses, older individuals were also asked about labor force participation. It was found that although Erzurum, Adana,

and Diyarbakir municipalities advocate aging as a period of time for rest, municipalities in Turkey generally favor older people's labor force participation, particularly for their physical and psychological health. However, these municipalities do not have a comprehensive program for enabling older people to engage in work life. They generally emphasize vocational training programs and hobby courses in which older people can participate, but they do not necessarily expect older people to participate in the labor market via those programs, as indicated by the respondent from Izmir municipality:

The older person sees himself as still able to do it. This is very effective for their psychology. Even the way an older person walks is different if he does something, works outside, from an old man who's always in the institution. Those who are working, their self-confidence is different, because they can do something, even their conversations with us are different. Working and earning money increases their self-confidence. (Izmir, Aegean Region, SED: 1)

Unlike in Western countries, which have largely completed their demographic transition, in Turkey, the labor force is not problematized based on an aging population. As a country on the edge of a demographic window of opportunity, Turkey is considered a young country with a young labor force. This also indicates why active aging in discourses in Turkey instrumentalizes productivity as a tool for the psychological health of older people, thus their self-reliance; the aim is not for an enterprising self. Indeed, the Antalya and Erzurum municipal officials mentioned that young people should be prioritized in employment policies:

The older person should take part in working life, I mean, institutions don't have such a thing for the older person to take part in working life, we live in a country with unemployment problems, in a way, in a country where youth unemployment is even higher. But the older people should be supported in the field of voluntary work, in other words, I think older people should always

produce if they can because they produce correctly. They have a lot of practice and experience (Antalya, Mediterranean Region, SED: 1)

6.3.4 Municipal Challenges to Structured Middle-class Activities

Although most municipalities hold older individuals responsible for their own health and autonomy, some, especially the Western municipalities (Eskişehir, Adana, Mersin, Izmir, and Antalya), place more emphasis on the structural problems that may prevent older people from being active. For instance, the respondent from Adana municipality stated that an older subject's ability to take care of themselves can be significantly dependent on their income and education levels.

In all the municipalities, taking part in activities was seen as important for older people's health and autonomy, but for the Mersin, Adana, Eskişehir, and Antalya officials, income inequalities may be an obstacle to an active life. Their discourses also emphasized the importance of social justice, unlike their Eastern, Northern and Central Anatolia counterparts, who strongly responsibilize the older individual with regard to being active (i.e., rather than sharing the responsibility between the state and the older individual, as in the case of Western municipalities):

Father State, (*devlet baba*) I mean, there is no harm, there is nothing negative about it. Father State, but a fair Father State. A Father State who depends on scrutiny and data, you know what I mean. The attitude of this father is also very important. Just as the position and relationships of the parents are important in the upbringing of a child, if that is what you mean, how the father treats his children, whether he treats them fairly or not, and on what basis he provides services will also be important, of course. In other words, when the areas of

need are thoroughly identified and policies are developed and implemented accordingly, it will be a situation that can better affect social peace. (Mersin, Mediterranean Region, SED: 3)

One of the respondents from Adana municipality mentions the positive correlation between income level and being active through self-improvement:

[E]conomic conditions are also very important. I mean, how much can a person who is worried about what they're going to eat tomorrow or how they're going to pay their rent this month devote themselves to sports or, I don't know, traveling, entertainment, sports activities? They can't. But people... I mean, this is the perception we have: When a person is 60 years old, we expect some wrinkles or stagnation. But I'm surprised to see people of 70 who are fidgety (kıpır kıpır). I can really spot those people, even if I don't ask them... You know, those are people who don't have much economic anxiety, whose children are employed, who are now oriented toward themselves, who are developing and improving themselves (Adana, Mediterranean Region, SED: 3)

Beyond class, municipal discourses reflect that the rural life and local ethnic culture can be an obstacle for the actualization of active aging discourses, as older people outside a middle-class culture may have the potential to develop certain counter conducts based on their local, ethnic, rural position. Municipal official discourses (Konya, Gaziantep) indicate that in the future older people can resist the strict form of activities. The respondent from Gaziantep municipality was disappointed by the results of their efforts to attract the interest of older people in a special neighborhood active aging center that they have opened; the neighborhood receives migration from the East, where there is a lower level of socioeconomic development. The discourses of the municipal official from Gaziantep reflect how bargaining about the opportunities enabled by activities can be transformed into a tool of counter-conduct by older people. He mentions as follows:

We have a center we call ‘Second Spring’ (İkinci Bahar). It’s in that part of the city where the families that have mostly migrated from Siirt, Cizre, Hakkari, and Van live. They only come [to the center] if there’s a trip or free food. They say, “Tell us if there’s food served in the event, otherwise we won’t come.” When we offer them literacy, crafts, or Quran courses, they’re not interested. (Gaziantep, Southeastern Anatolia, SED: 3).

In contrary with the Konya and Gaziantep municipalities, which strictly promote Western middle-class activities and hence transform the discourses into a disciplinary one, the Diyarbakir respondent interrogates whether Western middle-class activities would attract the interest of older people in their cities and talks about the details that may be an obstacle for the actualization of a Western sense of activities. For example, s(he) mentions that older people in their cities may not choose to get involved in *halay* (a type of folk dance), and women reject the opportunity to take part in some activities due to their religious sensitivities. She mentions as:

We want to include into our YADES project activities similar to those in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, and also in Bursa and Samsun. But we are not sure if our older people would be interested in them. There are local differences. Older people here like listening to *dengbej* (Kurdish folk songs) and not Turkish classical music popular in Ankara. There is the tradition of the older people singing in their Kurdish language about their experiences, it is like a branch of art here. (Southeastern Anatolia, Diyarbakir).

6.3.5 Localisation of Knowledge and Dissemination of Active Aging as a ‘Truth’

The governmentality of aging and dissemination of active aging discourses at the local level is not independent of municipalities’ close relations with local universities. All the officials participating in this research mentioned that they are collaborating with local universities in various ways. Specifically, gerontology and social work departments legitimize the implementation of active aging practices at the local level. Seminars and training programs provided at active aging centers are the main tools, where university knowledge input is directly involved in the governmentality process of aging through directly acting on the conduct of the older subject. Thus, local universities may be one of the sources of homogenization of active aging discourses of municipalities as they promote active aging as a *truth*:

We have good relationship with the professors in the gerontology departments of Dokuz Eylül University and Izmir University. On the Seniors Week or at the geriatric symposium, they give seminars on aging, communicate with older people, and comment on their common health problems... Additionally, we provide several training courses at our centers for healthy aging (Aegean Region, Izmir, SED: 1).

As the interview with the municipal worker in Eskişehir suggested:

I can say that as for the metropolitan municipality, we’re not working independently from the academic community here. We always consult them, so the lectures of our university professors on aging directly inform us about how we should structure our own dialogues. [...] For example, when we’re

organizing a sport event for older adults, we use the term ‘active aging’ on the billboards and posters. Our main aim here is to make this term popular in the city, and our goal is to integrate this scientific concept to the city’s terminology (West-Central Anatolia, Eskişehir, SED: 1).

Thus, local university knowledge transfers of active aging discourses become a tool to establish the right policy-making and thus convey the truth (i.e., about the proper way of aging for the older subject).

Since the majority of active aging officials are social workers, the discourses of municipalities on aging are inherently shaped by the principles of the social work discipline. Thus, social work departments and social workers at social service departments also play an important role in the dissemination of active aging policies across municipalities. Municipalities use the professional activities of the social work discipline, such as home visits, to govern the older person population. As social workers visit families, often informed by the local community about the problems in a family or with its older people, they become the professional gaze for intervention; and as they prepare social case study reports on a regular basis, they become the tool of knowledge production, acting as a surveillance mechanism (Donzelot, 1978).

In the context of Turkey, where the capacity for producing coherent local statistics is limited, local informal networks of information substitute for the role of statistics in the governmentality process. This informal network may require or prevent objective needs assessments and tends to engage the local neighborhood dynamics and power relationships to the service supply process. This may constitute a structural barrier to the development of a (human) rights-based approach insofar as the local community guides decisions about a person’s eligibility for municipal services:

During our visits, we talk to the neighbors to confirm what the person said. If she said “My daughter never comes to my home,” is this true? Well, the older people may also have problems, like dementia, Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s, that’s not yet diagnosed. So, it helps if we ask neighbors about this. (Northern Anatolia, Samsun, SED: 3).

At the start of our YADES project, we talked to the shopkeepers and the *muhtar* (elected neighborhood head). They’re the ones who know the profile of the community (Eastern Anatolia, Erzurum, SED: 5).

On the other hand, social workers have become the tool of controlling older people’s actions via their visits to homes:

Our psychologists and sociologists regularly visit our older people’s homes. They assign them tasks of occupational therapy tasks to make them active at home. In the next visit, they check whether they did it them or not (Southeastern Anatolia, Gaziantep, SED: 3).

Thus, social workers are well-informed agents on the problems that older people and their families are facing as they visit them, surveil their conditions, and hold the power of intervention. Recently, their intervention has been embedded in the policy of active aging, disciplining the older people for an active life—in line with the universities and academia generally in its operation at the local level as a tool of governmentality .

Conclusion

In conclusion, active aging centers in Turkey are envisioned as a part of a holistic policy discourse of aging in place. They are disciplinary institutions where a desirable, right way of aging is imposed as a 'truth' on older people. They offer various training programs and health services to older people, and municipalities often give them

positive names to attract older people and enhance their governing potential. These centers reflect municipalities' approach to aging and their expectations from older people, which often includes promoting productivity and self-reliance and in line with western middle-class values.

While most municipalities hold older individuals responsible for their own health and autonomy, municipalities in the Western regions of Turkey (Eskişehir, Adana, Mersin, İzmir, Antalya) place more focus on structural problems that may prevent older people from being active. These municipalities also emphasize the importance of social justice and share the responsibility of promoting active aging between the state and the older individual. On the other hand rural life and local ethnic culture can be an obstacle for the actualization of active aging discourses as older people may develop counter-conducts based on their local ethnic rural position. Some municipalities like Gaziantep are disappointed in attracting the interest of older people, in special active aging center that they have opened in neighborhoods with low socio-economic development level.

The municipalities collaborate with local universities, specifically the gerontology and social work departments, to legitimize the implementation of active aging practices at the local level. Universities provide seminars and training programs at active aging centers, which directly influence the governmentality of aging and older subjects. This collaboration leads to homogenization of active aging discourses across municipalities and the use of active aging as a "truth." Social workers also play a significant role in the dissemination of active aging policies and use home visits and social screening reports as tools for intervention and knowledge production. However, it should also be noted that limitations in the ability to produce coherent local statistics

and the potential for informal networks of information to substitute for statistics, which may lead to a lack of objective need assessment and the involvement of local neighborhood dynamics and power relationships in the service supply process.



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This thesis makes contributes to the fields of *critical aging studies* and *governmentality studies* in Turkey by going beyond the normative boundaries of active aging that dominate much of the existing literature (Chapters 1 and 2). It does not aim to prescribe a specific way of aging or to improve the effectiveness of active aging policies but rather to understand how the concept of active aging is integrated at the *local level* into the discourses of municipal officials as related to three dimensions: their various *regions*, varying levels of *socioeconomic development* (Chapter 3). Through this analysis, the thesis is able to situate municipal active aging discourses within a broader context of welfare provision and to examine the ways in which the transformation of the welfare regime is impacting aging policies in Turkey (Chapters 4 and 5).

The Turkish welfare regime relies heavily on the family as the primary provider of welfare, making the relationships between older people and their families a central focus of this thesis. While much of the existing literature on familialism has focused on national-level variations, this research discovers that there are also differences in the forms of familialism at the subnational level, both regional and local, particularly based on socioeconomic development and regions of municipalities. As a result, this thesis contributes to the study of familialism in Turkey by analyzing the varieties of familialism at the regional and local levels. On the other hand, to outline the rationalization of active aging discourses it aims to

understand how the autonomous desirable older subject engage with the different forms of familialism in Turkey.

By examining active aging discourses in relation to the problematization of aging at the local level within municipal discourses (and then abstracting this to the regional level), the thesis also sheds light on the complexities and varieties of the governmentality of aging in Turkey. In addition to its contributions to critical aging studies and governmentality studies, it also offers unique insights by focusing on *the case of Turkey*, a country where neoliberalism and neo-conservatism intersect and work together to compensate for the decreasing welfare functions of government, particularly through *responsibilizing* the individual *older subject*. This analysis thus affords an understanding of how different *conducts* and *self-technologies* of different governing rationalities interact and align with each other.

7.1 Main findings

The respondent officials at eight of the 11 municipalities studied—the exceptions being Bursa, Mersin, and Konya—frequently presented the idea that the aging process can be slowed down and that it is the responsibility of the individual older person to manage their late life and delay the aging process through self-intervention. This demonstrates how the neoliberal rationality of aging—responsibilizing older subjects for their own welfare—has been incorporated into the municipal discourse as a rationale for legitimizing active aging as the ideal lifestyle for later life, which is then promoted as truth.

This research has shown such a promotion of active aging to be consistent across municipalities, regardless of geographical location, socioeconomic condition, or political affiliation. Despite challenging the notion that the aging process can be delayed, the municipalities of Konya, Mersin, and Bursa still recognized the benefits of activities and active aging, and therefore embraced the concept of active aging with some nuances. This suggests that these municipalities may have different perspectives on the role of individual responsibility in the aging process but they still support the idea that maintaining an active lifestyle is beneficial for older adults.

Active aging discourses are intensely embraced by municipal officials. Municipalities acknowledge that the aging process can be *delayed*, and they hold the individual older person responsible for the management of later life. Regardless of their political affiliation or regional differences, municipalities have embraced active aging as the universal ‘truth’ for late life. Thus, their discourses challenge the traditional imagery of older adults and reconstruct the desirable *autonomous* and *self-reliant* older subject in line with the “norms” of neoliberal active aging discourses. Consequently, neoliberal conducts such as *self-improvement* and *self-management* dominate municipal discourses aiming to orient older people behaviors and activities.

Four factors have been identified as having contributed to the widespread adoption of active aging as a *normative* approach these also differentiate the position of municipalities in their rationalization of active aging. First, the close relationships with *local universities* is very important. Universities transferring knowledge to the municipalities enhance the homogenization of active aging discourses. The adoption of active aging discourses as ideal ‘truth’ for late life is disseminated via local

universities' engagement with municipal activities and policy-design processes. Thus, authorities producing knowledge engage directly in the governmentality process and become important actors in the power relations.

Second, the intensive effects of social work departments can be observed in the municipal policy discourses related to active aging and aging. Although not all municipal officials have a social work background, departments in which social workers are employed tend to adopt the principles and techniques of social work in policy design and service provision. All of the (15) municipal officials interviewed used social investigation reports as a technique to decide on how and to whom to provide with services. Thus, these municipal departments are inherently operational extensions of social work departments, which makes the 'professional gaze' of the social worker predominant in the reproduction of active aging discourses and aging policies in a way that is homogenous with similar techniques and policy practices.

Third, in the relatively prosperous Western cities active aging services are more frequently demanded and thus engaged by older people. The main motivation of the Western municipalities for providing active aging services is to fulfil the demands of their constituency. These cities have higher level of socioeconomic development than those in the other regions, which makes the relatively affluent, middle-class lifestyle of the older people living in those cities more compatible with the Western-originated global active aging discourses promoting middle class values. This compatibility facilitates the bottom-up provisioning of resources dependent on the individual older person's agency.

Fourth, in cities governed by Eastern, Northern and Central Anatolia

municipalities, active aging services are in general financed by central government's YADES Program. The lack of interest shown by older people in these services is problematized by municipal officials, which leads them to adopt a strict interpretation of active aging, in line, that is, with Western global discourses. Thus, the *top-down* diffusion of active aging discourses in those cities enhances the functioning of active aging discourses as an ideology, preventing them from criticizing active aging. This obscures inequalities based on class, ethnicity, and local cultural differences. Consequently, their municipal officials' discourses are more disciplinary than those of their western counterparts. For example, they insist on the structured form of activities promoted by global and national-level active aging discourses and do not consider traditional activities, such as (mostly men) going to the coffee houses (*kahvehane*) or (women) organizing informal house gatherings (*gün*) remain out of the scope of active aging for them.

In contrast, Western municipalities tend to be more flexible about the standards of global discourses and accept traditional activities as within the scope of active aging. They are also more critical about the economic and social boundaries that may prevent older people from participating in activities, with their main criticisms focusing on the class issue. Additionally, instead of only responsabilizing the older subject for their own aging process, Western municipalities also responsabilize the state for enabling older people with the necessary infrastructure and an adequate income level for them, as older people, to be active. Consequently, although both all municipalities acknowledge active aging normatively, as a necessary policy tool, Western municipalities' emphasis on social justice and its critique based on class and income inequalities make them more flexible regarding

the techniques of active aging.

Municipal discourses on active aging indicate that older people's agencies can confront the disciplinary active aging discourses and practices and that in the future, older people can develop certain *counter-conducts* stemming from their class position, rural lifestyle and local ethnic cultures. Thus, counter-conducts of older individuals indicate roadmaps for policymakers to develop more inclusive and less disciplinary policies on aging.

Municipalities *problematize* aging at the state, family, and individual levels. Active aging discourses are often presented as a solution to these three problematizations, as they are instrumentalized for addressing aging-related issues based on the three dimensions mentioned.

First, considering the state level, municipal officials problematize the financial costs of institutional care and suggest aging in place as an ideal policy mechanism. This relies on keeping older people at home or at least in their neighborhood with the support of family, community, active aging centers, and homecare services. Through aging in place as a policy preference, all actors with a minimum potential of caregiving will be available to take care of older people, and the (local) government can minimize the financial cost of public expenditures. In this case, active aging appears as an extension, complementary mechanism of aging in place discourses, as maximizing the older person's individual responsibility for self-care besides responsabilizing other informal actors of welfare for eldercare. Thus, the spatial dimension of aging in place promoting the home-based and neighborhood scale is transformed into a tool of governmentality, where active aging is articulated as a part of this spatial scale.

Second, municipalities problematize the transformation of families, which is not independent of the family's primary role in welfare provision. This is unsurprising as nuclear families' caregiving capacities are decreasing. Municipalities witnessing the transformation of families more closely in the field have started to give up responsabilizing them for eldercare, which has itself encouraged the promotion of an autonomous and self-reliant older subject, the older person who tries to avoid being a burden on their family (or society generally) by adopting an active lifestyle to maintain self-reliance.

Municipalities that have a hybrid form of familialism—shifting between optional and explicit forms as defined by Leitner (2003) and categorized here (see below)—tend to instrumentalize active aging for the welfare of families instead of the individual older subject. Thus, nuclear families' decreasing caregiving function is compensated by the self-reliance of the older subject. This indicates a certain articulation and cooperation between the familialism and active aging discourses. Although the cooperation between neoconservatism and neoliberalism was more expected, the municipalities characterized with explicit familialism such as Samsun and Erzurum didn't mentioned about such an instrumentalization of active aging discourses for the welfare of family.

On the other hand, the cooperation of hybrid familialisms with active aging is still in line with the conservative welfare-state reliance on familialism. Considering this relationship between familialism and individualistic neoliberal active aging discourses, in which two governing rationalities articulate, the relations between conducts and self-technologies may be nonlinear, contrary to well known, consistent relations between them. Thus, the conduct of one rationality may guide the self-

technologies attributed to the other. Thus, familialist conducts, such as not being a burden on the family, can be actualized through individualistic neoliberal self-technologies.

Unlike its Western counterparts, the problematization of the aging population through the labor force is lacking in the Turkish case. Consequently, the desirable productive older subject promoted in Western active aging discourses takes a different form. In Turkey, the aging population is not problematized in relation to labor market dynamics. However, the desirable older subject as productive is instrumentalized again to improve the self-reliance and psychological health of older subjects. Although municipal discourses' emphasis on productivity suggests the diffusion of the market mentality within the realm of the social, as in the Foucauldian theorization of neoliberalism, the productivity of older adults in Turkey is rationalized through psychological health and self-esteem and instrumentalized for an autonomous and self-reliant older instead of an enterprising self. This lack of problematization is particularly due to the position of Turkey, which is on the edge of a demographic opportunity window, since young people are still available for the labor market.

It is interesting that, although unconnected with the main problematization of aging in Turkey, namely the care crisis, productivity discourses are still very frequent in the discourses of municipal officials. This reflects the power of global discourses and their manner of diffusion as a package. Both self-reliance and productivity are technologies of neoliberal governmentality, and productivity discourses are instrumentalized for self-reliance. Thus, productivity discourses are also instrumentalized for the main problematization on the transformation of family as

producing a care crisis that necessitates the promotion of a self-reliant, autonomous older subject. This indicates that self-technologies whose problematization is absent may still be instrumentalized for the actualization of conducts connected to stronger problematizations, especially in cases where policy discourses are imported. This also reflect the hegemony of neoliberal discourses intervening policy making process in a disciplinary way.



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