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REFLECTIONS OF STATE AND DEMOCRACY VALUES IN TERMS OF THEIR EFFECTS ON HEALTHY AGE

ABSTRACT

The indispensability of the phenomenon of democracy is related to the fact that the basic values it contains contain a wealth that can find itself, in parallel with the development of time. However, in this study, we are trying to analyze with examples how it is reflected in old age, which is an unchanging reality and value, in the case that not being operated the concept of democracy, and how the realities are waiting for us in the name of this period which we hope to live by creating awareness. If the reactions of the state directly affect the lives of the people, it is certain that it affects the elderly people of the society much more by their periods and the awareness of the fact that the elderly people, who are not active in the state systematics and bureaucracy are not able to raise their voices in a sufficient level, can be revealed with the reality of this study.

Keywords: Sociology, Sociology of Old Age, Democracy, State, Basic Values

1. INTRODUCTION

The essential element in the context of the framework and ultimate point of the structural reality in which individual rights and competencies are protected by transforming the system into a harmonious structure within a systemic wheel of individual plan and social functioning is the state. The essential element of a harmonious and reputable union without any interruption in the state/society hierarchy is the values it contains and the fact that democracy is generally accepted all over the world. Democracy can be considered as an indispensable set of values which is the basis for the structure of the state and in which people are free and treated equally, and the understanding of law does not marginalize anyone on behalf of the society, and the understanding of democracy is identified with politics and the right of choice and the right to stand for election come to fore and the concepts of state and democracy are used synonymously. In democratic societies that are not closed and try to keep up with the development of time in the vital process, the triangulation point is evaluated by the fact that society and individuals can live a safe and peaceful life in every way. The major topic of this study is the group of elderly in the state apparatus. What is the relationship between democratic values and old age in a functioning structure? It is a fact that the non-functioning of democratic values or inability to make these values functional renders people powerless and insecure in states, societies and society, depriving them of equality, justice, freedom and the requirements of social justice. Similarly, a period that makes people barrier

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intellectually, physically and in terms of health-care perspectives or even hamper normal life due to their old age makes life more intolerable. In this context, the parallelism of the elderly, who become childish in all aspects, with the values of democracy within the state also needs to be analysed, and an awareness should be created in this regard.

2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

Human beings have equipment which is only enough for finding their presence and reflecting their characteristics in society. In this respect, they are the main component of a factory which is operating in the life cycle. From birth to death, by all means of being human is to be free for each individual, to be treated equally and to reach rights and opportunities in the name of congenital and future gains, to be the leading role in the formation of systematics such as the right to be practiced and the right to elect/be elected for each individual of the society. Together with these requirements, the emergence of social dialectics and structural interactions is also a natural requirement. It is a fact that, in the context of the protection of personal rights and social cohesion in the context of certain values, the state in which the powers are transferred is the state, while the state's rights to the people and society, and the protection of their rights and authority in the name of later acquisitions, is only possible with the prosperity and dynamism of the values of democracy. In this context The importance of this study is that it will analyze for example how the concept of democracy reflects on old age, which is an unchanging reality and value, and to create awareness about it. It is also to be able to show what the realities are waiting for us in the name of this period that we will not be able to live.

3. ASSOCIATION OF STATE AND DEMOCRACY WITH THE DEFINITIONS

The primary duty of the state is, above all, the construction of the systematic chains of a safe and peaceful life, social consensus and the continuation of a regular functioning. The main element in this systematic cycle is the use of the fundamental realities contained in the values of democracy. As stated by Kapani "Politics is nothing more than an effort to establish a social order for the benefit of all" [6] the balance point in the dilemma of state and politics is democracy. Social reality is a structurality that finds itself only with the determination and substitution of the rights and needs of an individual during periods from his birth to his death. Although differences are an element of wealth, it is certain that when certain values are not accepted as a common ground conflicts and separations will arise. Provision of a coherent and conflict free environment may become a reality in which personal rights and freedom are protected through a central administration and a systematic structure organized around a set of values which are result of experience. In this context the state is the control mechanism of the applicability of the rules in which the rights of life, freedom, equality and justice as well as property rights are guaranteed. In this process, the wheel of the system is itself the values of democracy which are composed of transferred values. In this respect, the name of the reality taken over by the state is democracy and the reality it contains.

The concepts of state and democracy are so intertwined, especially in terms of political legitimacy. The lack of one of them makes the other senseless and unacceptable. Bağcı describes the close connection between the concept of state and the concept of democracy



as follows: Citizens cannot claim and protect their rights if the state is insufficient or the state is weak in a country [3]. Similarly, when we suggest that there are no problems with the functioning of the state, it implies that in there is no question of legitimacy in that country. For an established democracy and for an efficient state the key points include the recognition of the state by the citizens as the legitimate decision-making and responsible authority.

The fact that individuals and society transfer their rights to the state shows that there is a contract between the parties. Each individual may find a place in the democratical state structure. The rights of the unborn child are related to his position and time. On the other hand, elderly have certain rights and authority resulted from their life experience and also, have certain weakness and deprivation due to their life cycle period. John Rawls who developed the theory that can go down to individuals with liberal individualism by establishing individual and social justice in the vital cycle made this awareness clearer in his social contract theory. The basic assumption in this theory that the parties of the contract can perform their task only if equitable justice is established for all and each of the individuals in the social structure [5]. It is an unquestionable reality that if justice is applied to each individual in the same way it will bring injustice, not justice. It is certain that an elderly person cannot be evaluated in the same way because of his limitations and capabilities as a young person in the society. It is imperative that the values of democracy contained in the state should be operated to achieve such a situation and that justice should be established and reflect the reality that can provide this assurance. In this way, the state maintains its legitimacy and makes itself accepted in the presence of individuals and in the balance of states.

4. AGING/QUALITY AGING

Life cycle of individuals follows a fixed order: childhood, youth, adulthood and old age. Therefore, old age is just one of the developmental periods like childhood, youth, adulthood and has its own characteristics. The earliest categorization about old age was produced at the meeting of the World Health Organization held in Kiev in 1963. In this categorization the following periods were included: ages 45-59 middle age, 60-74 old age and more than 75 advanced old age. However, today it is mostly accepted that the beginning of old age is 65. On the other hand, the United Nations accepts it as 60. In this study the starting age for aging is accepted to be 60 [11].

Similar to the variance concerning the beginning age of old age its definition is mostly varied. However, here the important point is to evaluate and analyze the old age very well. In order to achieve it is necessary to learn and analyze the concepts of age and old age very well [9].

Studies on aging in Turkey indicate that the concepts old and growing old are used simultaneously. As we mentioned above, old age is used in the sense of growing old which is big in number. However, if the concept of old age is used to refer to the concept of growing old, its use would not be completely correct. Because if we define old age as the period of life cycle just before death, we will exclude those who lost their lives at a young age which causes a misconception. Old age is the last period of life cycle just before death, except for those who have died at a young age [1].

As clearly mentioned above death is an inevitable end for every living being, old age is an inevitable process and period of



development for every living thing except for those who have lost their lives at an early age. The interesting point here is that although old age is a certain period, it is perceived to be a negative situation. In fact, it is useful to look at this situation from a broad perspective. If we approach to old age from a biological and physiological point of view, it can be stated that old age actually starts with birth. The reason for this is that the cells of the human being multiply through divided with birth. In old age the cells also multiple in the same manner, but this time this process is somewhat slower. So the cells have a little more difficulty in renewing themselves. The perception of this situation as positive or negative is related to the external environmental factors which individuals come across [10].

So far, the phenomenon of old age has been mentioned as a biological and chronological topic. However, there are many studies that do not examine the phenomenon of old age only in these respects. The approaches of the chronological and biological age are mostly quantitative approaches to old age. The comprehensive analysis of old age is possible only by examining psycho-social and cultural dimensions together here the related concept is "quality aging" [2].

4.1. Quality Aging

One of the significant points in aging is the problems that elderly experience. Due to its physiology and chronology, aging has its own characteristics. This situation brings physiological problems. Some of such problems are as follows: "blood vessels, nerves, body skin and other biological tissues lose elasticity, stiffness in vessels and degeneration of joints occur. Skeletal structure deteriorates, bones become thinner and brittle. Reflexes and hormonal activities slow down. Many health problems are experienced due to the deterioration in the general circulatory system. Decreased blood pressure adversely affects mental activity, reduces the effectiveness of muscles and other body organs. Because of all this, the risk of stroke and heart attack increases like many diseases in old age" [4]. One of the most important factors that affect the individual's mental health positively or negatively is the physical health of the individual. In addition to physical changes there are also psychological problems. When considered in psychological terms old age can be considered as a risk period. "Physiological changes in old age such as loss of physical strength, multi-faceted losses, stress, crises, retirement, death of spouse, diseases, changes in appearance, emotional losses, loss of status and decline of living standards make elderly an important risk group in terms of mental health" [7]. The elderly are negatively affected by all these physiological and sociological factors. These are closely related to the concept of quality aging. It is called quality aging when an individual passes the period of old age without any problem given above or has no negative situation that affects his order of life in terms of physiological, sociological and psychological points.

The influence of the state on quality old age is undeniable in the state/society hierarchy. While some traumas can be overcome more easily by young people in physical and mental terms, this process is much more difficult and even results in destruction among elderly individuals due to their limited and difficult situation. Within the systematic of the state/society, which assimilates the values of democracy and gains real state personality with solutions that can be applied by the people elderly are the happiest group of people in this harmonious cycle. Because they would have quality and safe old age in a system where all weak patterns in the state functioning are



eliminated making it possible for them to have bonds with socio-cultural life and to experience less problems. In a country where there is no verbal and real democracy, perhaps the elderly will get the most advantages from this harmony. It is seen that old age needs the most democracy and freedom in contrast to other developmental periods.

In societies cultural transfer is mostly performed through elderly. However, such a transmission can occur only in those societies with an established democratical culture. In societies where democracy values are not operated and instead have monophonicity even young people who play an active role in social life cannot find the power to protect their rights to express themselves. On the other hand, old people cannot transfer culture as a result of their knowledge and experience due to their weakness and isolation from social life. Because in societies where there is no democracy, individuals cannot tolerate and respect other voices other than their own voices and thoughts. This is a reflection of a state organization that has lost its legitimacy and is not likely to be sustainable. Elderly people and a whole society are affected by this vicious circle.

5. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOCRACY VALUES AND AGE

What makes democracy important and indispensable is the same line of real democracy for individual and social life in the vital process similar to the importance of basic needs for individuals. People and social structure in unsystematical patterns where racial rhetoric and attitudes exist and people's efforts to seek justice are common and where the freedom of opinion and belief is senseless and pluralist and pluralist realities are centralized are distorted and have no chance to be sustained. It is not difficult to predict that such a distorted patterns make elderly the most damaged group of people in the society.

In one aspect, old age indicates a compulsory acceptance. It is natural that the acceptance of old age and the fear of obscurity have physical and mental reflections on individuals. Such an acceptance can be seen within the concept of anomie¹, and the elderly can only lead a healthy and quality life in every aspect within a social and psychological environment in which they can be rehabilitated. Given that that the state is in direct relation with the reality of democracy and social life, and it is a trigger it is very clear that the elderly will be affected from it because they are in a sensitive period. Today, the rapid and difficult to follow technological developments have very fact impact on people. The protection of the elderly who cannot keep up with this development in terms of physical and mental aspects and making it possible for them to have a quality life can be achieved only through the arrangements made by the state. This dynamism of change can only be found in a state mechanism where the values of democracy can be absorbed.

6. CONCLUSION

Although old age is commonly seen as an individual problem, it is more of a social reality. Rapidly increasing elderly population is seen in demographic changes and in the related studies. Being aware of elderly people who are more stagnating and slowing as a result of the changing family structure and decreasing traditional understanding is

¹ Anomie: It is mostly used in the work by Emile Durkheim in the field of sociology. It is the term that indicates the existence of a certain environment of irregularity and conflict, ineffective, collapsing of the norms in the social structure [8].

necessary to ensure social cohesion through the use of elderly's experience which refers to cultural transfer. Particularly social realities need to be protected by state policies. Given that old age has many distinct negative points, including health-care problems, isolation, economic deprivation as a result of being away from the working environment and psycho-social realities, there should be a democracy-based system having a basic dynamic structure in state functioning. It is certain that elderly who have weakened in every sense due to the period in which they live and who are in need of care, can have a healthy and quality period as a result of the state policies. It is understood that these policies can only be possible with human based references around the values of democracy which are generally accepted in the world.

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