

Changes in the Direction of Intergenerational Support Flows in Turkey, a country at the onset of aging: Evidence from Turkey Family Structure Survey, 2006 and 2011

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1. Introduction

In Turkey, the results of the demographic research carried out in last 40 years have shown that family structure is on the way of transformation from extended to nuclear families. Although family roles are changing and families are losing the feature of being a buffer institution in elderly care and protection in Turkey, both parents and children still prefer to live in the same neighbourhood with their families to provide support to each other.

Based on the changes in family roles in Turkey, parent-child and child-parent relations are complicated as both parents and children need intergenerational support. However, the question of who is supporting whom remains an unanswered question. This paper investigates the direction of intergenerational support flows in Turkey that defined as a country at the onset of aging.

This study analyses the direction of intergenerational support flows on the basis of two concepts; ‘functional solidarity’ and ‘associational solidarity’ borrowed from Bengston and Roberts based on their study published in 1991.

In the first part of the paper, demographic changes in Turkey will be covered in order to shed light upon how the dynamics of intergenerational support may change in a country at the onset of aging based on the changes in demographic and familial structure. In the second part of the paper, data and methods used for this paper will be analysed and in the last part of the paper, the results will be discussed in the light of the demographic changes in Turkey and how the direction of intergenerational support changed in five years period will be understood based on the data comes from two different Turkey Family Structure Surveys conducted in 2006 and in 2011.

2. Changes in Demographic and Family Structure in Turkey

Demographic researches carried out last 40 years in Turkey indicate that since 1970s total fertility rate in Turkey has been declining continuously. While total fertility rate was 5 births per woman in 1970, it declined to 2.2 births in 2003, and stabilised at this level in 2008 and 2013. As a result of decline in fertility, young population consisting of people below 15, is decreasing. While this group was consisting of the 41% of whole population in 1935, it declined to 25% in 2013. In parallel to fertility decline in Turkey, the elderly population has a tendency to increase. While the proportion of elderly population (65+) was only 3-4% in 1975, currently, population aged 65 and over constitutes 8 in Turkey (approximately 6 millions) and it is expected to rise to 9% in 2023, 21% in 2050 and 28% in 2075 according to the population projections conducted by Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT, 2013).

When the proportion of elderly population was compared to other age groups, it was seen that elderly population had higher growth rate. In 2013, while the growth rate of total population in Turkey was 13.7%, growth rate of elderly population was almost triple with 36.2%. Any other indicator, old age dependency ratio is number of elderly persons per 100 people at working age groups. While the number of elderly persons that were needed to be taken care of per 100 working people was 11 in 2013, this number is expected to be 19 in 2030. Both demographic data and elderly indicators show that Turkey is losing its young population structure and is turning to an old population structure.

Demographic researches carried out in Turkey also indicate that average household size has declined from 7 to 4 people in last 40 years. Decline in household size as a consequence of both fertility decline and change in the family structure in Turkey show that family structure in Turkey has been changing from extended families to nuclear families. According to results of Turkey Demographic and Health Survey 2008 (TDHS 2008) the rate of nuclear families in Turkey has reached to 70 percent (Koç et.al 2010). Among these families, classical nuclear family consisted of spouses and children has the highest proportion (56%) while the proportion of nuclear families consisted of spouses is %14 and the proportion of extended families is %16 (Koç et. al 2010).

Families have been changing since several decades due to several reasons in Turkey. Structural changes such as urbanization, changing mix of agricultural and industrial employment and changes in individual characteristics such as increased levels of education particularly for women underlie the modernization process while economic development accompanies this process and these are accepted as affective in changing value systems in Turkey (Aykan and Woolf, 2000). Thornton and Kavas (2013) consider ideology of developmental idealism in the scope of family change. They added modernization programs of Turkey and their adoption to value and belief systems of developmental idealism as other causal

factors on family change in Turkey.

Family has been a central element of modernization projects in Turkey since the late Ottoman Period. Legal family norms were also implemented during the early Republican period such as Civil Code which banned polygyny, increased the minimum age for marriage, enacted gender equality in inheritance and granted equal child custody rights for both parents (Thornton and Kavas 2013). Increase in women's autonomy was also one of the main concerns of the Republic of Turkey. Based on the increase in women's autonomy since early Republican period, it can be assumed that when the women's position increases in the society, it affects their relations with their elderly parents. With the increase in women's visibility in public domain, elderly care may lose its primary role even if traditional familial roles enforce caring for the elderly. It is of importance that policy changes prepare the background for macro family changes but changes in the norms regarding the women's roles as a primary care giver also affect the parent- adult child relations.

Aytaç (1995) questioned whether modernization process of Turkey also changed the familial relations. He claims that modernization has a different face in Turkey and even if nuclear families are increasing, strong familial relations still continues in Turkey. To what extent co-residence patterns are influenced from the modernization process is controversial. Intergenerational co-residence is a vehicle for the exchange of social, emotional, practical and financial support (de Yong Gierveld et.al, 2012) and there are studies pointing out the co-residence patterns in Turkey.

The common point of these studies is that they claim that not only elderlies but also adult children prefer intergenerational co-residence or at least they prefer to live in the same neighbourhood which shows that traditional ties with children and families still continues in Turkey (Aytaç, 1995; Aykan and Wolf, 2000). TDHS 1998-2008 also shows that children living in the same neighbourhood have increased from 34 to 37 percent in 10 years time. Aykan and Wolf (2000) in their study, indicate that different factors affect the co-residence patterns of elderlies and children. They claim that when adult children have children and constitute their own nuclear family, it affects their coresidence possibility with their parents in a negative way. They also indicate that when education level of adult children increases, coresidence possibility of adult children and families also decreases. They also found that geographical residence – whether living in an urban setting or a rural setting – also has an impact on co-residence patterns as living in rural areas increases co-residence with elderly parents.

3. Types of Intergenerational Solidarity and Intergenerational Relations in Turkey

This study uses the concepts developed by Bergston and Roberts (1991). They explain six elements of intergenerational solidarity with nominal definitions and examples of empirical indicators. These are associational solidarity, effectual solidarity, consensual solidarity, functional solidarity, normative solidarity and structural solidarity. As this paper uses the two concepts among six which are consistent with the target of the paper and the available data, they will be explained here. The first concept that the paper utilizes from is the associational solidarity. According to Bergston and Roberts (1991), it is defined as “frequency and patterns of interaction in various types of activities in which family members engage” and empirical indicators of associational solidarity are listed as “frequency of intergenerational interaction” such as face-to-face, telephone or mail interaction. Types of common activities shared such as recreation and special occasions are also among empirical indicators of associational solidarity.

The second concept that this paper utilizes is the functional solidarity; which is defined as “degree of helping and exchanging of resources.” Empirical indicators of the concept mentioned by Bergston and Roberts (1991) again are “frequency of intergenerational exchanges of financial, emotional, physical or other kinds of assistance” and “ratings of reciprocity in the intergenerational exchange of resources.”

These concepts do not point out to the direction of intergenerational solidarity, but shed light upon the discussions related to direction of intergenerational solidarity. The concept of intergenerational support flow is based on the Caldwell’s (1976) wealth flow concept which mainly points out that intergenerational relation determine the way of resources. In this concept, wealth is used to refer income, money, goods, service and assurance. Even if familial relations can also be conceptualized under wealth flow theory, as Kalaycıoğlu and Tılıç (2000) use, I prefer to use “support flow” while pointing out the intergenerational support between families and children. The work of Kalaycıoğlu and Tılıç (2000) shows that the expectation for support is not only related with the expectations of elderlies but also necessities of children. They claim that there are support flows both from children to parents and from parents to children of which have some similarities. Kalaycıoğlu and Tılıç (2000) have explained the intergenerational support between children and parents as “the model of collecting resources in a common pool”. It indicates that each person within the family either a child or an elderly and a parent is putting her/his resource to the common pool and the resource is being used within the family which may sometimes turns a three-generation support mechanism (elderly- adult children and grandchildren) in Turkey.

Even if most of the studies in the literature in Turkey point out the preference for intergenerational support especially from the young generation’s point of view, some other studies claim that it is getting more

difficult to provide upward support, in other words, support for elderlies. For instance, while Tufan (2007) claims that elderly care creates a “burden” on the neck of all family members, Kalinkara (2005) also claimed that elderly care creates “emotional burden” especially for the married children and lead them not to spend time with their nuclear family. In order to come to a conclusion for elderly and adult children’s preferences, there is a need to examine the related data on their preferences.

4. Data and Methods

In order to reach the main objective of the study, this paper uses the data from “Turkey Family Structure Survey” conducted in 2006 and 2011 (TAYA- 2006 and TAYA-2011) by Ministry of Family and Social Policies in Turkey. In the selection of TAYA-2006 and TAYA 2011 sample, a weighted, multi-stage, stratified cluster approach was used.

In the interviewed 12,056 households, 23,379 individuals over age 17 were identified and interviewed individually with the Individual Questionnaire. Some of the questions were directed to elderlies above 60 with the individual questionnaire. Both of the data sets include detailed information on upward support type (young to old) and downward support type (old to young). This paper is based on these data sets derived from the questions focusing on intergenerational relations.

The direction of intergenerational support was obtained from several questions. “Who is responsible for the care of children within the household” and “who is responsible for elderly care within the household” were selected to analyse the direction of intergenerational support flows as the answers of these questions can be categorized under the functional solidarity concept that is used for this study. Among Bengston and Robert’s conceptualizations, it should be said that the analysis on “functional solidarity” is limited with the “help across generations.” “Exchanging resources” was not involved to the analysis due to the limitations of the data.

In order to analyse the level of associational solidarity between generations, coresidence pattern and the question of “how often do your children visit you?” is also analysed. “Frequency of intergenerational interaction” as a definition of associational solidarity is measured through face-to-face visits in non-resident families. Under the light of these questions, intergenerational support flows are determined and changes between 2006 and 2011 are analysed both observing coresident and non-resident family patterns. While the first two questions give insights on type of intergenerational support among especially coresident families; the analysis on coresidence pattern of the elderly provides valuable information on the type of intergenerational support for elderly living with resident and non-resident family. Also, third question focus on only elderly living without family members. Following section will provide the findings of this paper.

5. Findings

Table 1 and Table 2 presents the results regarding with the analysis of “functional solidarity” in Turkish households. Table 1 provides the percentage distribution of persons who responsible for the care of children within the household as one of the indicators of downward support. We see that while about 4 percent of care of children within the household is done by elderlies in the family in 2006, it increased to about 8.5 percent in 2011. The major change between 2006 and 2011 is the contribution of grandmothers in the care of children. While the percentage of care of children done by granfathers remains the same in 2011 with only 0.1, the percentage of care of children done my grandmothers increased from 3.7 to 8.2 in five years time which also provides an explanation how gender is one of the determinant factors in care of children.

Table 1. Percentage distribution of persons who responsible for the care of children within the household, 2006 and 2011

Responsible person	TAYA-2006	TAYA-2011
Mother	91.8	86.6
Father	0.5	0.6
Sister/Brother	0.2	0.8
<i>Grandfather</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.1</i>
<i>Grandmother</i>	<i>3.7</i>	<i>8.2</i>
Caretaker/Day-care centre	2.1	3.1
Other	1.7	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 2 provides the percentage distribution of persons who responsible for the care of elderly within the household and provides clues on the other direction of functional solidarity (upward support). We see that even if daughter’s responsibility for the elderly care within the household has increased from 12.2 to 15.0 percent in five years time and son’s responsibility has a tendency to decline, sons still have more responsibility for elderly care within the household in comparison to daughters. However, the percentage of daughter-in laws in elderly care within the household is the highest among the others, with 36.0 percent in 2006 and 33.5 percent in 2011.

The fact that higher percentage of daughter-in laws in elderly care compared with the percentage of sons in both 2006 and 2011 reveals how gender roles are determinant in elderly care within the household as the daughter-in laws have the responsibility of parents-in laws on behalf of their husbands. The share of grandchildren, other women relatives and caretakers in elderly care has an increasing tendency during 2006 and 2011.

Table 2. Percentage distribution of persons who responsible for the care of elderly within the household, 2006 and 2011

Responsible person	TAYA-2006	TAYA-2011
Spouse	25.1	20.8
<i>Daughter</i>	12.2	15.0
<i>Son</i>	22.5	20.1
Brother/Sister	1.2	1.0
<i>Daughter-in-law</i>	36.0	33.5
Son-in-Law	0.4	0.5
Grandchildren	0.7	2.5
Other women relatives	1.2	3.3
Other men relatives	0.2	1.2
Care-taker	0.3	1.1
Neighbour	0.2	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 2A and 2B show percentage distribution of persons who responsible for the care of elderly within the household by type of settlements in 2006 and 2011. Both tables indicate that daughter's roles in rural areas have increased in five years time in contrast to son's and daughter's in law's roles. Even if roles of daughters also have increased in urban areas, there is still huge difference between urban and rural in terms of responsibility of care of elderly by daughters. Besides, responsibility of sons and daughter-in-laws has decreased in both rural and urban areas in five years time. The decreasing tendency appears to be related with the substantial increase (3-fold increase) in the share of the "other" persons such as grandchildren, other women relatives and caretakers in the care of the elderly in Turkey.

Table 2A. Percentage distribution of persons who responsible for the care of elderly within the household by type of settlements, 2006

Responsible person	Urban	Rural
Spouse	25.0	25.2
<i>Daughter</i>	5.5	17.5
<i>Son</i>	23.4	21.7
Brother/Sister	1.8	0.7
<i>Daughter-in-law</i>	41.9	31.4
Son-in-Law	0.6	0.3
Grandchild	0.5	0.9
Other women relatives	0.9	1.4
Other men relatives	0.2	0.2
Care-taker	0.1	0.4
Neighbour	0.1	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 2B. Percentage distribution of persons who responsible for the care of elderly within the household by type of settlements, 2011

Responsible person	Urban	Rural
Spouse	21.6	20.2
<i>Daughter</i>	7.1	20.8
<i>Son</i>	21.8	18.8
Brother/Sister	1.6	0.6
<i>Daughter-in-law</i>	40.7	28.3
Son-in-Law	0.8	0.4
Grandchild	1.9	3.0
Other women relatives	2.7	3.8
Other men relatives	1.0	1.4
Care-taker	0.2	1.8
Neighbour	0.5	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 3 shows the percentage distribution of elderly by family type. It shows that elderlies still live in nuclear families especially consisted of only wives and husbands. However, we see that while the percentage distribution of elderlies living in nuclear families has a declining trend, the percentage distribution of elderlies in extended, especially in the patriarchal families, and dissolved families has an increasing trend in five years period.

Table 3. Percentage distribution of elderly by family type, 2006 and 2011

Family types	TAYA-2006	TAYA-2011
Nuclear	54.7	52.1
<i>Wife+Husband</i>	<i>39.4</i>	<i>43.5</i>
<i>Wife+Husband+Unmarried Children</i>	<i>15.3</i>	<i>8.6</i>
Extended	19.3	19.6
<i>Transient</i>	<i>17.2</i>	<i>12.1</i>
<i>Patriarchal</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>7.5</i>
Dissolved	26.0	28.4
<i>One Person</i>	<i>20.8</i>	<i>20.0</i>
<i>One Parent</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>3.0</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>1.2</i>	<i>5.4</i>
Total	100.0	100.0

Percentage distribution of elderly by co-residence patterns indicates that percentage distribution of elderlies (both women and men) living with their children has decreased between the years 2006 and 2011. In

parallel to this finding, elderly living without children have increased between the same periods. It indicates that female elderly have a higher tendency to live with their children as opposed to male elderly.

Table 3A. Percentage distribution of elderly by co-residence pattern, 2006 and 2011

Sex of the elderly	Living with children	Living without children	Total
TAYA-2006			
Male	32.9	67.1	100.0
Female	40.3	59.7	100.0
Total	36.9	63.1	100.0
TAYA-2011			
Male	30.5	69.5	100.0
Female	35.6	64.4	100.0
Total	33.3	66.7	100.0

Table 3B and Table 3C provide information on percentage distribution of reasons for living and not living with children. Table 3B shows that the percentage of the reason “we want to support each other” has increased from 17.2 to 19.9 in five years time which is somehow a proof for willingness to involve into the intergenerational support process. While it was the third important reason in 2006, it became a second important reason in 2011, and this again shows that importance given to the intergenerational support has increased over time in Turkey.

Among reasons for not living with children being self-sufficient enough in nuclear families without children seems as being most important reason, the percentage of which also increased from 24 to 37 in five years time. Besides, even if the proportion of elderly who do not want to live with their children has decreased between 2006 and 2011, they constitute the second largest group in 2011.

Table 3B. Percentage distribution of reasons for living with children, 2006 and 2011

Reason	TAYA-2006			TAYA-2011		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
My children do not want me to be alone	11.7	23.7	18.7	5.5	9.0	7.6
Due to our traditions	19.6	12.2	15.3	13.1	10.7	11.7
I am happy to live with my children	19.2	21.1	20.3	27.7	28.1	27.9
I need their care	9.2	15.1	12.7	10.0	14.6	12.8
I have no other possibilities	10.8	8.6	9.5	9.0	7.0	7.8
I do not want to stay in the nursing home	0.8	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3
We want to support each other	21.3	14.2	17.2	20.1	19.7	19.9
Other	7.5	5.0	6.1	14.2	10.7	12.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3C. Percentage distribution of reasons for not living with children, 2006 and 2011

Reason	TAYA-2006			TAYA-2011		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
My children do not want to live with me	3.7	2.6	3.1	3.8	4.1	4.0
Their house is small and no place for me in their house	9.2	11.4	10.3	5.1	6.0	5.6
No one for my care in their household	2.7	2.2	2.4	0.8	2.2	1.5
Their financial possibility is not enough to take of me	7.8	7.2	7.5	3.5	3.9	3.7
I do not want to change my social environment	29.5	30.5	30.0	16.1	17.5	16.9
My daughter in low and grandsons/granddaughter do not want me	2.3	3.6	2.9	2.1	3.6	2.9
I do not want to live with them	14.1	20.8	17.5	13.6	19.8	16.9
We are self-sufficient with my wife/husband	29.3	18.8	24.0	43.0	32.0	37.1
Other	1.4	3.0	2.2	12.1	10.9	11.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In order to analyse the associational solidarity between generations, Table 4A and 4B shows percentage of distribution of visits done by children of the elderly in non-resident families¹. We see that the frequency of visits done by sons and daughters have increased in five years time. However, frequency of

¹ Table 4A and Table 4B can not be totally comparable as the categories provided for the question “how frequent your children (daughter and son) visit you?” have some differences as shown above.

visits done by sons have increased more than visits of daughters in five years time. While monthly based visits have decreased, frequency of visits in a year have increased both for daughters and sons in five years time. Increase in face-to face visits especially done in once a week or more frequent confirms that associational solidarity between children and parents as a type of intergenerational support also has an increasing trend in Turkey.

Table 4A. Percentage of distribution of visits done by children of the elderly, 2006

Frequency	Daughter	Son
Once a week or more frequent	46.9	43.8
Once a month	14.7	16.3
Several times in a year	17.9	18.9
If needed	0.7	0.3
No visit more than a year	2.5	2.7
Never	1.1	1.0
Only in the weekend	10.6	11.0
Only in holidays	5.6	6.2
Total	100	100

Table 4B. Percentage of distribution of visits done by children of the elderly, 2011

Frequency	Daughter	Son
Once a week or more frequent	49.8	51.2
Once a month	5.9	6.1
Several times in a year	22.0	24.1
If needed	1.2	1.8
No visit more than a year	1.2	1.6
Never	1.5	1.4
Several times in a month	18.5	13.8
Total	100	100

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This paper targets to find an answer to the question of “how do the direction of intergenerational support flows have changed in Turkey” as well as “across generations who is supporting whom?” The reason why the answers of these questions is important based on the fact that population is getting older and older in Turkey and even if the elderly population have been increasing since years, families’ role are also changing. Therefore, “to what extent do the change in the families affect the direction of intergenerational support” is a question that should be answered in order to understand the effect of aging and family change in Turkey.

The analyses in the paper were based on the concepts of Bengston and Roberts (1991) namely, *functional solidarity* and *associational solidarity*. While the concept of functional solidarity is used to understand the “help across generations” living together (in co-resident families), the concept of associational solidarity is used to understand the “frequency of intergenerational interaction.”

The data from TAYA (Turkey Family and Structure Survey) 2006 and 2011 provides information on functional and associational solidarity, therefore questions regarding the elderly and child care in co-resident households, co-residence patterns, and visits in non coresident families were analyzed.

The results of the study reveal that in terms of type of the intergenerational supports, both of the supports, namely ‘*functional solidarity*’ and ‘*associational solidarity*’ are observed in the families of Turkey both in 2006 and 2011.

When the findings are examined in detail, we see that downward support (from elderlies to children) in terms of providing care to younger generation within the household has increased in five years time. Even if one of the important features of labor market in Turkey is the distinctly lower labor force participation rates of women, it has been increasing since last five years and stabled around 29% in 2013. Women’s increasing role in labor market might be one of the reasons of increasing role of grandparents in child care. However, due to the limitations of TAYA 2006 and 2011, it would not be possible to come this conclusion from the data directly. There is a need to make a further investigation on the relation between increasing labor force participation of women and increasing role of grandparents in child care. In terms of downward support it is also examined that the role of grandmothers within the family in providing care to younger generation is much more important than the role of grandfather which is one of the indicators of care work is gendered.

In terms of upward care support we see that the role of sons is higher than the daughters. However, the highest care work is done by daughters-in laws which is also other indicator of how elderly care is

gendered. Even if the primary care role is given to the sons according to the patriarchal norms, gendered care ideology leads the increasing role of daughters-in laws as they are doing care work on behalf of their husbands. These findings indicate that functional solidarity in terms of providing care across generations is somehow gendered but reciprocal. Care work according to the type of settlement also indicates one of the important changes in Turkey. In Turkey internal migration from rural to urban areas have been increasing and sons living in rural areas have more tendency to migrate to urban areas. In that sense, care of elderly is mostly done by daughters who are staying in rural areas.

Coresidence patterns indicate that the percentage of elderlies living with their adult children has a declining trend. In parallel to this finding, as a reason of not living with their children, the percentage of elderlies who do not want to live with their children constitute the second largest group despite the decline in five years time. Considering the other reasons, it may be concluded that elderlies also prefer not to change their own lives for the sake of living with their children, however living with their children is something that makes them happy.

When the data related to the associational solidarity is examined, we see that adult children have tendency to visit their parents in different times and frequency of visits has increased in period examined here for both sons and daughters, however son's visits increased more than daughter's visits during this period.

All findings indicate that regarding with direction of the support, there exist reciprocal flows of intergenerational support rather than unilateral flows in Turkey and the small changes between 2006 and 2011, also indicate that reciprocal nature of intergenerational support did not change during this process.

It may be concluded that in an aging society Turkey, with the increase of an elderly population, the need for intergenerational support will increase in the following years. In that sense, there may be an increase in the searching of upward support (from children to parents) rather than downward support (from parents to children). However, the decline in co-residence with parents indicate that family change in Turkey has an effect on co-residence patterns and therefore on dynamics of intergenerational support across generations. In that sense, how intergenerational support types continue to change would remain a significant topic for Turkey as adult children's preferences on living in the same neighborhood with their parents still indicates the reflections of dichotomy between traditionality and modernity into the family and intergenerational relations.

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