

The role of the State before population aging: the case of Chile

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Abstract: States must establish the basis for people to age with adequate living conditions in all areas. Therefore, the cardinal purpose of this research is to describe the role played by the Chilean state to face Population Aging, PA, developing for this an analysis that determines the relation between the implemented measures and the objectives of the public policy created for this purpose. To achieve the research purposes, an exploratory-descriptive study was carried out, analyzing the main variables involved in the process and identifying the essential components.

Although actions that seek to face this context have been taken, it is unclear if they respond to defined strategic guidelines or reactive policymaking arising from the delayed response to existing problems, what is clear is that States must act promptly to deal with this present challenge.

Key words: population aging, Latin America, Chile, State, public policy.

Resumen: Los Estados deben establecer las bases para que las personas envejezcan con condiciones de vida adecuadas en todos sus ámbitos. Considerando este desafío, se ha planteado como propósito cardinal de la presente investigación describir el papel que ha jugado el Estado chileno, para enfrentar el Envejecimiento Poblacional (EP), desarrollando para ello un análisis que determine la relación entre las medidas implementadas y los objetivos de la política pública creada para este fin. Para lograr los propósitos indagativos, se realizó un estudio exploratorio-descriptivo, analizando las principales variables que conforman el proceso e identificando los componentes esenciales del mismo.

Si bien se han tomado medidas que buscan enfrentar este contexto, no está claro si responden a lineamientos estratégicos definidos o a medidas reactivas surgidas de la respuesta tardía a problemas ya existentes; lo que queda claro es que los Estados deben actuar oportunamente frente a este desafío que se presenta.

Palabras clave: Envejecimiento de la población, Latinoamérica, Chile, Estado, política pública.

Introduction

The State in its ongoing search for solutions to poverty alleviation and improved income distribution has been forced to modify and design public policy that can help face new problems such as aging population.

The change in the global and national demographic pyramid has already been noticed in priority sectors of the state, for instance healthcare, education, pensions and housing, among others.

In relation to aging, it refers to a long process with a gradual development that can be predicted. This gives States some time to determine possible scenarios of action to address this problem.

Over the years and because of different needs, the elderly's behavior changes in demands. Their main desires and needs aim to produce aging with a quality of life similar to that over their working lives, preventing economic detriment and maintaining their socioeconomic status, beyond luxury and purchasing power. This quality of life is rather related to aspects such as health, social integration and others.

Age-group changes is a subject projected as a constant process in the following years and decades, increasing the population over 65 in comparison with the total population. According to studies conducted by the Corporation for Research, Study and Development of Social Security (Corporación de Investigación, Estudio y Desarrollo de la Seguridad Social, CIEDESS) (2012), it is estimated that the population over 65 years will go from about 10% to just under 15% in 2025, and to more than 20 % by 2050.

It is clear that the aging population is more than a demographic change; it is not a variation in the figures with which public policies are built, but rather a transformation in how a society develops as a whole and how it faces its future development.

It is necessary to consider that for the States the issue of aging population has become a challenge, which does not seem easy to deal with, understanding that they should strive to create the necessary conditions for people to be able to develop in a quality environment with adequate housing and health, and integrated into society.

In this regard, this paper has set as its primary objective to describe the role played by the Chilean State to address population aging. Therefore, it has developed an analysis to determine the relationship between implemented measures and the objectives of public policy established in this country for such purpose.

In order to achieve the main purpose, a mixed approach methodology since a process to collect, analyze and link qualitative and quantitative data is carried out in a single study or series of studies to respond to a problem statement (Hernández and Baptista, 2006: 751). Additionally, it can be mentioned that it is exploratory in nature, since in this research examines a problem that has not been extensively studied (Hernández and Baptista, 2006: 100).

As it will be seen, this research should contribute to the discussion of public policies and strategies related to older adults in Chile. Its main contribution is to present what the government programs this country has launched have been in order to meet the challenge of population aging and how they relate to the objectives set by the Chilean State for this purpose.

Public Policy

According to Aguilar and Lima (2009), in the 1950's political science pioneer Harold Lasswell defines public policy as "the disciplines concerned to explain the processes of development and implementation of policies... scientifically and interdisciplinary based for the service of democratic governments". Twenty years later, in 1971, he would add a key point in the definition: "knowledge of the decision process and knowledge in the decision process".

Years later, the definitions of the concept of public policy focus on various approaches. The first approach is focused on the purpose of the decision on whether it aims to alter or not the current state of affairs. For example, Kraft and Furlong (2004) note that "public policy is a course of action (or inaction) that the State takes in response to social problems". Experts point out, regarding this, that public policies reflect not only the most important values in society, but also show the conflict between values and which the highest priorities are in a specific decision.

The second approach focuses on the decision that raises public policy. For Jenkins (1978), public policy refers to a set of interrelated decisions, made by an actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and means for attaining them in a specific situation, and in which those decisions are within the scope of authority of such actors. That is, "most public policies involve a series of decisions, some of which may go unnoticed before being deliberated on, but cumulatively, all these decisions constitute public policy" (Olavarria, 2007: 16).

A third approach to the concept focuses on the dimension of power. Experts Meny and Thoenig (1992) emphasize the role of public authority by noting that a public policy correlates with the action of an exercised authority of public power and government legitimacy.

According to Birkland (2005), there is no consensus among experts on a single definition of public policy. However, this research will take the definition of Chilean expert Eugenio Lahera (2008: 28): "courses of action and information flows related to a target audience defined democratically; such courses of action or information are developed by the public sector and often with the participation of the community and private sector."

Lahera (2008) mentions that there are five phases in public policies: origin, program, design, management and assessment. He explains however that such “phases” do not follow a linear sequence, due to two main reasons. First, because both political and administrative systems are not perfect; and secondly, because social and economic reality data are changing. Therefore both problems and solutions of public policy are constantly redefined.

Along these lines, it is worth mentioning that public policies are commonly operated as programs and projects with guidelines to facilitate their implementation (Sub-secretariat of Regional and Administrative Development, SUBDERE, 2009).

According to Art. 2, no. 1, Law 20.530 / 2011, a program is the “integrated and articulated set of actions, services and benefits designed to achieve a specific purpose on a target population, in order to solve a problem or meet a need that affects such population”. In this case, the Chilean State has been concerned in establishing courses of action to respond to the needs of the segment of people over 60 years, with the specific purpose of creating favorable conditions for aging. Thus, since 1995, public policies with specific objectives have been implemented in this sector, in which the State has applied permanent measures to meet them.

General context

Aging is a condition that has been historically analyzed. Some experts have mentioned the importance of this stage of life in society. Clearly, the aging population, besides being a great achievement of society, has become a major challenge for the global community, particularly its impact on the financial burden of the countries.

An anthropologic perspective of the aging process can enable the possibility to identify factors that can make this stage a bearable experience. The importance of the health/disease condition, the importance of a stable economic situation, the relevance of living and not dying alone, the dissimilar experiences at this stage according to each gender, and the growing need to consider aging as a social responsibility in the face of weak institutional support, among others (Siller and Serrano, 2016).

Over time, life expectancy has increased, causing an increase in the population over 65 years, which makes it a concern. In the present society, which seeks to create equal conditions for all the inhabitants, regardless their economic status, there must be an expected minimum which must be secured and protected by the state, in the understanding that everyone has rights as well as obligations.

Globally, population aging has shown a steady upward trend in the past 30 years, rapid and progressively increasing the number and proportion of people over 65 years of age.

According to studies by CIEDESS (2012), it is projected that the population over 65 years will go from about 10% to nearly 15% in 2025, and more than 20% by 2050. Meanwhile, studies by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2013) indicate that between 1970 and 2011 the world population grew from 3.6 to 7 billion people. The design of public policy is influenced by the population's age structure and also by its size.

Aging population is not a recent topic in the world. Perhaps Latin America's awareness of this phenomenon is a process that has been slowly introduced in the respective countries, but Europe, for example, has traveled a long way and has defined certain possible solutions, in which the state has undoubtedly played a leading role in defining specific policies on these topics.

Population aging in Latin America

In Latin America, according to a study conducted by the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Center (CELADE), during the 1970-2010 period, the population in the region increased from 277.7 million to 557.3 million people, generating a projection for the year 2010 of 646.7 million inhabitants.

The same study points out that demographic changes will profoundly affect most countries in the coming decades, but in very different ways. Now populations age more quickly than in the past, as fertility rates drop and life expectancy increases (World Bank, 2013).

According to the Statistical Yearbook published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2012), there is a steady decline in the number of children per woman. In the quinquennium from 1950 to 1955, the average number of children was seven; as of 2010, the average is two or one per woman.

To complement the information previously mentioned, life expectancy has noticeably increased in Latin America; this is to say, from 50 years of age over the decade from 1950 to 1960, it increased to 75 years of age on average and it is expected to go up to an average of 80 years by 2050.

Aging is increasing even faster in developing countries. In a sample of nine developing countries, eight are expected to have an increase in their elderly population, reaching 14% in 30 years or less (UNDP, 2013: 101).

The rate of aging population that expresses the relationship between the number of seniors and the number of children and young people is important and gives clear evidence of what Latin American countries are living in relation to the population's age composition.

The calculation made by CELADE is the ratio of people aged 60 or older compared to those between 0 and 14, multiplied by 100. This means, for example, that a value of 10 means that there are 10 older adults (60 years and over) per 100 children and youth (under 14 years). Conventionally, it is an intergenerational transfer indicator, and its systematic increase implies a greater investment by the States on the healthcare and social security intended for this age sector (CELADE, 2013).

The results shown by this indicator are essential when making decisions regarding programs and policies that States should define. Some examples of these results in Latin America indicate that the aging index is increasing. In Chile in 1990, there were 30 older people per 100 children and young people; by 2010, the number increased to 59.1. In Mexico during the same period, it increased from 16.8 to 33.1 seniors per 100 children and young people. Uruguay's case is highlighted since it reached 82 seniors per 100 younger than 14 (see graph 1).¹

In addition to the previous information, David Cornejo (2013) states that for years Latin America was characterized by high birth rates, large families and surplus labor. However, its demography is changing as birth rate decreases and life expectancy increases each year. According to UN figures, the percentage of population over 65 will triple by the middle of XXI century, surpassing 20% of the total population.

Likewise, the projected figures by ECLAC (2012) indicate that the population over 65 years in Latin America will rise from 6.9% of the total population in 2010 to 19.3% in 2050, and the population aged 0 to 14 years will fall from 27.7% of the total population in 2010 to 17.2% by 2050.

This situation has made all States search novel ways to meet the challenge of an aging population and demographic changes in Latin America, in areas such as health, social security, education and housing, among others.

Population aging in Chile

Aging in Chile is not far from the global reality, quantitative projections of the population, carried out by national, the National Statistics Institute (INE), and international organisms, CELADE, reflect and project results that allow the State to plan and produce public policy to meet the needs of present and future populations.

Studies conducted by the aforementioned entities show that in 2005 the country's population would have reached 16,267,278 inhabitants. It is predicted that by 2020 it might increase to 17,865,000 (INE, 2005).

¹ This graph and table are in the Annex, at the end of this article.

Another indicator that reflects the aging of the population is the Index of Aged Adult (Índice de Adulto Mayor, IAM), which is defined as the number of older adults for every hundred children under 15 years. It corresponds to the ratio of the population aged 60 years or older and the population under 15 years (INE, 2008).

In the 2012 Census in Chile, INE indicates that IAM amounts to 67.14 adults over 60 years or older per 100 children under 15 years, which shows that this indicator continues growing when it is compared with the 59.1 calculated by CELADE in 2010.

INE also indicates that distribution by age groups has changed significantly since the 1950's; back then people younger than 15 accounted for 36.7% of the total population, those aged 15 to 64 years were 59% and people over 65 years amounted 4.3%. It is estimated that by the end of the projection period, 2050, these groups will be 16.6%, 61.8% and 21.6% which represents a continuous aging of the Chilean population (INE, 2012).

By looking at the projections of population in Chile, it can be shown that the aging population is a variable that must be taken into account; the State cannot disregard it considering that the consequences might be of paramount importance, especially in meeting its objectives: matters particularly related to the population's wellbeing.

To internationally and nationally address this, various courses of action have been developed to reduce the effects of this growing issue. Plans, projects, programs, and even policies are created in order to address this urgent need to improve the life conditions of the elderly population. In Chile, certain mechanisms to direct the State action toward the creation of a better environment for those entering older ages have been set into motion taking into account as many sectors as possible.

State actions to face the new scenario

In recent years, the Chilean government has been concerned about seeking alternative public policies for people over 60 years, commonly called "older adults"; to do so, some actions which are expected to generate favorable conditions for aging have been created.

The first approaches of the Chilean State to this new scenario started in 1995 with the creation of the National Council for the Elderly, advisory body of the President. The following year, 1996, the National Policy for the Elderly is approved. Subsequently, the Regional Committees for the Elderly are created and considered operating service committees by Supreme Decree no. 9, 1997, issued by the General Secretariat Ministry of the Presidency of the Republic of Chile.

In 1999, the International Year of Older Persons, a milestone was marked since the National Congress was sent the bill that created the National Service for the Elderly (SENAMA).

In July 2002, the National Congress approves the bill to create SENAMA, by the enactment of the law number 19.828/2002. Ten years later, the 'Integral Policy for Positive Aging' for Chile 2012-2025 was created.

Parallel to this, the State has designed and implemented programs and benefits designed to meet the needs of the elderly in several areas, in order to improve their quality of life, and their economic, social and cultural wellbeing.

The National Service for the Elderly, according to the law, seeks to ensure their full integration into society, their protection from abandonment and indigence and their exercising of acknowledged constitutional rights and laws.

This same service, according to Article no. 3 of the Law no. 19.828/2002, should suggest policies intended to achieve the family and social integration of the elderly and the solution of the problems that affect them.

The most recent milestone is the Comprehensive Positive Aging Policy, which constitutes an important advancement that thoroughly collects the challenges of aging, which allows protecting the people's functional health as they grow old, impedes an increase in the levels of dependence, promotes self-care, identity, autonomy and participation of the elderly. It tries to end exclusion and abuse and encourages the social, economic and cultural integration from the perspective of legal subjects (SENAMA, 2012: 3).

On the basis of the foregoing, the Integral Policy for Aging focuses on three main aspects: to protect the elderly's functional health, to improve their integration and participation in different areas of society and to transversally increase the subjective wellbeing of the elderly.

This policy is based on several areas that intend to "confront the issue of aging and old age, and is proactive as it faces the current challenges and prepares Chile for the future instead of simply solving problems". (SENAMA, 2012: 2).

The areas covered by the Integral Policy for Aging are tourism, health, labor, education, family income, housing, culture, transport, social participation and justice.

Apart from the ten priority areas, this policy suggests thirteen specific objectives, which are shown in Table 1.

Up to 2013, Chile has implemented through its Ministries and Public Services programs and benefits for the elderly. Following there is an analysis by objectives that shows the consistency between them and the programs and benefits developed by the different State Ministries.

Chilean State's response to the specific objectives of the Integral Policy for Aging 2012-2025

Objective no. 1: To improve the offer, quality and efficiency of care services as well as protection, prevention, assistance and rehabilitation of the elderly's health. Its response is mainly by means of programs executed by the Health Ministry, such as the Health Program of Elderly People, the Plan of Health Explicit Guaranties, the Preventive Examination of Elderly People, Health Controls, the Community-based Rehabilitation Program, the Respiratory Disease Program, the Cardiovascular Health Program, the Complementary Feeding Program for Elderly People, the Immunization Program, the Program of Elderly People in Motion and the Program of Home-Care for People with Severe Dependency. These programs, on balance, seek to improve the health conditions of elderly people through efficient assistance services, prevention and protection, accompanying them in their aging process

In addition, the Social Development Ministry, through its programs: the National Fund for the Elderly and the Vínculos Program, seeks to improve the aged people's life conditions, regarding their care through the contribution of this fund of intermediate institutions in charge of this, as well as their psychological health, accompanying and incorporating them into society.

On the other hand, the Ministry of the of Government, through the Program of Elderly People in Motion, together with the Chilean Government and its 'Choose to Live Healthy' Program, seek to contribute to the improvement of the elderly people's quality of life, observing fundamental aspects such as alimentation and physical activity, preventing diseases from an unhealthy lifestyle.

Objective no. 2: To increase the prevalence of protective factors for the health of elderly people. The answer is given through the same Ministry of Health programs, in the previous objective, along with one program of the Ministry of Social Development: Vínculos Program, which provides psychosocial support to socially vulnerable seniors so they can create social networks. The Ministry of Economy, Promotion and Tourism joins with the Third Age Holidays program, which allows elderly people to continue activity through the promotion of recreation, allowing them to keep their physical and mental health. Likewise, the Ministry of the General Secretariat Ministry of Government with the Program of Elderly People in Motion and 'Choose to Live Healthy' Program intend to improve the quality of life with physical activity and healthful eating, key factors for good health.

Objective no. 3: To increase the number of professionals and technicians with specific knowledge of elderly people. Unfortunately, it is not related to any of the current programs, showing a flaw in the available specialized care; it is so, that by the end of 2012 there were 32 geriatricians in the National Health Fund (FONASA, 2012).

Objective no. 4: To increase the opportunities that elderly people have to participate in social, recreational and productive activities. They have an answer through four programs from the Ministry of Social Development:

- Firstly, the Social Tourism Program provides elderly people with opportunities to know historical, cultural and touristic places. This program significantly increases recreation and social integration, strengthening their support networks.
- Secondly, the Senior Advisors Program seeks to relate elderly people with children from vulnerable families, supporting them to improve their academic performance, in order to integrate actively into society, identifying themselves as contributors.
- Thirdly, Vínculos Program contributes to the fulfillment of this objective through the psychosocial preparation and support of the elderly people to integrate into social activities.
- Fourthly, the program Training School for Senior Leaders addresses this objective delivering tools to train senior leaders, enabling the inclusion and active participation of this age group.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education supports this objective through the program Flexible-Mode Studies, which generates opportunities for elderly people to finish their elementary and secondary studies, which contributes to their productivity.

The Ministry of Economy, Promotion and Tourism is also addressing this objective through its program Third Age Holidays, which provides this sector of population with recreational activities related to tourism, integrating them socially, creating and strengthening important links between them. The General Secretariat Ministry of Government, along with the Ministry of Health –with its program Elderly People in Motion– also contributes to give opportunities for recreation to elderly people, through workshops and events over the year.

Lastly, the governmental program ‘Choose to Live Healthy’ promotes outdoors recreational activities and family life, integrating elderly people actively into society.

Objective no. 5: To improve the elderly people’s educational level and work training. It is attained through two different programs:

- Firstly, from the Ministry of Social Development, the Training School for Senior Leaders, which provides training tools for unions, contributing to elderly people's labor integration.
- Secondly, through the Ministry of Education, with its program Flexible-Mode Studies, which contributes to completing the educational level of this age group.

Objective no. 6: To protect the economic security of elderly people. Different to the other objectives, it is addressed through six benefits provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security:

- The first benefit is the bonus 'Golden Anniversary' which is given to couples with 50 years of marriage, seeking to reward family institution as a basis of our society.
- In the second place, there is a bonus for each child born, which aims to improve the pension amount for women older than 65.
- In the third place, the winter bonus aims to help with the winter expenses of aged pensioners with low incomes.
- In the fourth place, the benefit of elimination or reduction of 7 to 5% of health allows to keep the economical wellbeing of the elderly, preventing their income from decreasing.
- In the fifth place, the Basic Solidarity Pension for the Elderly, which allows people without the right to pension in any social security regime to obtain some income in order to subsist.
- Finally, the Solidarity Pension Contribution for the elderly aims to increase incomes under the fixed amount established in the norm regulating this benefit (Ministry of Labor, 2008).

Overall, the previously mentioned benefits aim to contribute to the improvement of the economic conditions with which the elderly meet their needs, allowing them to have a higher purchasing power. Fundamentally, in this sense, the existing benefits have been the elimination or reduction of health discounts, and social security contributions, which improve family income.

Objective no. 7: To adapt housing, means of transport and cities for elderly people. It is attained by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, through its program Fund of Assistance Services for Elderly People, which finds housing solutions for the elderly in vulnerable situations with three kinds of instruments: long-term accommodation establishments, supervised housing and stock housing. This way, the objective is to improve housing and living conditions of elderly people, adapting such areas to their needs, in addition to provide support services, according to their level of dependency.

Regarding the objective which seeks to adapt means of transport and cities for the elderly, there are no programs that concretely address these tasks.

Objective no. 8: To diminish the prevalence of active and passive abuse of elderly people. It is answered through the program of the Ministry of Social Development, Against Violence and Abuse of Elderly People, which has allowed the elderly to incorporate into the normative framework related to violence, recognizing them as legal subjects, specializing in the assistance given to them in the case of active and/or passive violence. Additionally, the program allows making society aware of these problems.

Objective no. 9: To increase the access to justice that elderly people have as legal subjects. Just as the previous objective, it is answered through the program Against Violence and Abuse of Elderly People, with support and legal advising provided by the National Service for the Elderly to those who deal with some kind of legal problem, improving their access to the defense of their rights.

Objective no. 10: To improve the coverage and quality of State assistance services related to inquiries and promotion of information regarding elderly people. It is addressed by means of the program from the General Secretariat Ministry of the Presidency 'Chile Cares', which allows bringing the different State services to aged people, avoiding long distance journeys in order to meet their relevant needs. Additionally, it allows promoting relevant information about the services and benefits for the elderly.

Objective no. 11: To enhance a positive social and cultural identity of the elderly people. It is attained through two programs, the first one Senior Advisors Program from the Ministry of Social Development, which helps elderly people to identify important social actors, as they meet the social task of helping children with learning difficulties. Separately, the Social Tourism program falls under the same Ministry and contributes to the social integration of vulnerable elderly people, bringing them to the characteristic culture, history and places of the country, thus relating them to their cultural origins.

Objective no. 12: To increase the amount of research related to aging and old age; this has not been fulfilled by the Chilean State, possibly because of the lack of incentives such as academic, monetary or other that would allow developing this area of research, which has become relevant over the last years as a public concern.

Objective no. 13: To periodically assess and optimize the contribution from politics to the subjective wellbeing of the elderly. This has not achieved a demonstrable development, at least it is not observed in official sources, programs and benefits associated to these objectives. It seems that there is a lack of ex post assessment, which evaluate the impact the developed measures have had on pre- and post-public policy

regarding aging, as it will allow taking corrective measures in relation to those areas in which the expected results are not obtained.

In addition, it is worth considering that in the fulfilment of the objectives, there are not only undeveloped topics, as there are some aspects where efforts have focused on, mainly those related to health and social integration, having as a consequence a high number of programs and or benefits for the improvement of conditions in the healthcare sector regarding offer, quality and efficiency and the increase of activities that allow elderly people to participate in public life.

In order to reaffirm the former, the survey on 'Quality of Life in Old Age' shows an important background when designing new initiatives and public policies that aim to respond to the challenges and needs of the elderly people.

The results of the third 'Quality of Life in Old Age' Survey, 2013, show a sustained increase of general life satisfaction: coming from 56.2% in 2007 to 59.5% in 2011, and 62.8% in 2013. The study points out that this increase could be a consequence of the improvement in living conditions and the increase in the satisfaction of affective and recreational needs of the respondents, which reinforces the Active Aging policy.

Another more specific factor considered in the survey and which shows positive results is the percentage of aged people who prefer to stay at home instead of going out and trying new things; it shows that between 2010 and 2013 the percentage decreased from 60% to 53%; which may be a reflection of the increase in the amount of recreational activities, which have been contemplated in the programs of the Government through their Ministries.

One of the issues that have remained as one of the growing worries of the elderly is health, the results of the survey point out that nearly 90% of the respondents recognize having at least one disease, predominantly those related to hypertension, high cholesterol or diabetes, which reflect a steady increase in their prevalence according to what the respondents manifested from 2007 to 2013. In the same line, the survey shows an alarming result, which corresponds to the increase in medicine, which went from 2.9 in average in 2007 to 3.6 in 2013, the majority of ingestion being among women, older people and people without higher education.

Furthermore, another element in which there is constant concern is related to the protection of the people's economic security, seeking the necessary measures to generate favorable conditions for development, mainly related to social security.

As a result, it is fundamental to acknowledge the results of this survey that relate to economic level; the results indicate that nearly 28% of the respondents performed some kind of paid work in the last month, despite the elderly people's income being most of the times barely sufficient to cover their expenses, or it is simply insufficient.

Moreover, 20.8% of the elderly people state that they have the necessity of training in order to maintain and return to work, but only 8.3% declares they have received some kind of training in the last years.

It is important to recognize that the current pension system in Chile is insufficient, which means that this is leading to a replacement rate of remunerations at retiring that does not reach the expected standards for elderly people.

By the year 2014, there were ten million of affiliates to the pension system in Chile, individual capitalization, from which 4.7 million are active contributors, and 400 thousand of them have equal incomes or higher than the taxable limit.

A sixty percent of the active contributors have balances lower than 31 012.56 USD (20 million CLP) since 1981, for which they reach a pension of 232.59 USD (150 thousand CLP); in the face of this, they are forced to use the benefit of the Solidarity Pension Contribution in order to reach the minimum pension guaranteed by the State.

Some studies developed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013) verify that the 70% of the replacement rate that jeopardized the pension systems in Chile is not reached, and they indicate that a male contributor, who retires at 65 and began contributing at 25, whose real salary grew at 1.5% annually over his lifetime, will receive a net pension equal to 54% of the average of the last three years of his net salary. In the case of a woman, the scenario aggravates, as the current legislation indicates they must retire at 60, therefore, if they begin to contribute at 35 and their salary increases 1.5% annually, they will receive a net pension of 39% of the average of the last three years of net salary.

The previous examples reflect the better scenarios in the results of the replacement rate, as it considers that people contribute over their entire working life; but the reality of Chile creates a greater concern: by September 2013, 2.2 million of the total of the affiliates have gaps in their contributions between 0 to 5 years, 1.1 million does not contribute between 5 to 14 years, and 1 million of affiliates have gaps of more than 14 years; the reasons are unemployment or the kind of contract. Therefore, men end up contributing 21.5 years to finance 20-year pensions on average, while women contribute 15 years to finance 30-year pensions on average. This shows the real decrease in people's life quality when retiring, which reinforces the role of the State in continuing to implement programs that allow overcoming somewhat this decrease.

The positive aspect of the manifested concerns is that these issues, which have remained in time and are expected to increase because of the growing elderly population, are contained in the Integral Policy for Positive Aging and take part in the program of the current government, which through the National Service for Elderly People considered relevant to stop using the concept of positive aging and to work with the concepts of active aging, based on the transversal approach of rights, from which

actions, plans and defined programs take place and promote the articulation of public offer for the elderly, without neglecting the areas of participation and promotion of active aging, where there is greater development and progress.

Conclusions

The Chilean State has generated progress in respect to preparation and protection, facing the challenge of aging that its population experiences, the necessary guidelines have been developed in order to face this process in the best possible way, considering those unavoidable aspects in the search for improving the life conditions of elderly people. Facing this reality there are a lot of tasks left to undertake at the different levels and sectors this topic comprises.

On the one hand, for social security, population's aging is the most important challenge raised by demographic changes. It is necessary to emphasize that "aging" does not only make reference to the growing number of elder citizens, but more specifically to an imbalance within age groups, a decrease in the birth rate, an increase in active population, which will diminish in the near future or not –according to the country analyzed– and of course, a growing number of elderly people, who may need help according to their state of health.

Another challenge Chile faces in the medium term is to improve the elderly people's quality of life, searching options so that they generate more income through the integration to the labor market, with labor conditions according to expected life quality indexes that allow overcoming the deficiency in the social security of the elderly.

On the one hand, assuming that life quality totally depends on the quality of health benefits for people, it is a true challenge for the Chilean State to achieve the health systems' early and concrete adaptation to the changes in the demand proper to the current demographical dynamics and which constantly increases. This means improving the coverage of healthcare services to allow providing the professional and infrastructural conditions for quality care.

Another aspect to consider –among the tasks to be performed by the Chilean State– is the lack of proactivity related to protection and defense of rights at old age, understanding there are still certain hints of discrimination against people in function of their age. Critical issues facing this vulnerability are the difficulty to access to basic services such as housing, education, among others.

Another challenge has to do with the lack of efficiency that the social service system of individual capitalization has demonstrated; it has not been capable of efficiently answering the elderly's need for quality of life after retirement, making them end up in inadequate conditions.

Within the search for options that allow improving the life conditions of elderly people, one has to consider as a relevant factor –related to the creation of action guidelines from the State–: to avoid the immediate implementation of international models created in response to this problem. This implies the assumption that it is necessary to consider in advance the adequacy of such methods for the various realities and contexts within the corresponding country.

Moreover, education and constant training are one of the issues at which the country must aim; it is the State's job to prepare its adult population in order to integrate and remain in the active labor market as best as possible. In turn, it is imperative that education (related to social security and aging) is offered from young ages, as it will allow mitigating the adverse effects in a better way (in terms of employment and lack of resources) that are being produced, in most of the cases, along the years, preparing population and improving their life quality.

While recognizing the existence of a public policy in Chile which seeks to improve the life conditions of the elderly, progress in concreting such guidelines is still to be completed. It is even more necessary to strengthen and develop the State's concern to the new necessities that will appear in the medium and long term, in particular regarding the integral development of elderly people. Concerning the objectives which define this policy, one can observe the coherence between what is proposed there and the programs, services and benefits the State has provided since the issue began to be a part of the public concern and discussion. However, there are some issues to solve, especially those related to the effective materialization of ideas and the generation of a positive impact in population, as a whole, as well as in the aged population. For example, one of the aspects that has not yet been visualized is the elderly people's abuse, for which there is insufficient information; this way, corrective actions are scarce and the problem has not been established in public opinion, leaving them in a certain way in a state of constant defenselessness.

The lack of incentives regarding the generation and training of new professionals specialized in the field is an aspect on which measures must be taken in the short term, understanding this process will continue growing and bringing a series of necessities that cannot be covered if the adequate number of experts in the field is not met. Furthermore, besides having specialized professionals, it is seriously relevant to generate knowledge in the search for more and better solutions related to aging, stimulating and motivating researchers from different areas to integrate this topic into their concerns, strengthening innovation and the development of ideas about quality aging.

The generation of a public policy by the Chilean State is a very important step in order to face this great challenge, but without tracking and assessing such measures there would not be any improvement concerning quality and effectivity.

There are too many ideas related to how to face aging, concreting them in some cases is the problem; therefore, the challenges the Chilean State must face are varied, the available time needs to be used in the best possible way in order to prevent this topic from becoming a major issue even harder to control. Which is clear is that the country ages and it is every Chilean's mission to sum ideas, efforts and engage with each sector to achieve a better quality of life for the elderly.

As a corollary, what is relevant in all this discussion is that the Chilean State has continuity in facing the challenges that intend positively respond to the citizens' needs, and in this case, the program promoted by the Government expects to contribute to the active aging of elderly people in vulnerable social situations, providing knowledge and opportunities for personal, cognitive, biological, physical development and social participation, for which it is required to foster and balance personal responsibility, encounter, intergenerational solidarity and the creation of favorable contexts, which provide the elderly with quality of life and delay dependency levels.

Therefore, it is clear that this issue is very interesting to address; consequently, the opening of new researches that go from an inquiry with primary sources of information that allow accessing the elderly people's thoughts and experiences, to the realization of comparative researches with other realities, in underdeveloped countries as well as in those in conditions of prosperity.

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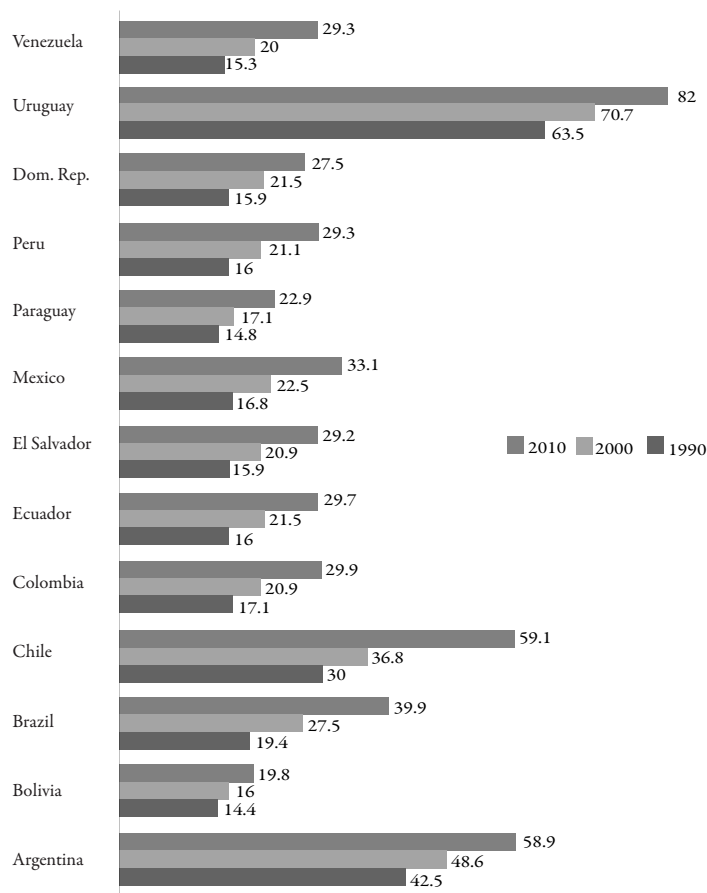
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Annex

Graph 1
Aging Index (per one hundred) – years 1990-2000-2010



Source: Own elaboration with data from Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Center – ECLAC Population Division.

Table 1

The thirteen objectives of the Integral Policy for Aging

Objective	Description of the objective
No. 1	To improve the offer, quality and efficiency of the care services as well as protection, prevention, assistance and rehabilitation of the elderly's health.
No. 2	To increase the prevalence of protective factors for the health of elderly people.
No. 3	To increase the number of professionals and technicians with specific knowledge of elderly people.
No. 4	To increase the opportunities that elderly people have to participate in social, recreational and productive activities.
No. 5	To improve elderly people's educational level and work training.
No. 6	To protect the economic security of elderly people.
No. 7	To adapt housing, means of transport and cities for elderly people.
No. 8	To diminish the prevalence of active and passive abuse of elderly people.
No. 9	To increase the access to justice that elderly people have as individuals with rights.
No. 10	To improve the coverage and quality of State assistance services related to inquiries and promotion of information regarding elderly people.
No. 11	To enhance a positive social and cultural identity of the elderly people.
No. 12	To increase the amount of research related to aging and old age.
No. 13	To assess and optimize periodically the contribution from politics to the subjective well-being of elderly people.

Source: Own elaboration based on SENAMA (2012: 37).

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