

# Growth of Population and Population Policies Implemented in Turkey between 1965 and 2014

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**Abstract:** Countries may periodically implement different policies with regard to the amount of their populations. While these policies sometimes aim at increasing the population depending on the countries' level of development, they sometimes restrict the population growth rate. Generally, it is possible to mention about two periods for Turkey in terms of population policies. Whereas pronatalist policy, in other words, reproduction policy (population-increasing) was followed in the first period, which lasted from the beginning years of the Republic until 1965 in our country, antinatalist policies, that is, policies for decreasing the population growth (restricting the population growth rate) were initiated in the second period after this year. Our population generally had a tendency to increase in the period between 1927 and 1965. The years of the Second World War (1939-1945) were a period when great population losses were experienced in our country just like the whole world. There were decreases in the populations and population growth rate because of the reasons such as: a majority of the male population was fighting at the front, family unions were dispersed and medical care and medicine couldn't be supplied sufficiently. In order to prevent the negative effects of this situation, population-increasing policies were followed between 1927 and 1965. As of 1960s, it started to appear that population-increasing policies, which had been adopted in the Republic Period, weren't valid any more under the circumstances of that time. Turkey had to produce various policies in many fields within the new system depending on the changes and developments that occurred in the world conjuncture. Especially after 1965, our country brought new initiatives with respect to population (Doğan, M., 2013:27). Peace and trust environment, psychological relaxing, increase in the national income, technology developing over time, improvement of health services, hygienization of nourishment and accommodation conditions and increase in the transportation and communication opportunities, which were caused by the adoption of multi-party democratic regime after the Second World War, had an effect on the population growth. Population policies implemented in Turkey after 1965 developed in a reverse way, because the population increased more quickly and a lot more than expected. From this year onwards, a policy was implemented to decrease the population growth rate.

**Keywords:** Turkey, Population, Development, Population Policies, Antinatalist policies

## 1. Introduction

Population structure changed in all the aspects and traces of the war were entirely observed due to the battles fought before the Republic in our country. Especially the decrease in one of the population types, which enabled the population growth, became an apparent problem. The "child miscarriage or illegal abortion is forbidden" article was included in the Penal Code, which was enacted to decrease the problems with the population more clearly in those years. In addition to this article, "endangering the continuity and health of the race" was accepted as a crime in 1936. Besides, decreasing deaths was aimed by protecting the public health with several laws enacted. It is stated that 13 million 648 thousand, which was determined in the first population census conducted in 1927, was less than the real count in many sources and a population approximately between 250 thousand and 400 thousand wasn't presumably declared under the effects of the factors such as military service and taxation. A significant decrease was observed in the population growth rate of Turkey after 1927; between 1940 and 1945. The causes of this decrease are given below: Less births and higher deaths between the war years 1914 and 1922 caused the population, which would reach the fertile age, to decrease between 1940 and 1945. A great part of the male population, which could have become fathers and married, was called for fighting in this period corresponding to the Second World War. The problems that occurred during the deprivations of the war years, illnesses and medicine supply increased the death rates. However,

population growth rate accelerated substantially between 1945 and 1950. After 1950, both the growth rate of our population increased and the developments that emerged in industrialization movements such as relative improvement of transportation opportunities, migrations from rural sections to cities and foundation of factories that dealt with manufacturing in different sectors led to urbanization (Sertkaya Doğan, Ö., 2009: 3). The high number of the immigrants, who came from abroad between 1950 and 1955, also played a role in the high actual growth rate of the population in this period. It is a fact that the immigrants (1923-1924 from western Thrace) that came to our country especially through population exchange played a significant role in the population increase in the beginning years of the Republic in our country. The same situation also showed itself after 1950. This time, migration continued from Yugoslavia after 1954. Population growth rate was opposite the expected rate between 1960 and 1965; while the annual population increase was 28.5 per thousand between 1955 and 1960, this rate decreased down to 24.6 between 1960 and 1965. Initiation of the worker movement from Turkey to Europe and the decrease in the number of immigrants who came to the country were among the factors decreasing the population growth rate between 1960 and 1965. It is a fact that such a migration based on cheap labor force influences the population policies of the countries as well.

Increasing the birth rates and decreasing the deaths through struggle with epidemics were determined as the most significant method applied for increasing the population at

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the beginning. Population increase was adopted especially due to military and political reasons, but also economic grounds in the beginning years of the Republic. It was overstressed that the population was a political, military and economic power element. Emphasis was laid on the benefit of not only increasing the population quantitatively, but also developing its quality while supporting the idea of population growth; meanwhile, attention was drawn to the tendency of late marriage and giving fewer births among the enlightened people.

After the foundation of the State Planning Organization in 1960, officials of this organization and those concerned from the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance came to an understanding for making changes in the traditional population-increasing policy and decreasing the birth growth rate. It was insistently stated that decreasing the population growth rate was an obligation to increase the economic and social development rate up to the desired level, struggle with unemployment and overcome the problems induced by rapid urbanization. While the proposals of a change in the population policy after 1960 gained intensity and extensity, the idea of non-requirement for a change in the population-increasing policy was also supported strongly. The conflict that began between two opposite ideas in 1960s also continued after the acceptance of the Law for Population Planning (Population Planning Law numbered 557) in 1965. Population Planning began to be presented to the public as 'Family Planning' from this year onwards (Özdemir N., 2013:14). Thus, the second period for population policies started in our country after 1965.

## 2. Population Growth of Turkey (1965-2014)

We can mention about three different periods in Turkey with regard to population dynamics and transition periods. The first period is between 1927 and 1955. Birth and death rates were at the highest level in this period. The number of children that were had in this period is 7 on average. The population was doubled in 28 years.

**Table 1:** 1965-2014 Population. Source: <http://www.tuik.gov.tr>

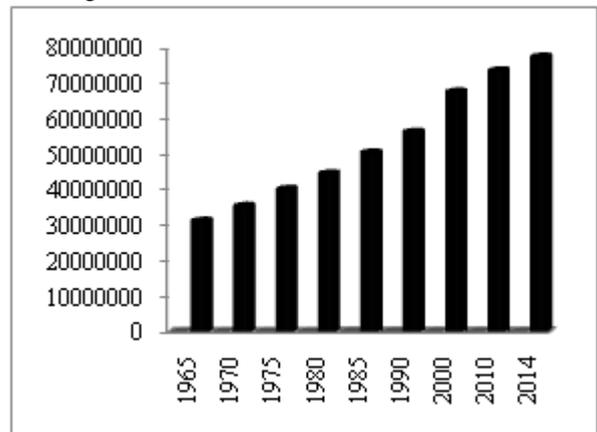
Census Year	Population	Annual Population Growth Rate (%)	Population Density
1965	31391421	24.62	41
1970	35605176	25.19	46
1975	40347719	25.00	52
1980	44736957	20.65	58
1985	50664458	24.88	65
1990	56473035	21.71	73
2000	67803927	18.28	88
2009	72561312	14.50	94
2010	73772988	15.88	96
2011	74724269	13.49	97
2012	75.627.384	12.0	98
2013	76.667.864	13.7	100
2014	77.695.904	13.3	101

The second Demographic Transition Period covers the years between 1955 and 1985, when the fertility rate was high and death rate was low. In this period, annual population growth rate was 2.8%. The population was again doubled as it was in the previous period. The third period began in 1985 and

still continues. The most important characteristic of this period is the substantial decrease in the birth rates. The Fourth period will begin upon the completion of this period. 'In the Fourth period, birth and death rates are low and equal to each other. Hence, population growth rate is zero. One of the conditions of the Fourth period is the correspondence of the net reproduction rate to one and this condition will be fulfilled in 2014. The second condition- stabilization of the population- will be provided in 2050 (Aysit T., 2012: 34).

As of 1950s, war ending, foundation of family unities again and provision of trust and security enabled the population growth. This process can be discussed not only for Turkey, but also all the countries that were involved in the war. As of 1955, serious increases occurred in our population growth rate and therefore population.

In Turkey after 1950, developments and increases appeared not only in the population, but also many areas. After these years, an intensive industrialization movement began and this set ground for profound changes in the population distribution within the country. By determining certain centers depending on the industrialization movement, factories were established to serve the heavy industry and manufacturing industry, and various facilities were built to make use of underground and aboveground resources as much as possible. They became centers that appealed to the population, because they naturally provided labor potential in these regions.



**Figure 1:** Distribution of the total population as per years (1965-2014)

Peace and trust environment, psychological relaxing, increase in the national income, technology developing over time, improvement of health services, hygienization of nourishment and accommodation conditions and increase in the transportation and communication opportunities, which were caused by the adoption of multi-party democratic regime after the Second World War, had an effect on the population growth. Therefore, the period after the Second World War, especially the period of 1965 is one of the milestones for the growth of the Turkish population.

Turkish population of 2014 is 77.695.904 people and population density is 101. The population increased approximately by 470% during the period of 85 years between 1927 and 2014.

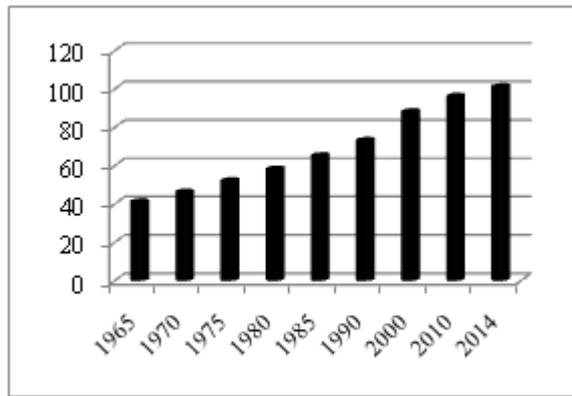


Figure 2: Population density (1965- 2014)

Population density increased in parallel with the increase in the population by years. While the arithmetic population density was 41 in 1965, it reached 65 in 1985 and 88 people in 2000. According to the population data of 2014, population density is 101 people.

### 3. Population Policies Implemented after 1965: Antinatalist (for decreasing the population growth rate) policies

We see that scientific and technological superiority gained a certain importance and value as of 1965. Accordingly, the opinion which supported that high population was a source of power changed as well. The basic problem induced by the rapid population growth in Turkey is unemployment. It is necessary to legalize the precautions to decrease fertility through legal means and to try to spread the birth control precautions especially in the rural section, where the fertility rate is high.

It is seen that population policy has become legal together with development plans since the beginning of the planned period.

**1. Five-Year Development Plan (1963-1967):** A new population policy is discussed for guiding depending on the changes in the population structure following the Second World War. In this scope, the following was stated: 'The population in Turkey is increasing very rapidly. Maximization of the economic development rate became a national policy. Therefore, there is a strong need for a change in our population policy' (<http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr>). The requirement for a population policy based on population planning was presented regarding that rapid population growth hindered economic development. Moreover, due to the fact that the population, which was rapidly increasing in the rural section, didn't make any contribution to agricultural production, stress was laid on the foundation of this population's balanced urbanization order by either creating new employment in villages or moving the rural section towards the new city centers, where there was a potential for development, and it was stated that gathering in big cities must be stopped (F. Özbay et. al., 2001:11).

**2. Five-Year Development Plan (1968- 1972):** In this period, the approach to the matter changed and the statement "population planning" was replaced by "family planning".

Meanwhile, it was stated that the population was also one of the elements of the economic development and it had to be improved in terms of quality and quantity. In this sense, the following was said: 'Quantity and quality of manpower are related to each other with the economic welfare level. Population is an element which provides the amount and distribution of the investments in respect of quantity and the manpower that is necessary for development in respect of quality and accordingly affects the economic development in two directions' (<http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr>).

**3. Five-Year Development Plan (1973- 1977):** In this development plan, focus was on population, employment and employment participation rates and the following statement was made: 'While employment in the 15-64 age group was 12.5 million people in 1962, it increased up to 14.1 million people with a growth by 12.7% in 1972. However, an increase occurred by 27.3% in the population of the 15-64 age group in the same period. These findings show that the 15-64 age group increased more rapidly than employment' (<http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr>).

**4. Five-Year Development Plan (1978- 1983):** It was stated that the mutual effects of the social, economic and population components, population policy, social and economic policies were complementary. Besides, internal and external migrations were discussed, and it was remarked that population movements also influenced the age structure of the population. It was expressed that the weight of the 15-64 age group increased whereas the proportion of 0 - 14 age group decreased within the total population as a result of the reduction in fertility.

**5. Five-Year Development Plan (1985- 1989):** In this period, annual population growth rate tended to decrease in Turkey, previous studies started to give positive results and the idea of increasing and strengthening the precautions about family health continued. Although progress was observed in the demographic structure of the population in the socio-economic area, improvement of the population quality was specified as the main target.

**6. Five-Year Development Plan (1990- 1994):** Implementation of population-decreasing policies was foreseen. In this sense, decrease in both the birth rates and infant deaths was aimed.

**7. Five-Year Development Plan (1996- 2000):** Emphasis is laid on the generalization of family planning services and increasing the activities in this matter. Main goal appeared as reaching the optimum population for economic development.

**8. Five-Year Development Plan (2001- 2005):** In this period, an opinion was delivered for the transition to the central census system instead of the census conducted every 5 years to form more consistent, reliable and actual data, and it was stated that information flow and coordination would be easier in this way. Moreover, the following statement was made: 'It is expected at the end of the Plan period for the tendency of decrease to continue in the population growth rate and decrease down to 1.33%, for the total fertility rate to decrease down to 2.3 and for the total population to reach

70.2 million people. It is predicted that the proportion of the 0-14 age group will continue to decrease and the proportions of the 15-64 and 65+ age groups will increase within the total population until 2005' (<http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr>). Moreover, it was expressed that reproductive health and family planning services would be combined with the fundamental health services and applied in a quality way without gender discrimination for a lifetime.

**9. Five-Year Development Plan (2007-2013):** The policy for decreasing the population growth rate continues in Turkey. Although the negative situations, which were caused by the rapid population growth, were reduced throughout the country, the problems related to increasing the employment, decreasing the unemployment and education couldn't be solved and the relationship between education and employment couldn't be built adequately. In the plan period, steps were taken to improve the education and health infrastructures and fix the income distribution with the purpose of enhancing the living quality of our people and certain improvements were achieved. However, the need for increasing the educational quality and employability continues. Demographic structure of Turkey began to resemble that of the developed countries together with the developments in its fertility level and age pattern. Changing population structure led to the need for reviewing the policies in the fields of especially education, employment, health and social security (<http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr>). Besides, it was specified in this plan period that a great increase was obtained in the number of students and transitions from primary education to secondary education enhanced together with the compulsory basic education, which was extended to 8 years for the improvement of the population's educational level.

**10. Development Plan (2014- 2018):** It has been stated in this plan, which covers our current period, that the total fertility rate that was equal to 2.12 children in 2006 fell to 2.08 in 2012 and dropped below 2.10 - the self reproduction level of the population - and this rate decreased down to 1.02 in sections where education and income levels are high. Moreover, it is predicted that the proportion of the old population within the total population is increasing as a result of the decrease in the infant death rate and the extension of the lifetime expected at birth, and the working age population will begin to decrease as of 2038 and the total population after 2050 if no precautions are taken. In this framework, the need has been expressed for increasing the fertility rate with population policies and developing efficient policies with a convenient timing oriented to aging population. Accordingly, Turkey has again started to implement Pronatalist population policies since 2014.

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestions

Consequently, population growth and the distribution of the growing population have remained and been shaped under the effect of diverse factors in our country. The growth of our population, which has existed since 1927, in the most profitable way, execution of studies to increase its quality and quantity and implementation of policies in this direction have been supported by the state and included in the development plans.

Various opinions are presented for population increase and policies. According to some opinions, high population signifies a power and young population is significant, and to the others, the population must increase on condition that it is balanced and carries a value in terms of quality and quantity. In this sense, it is important for the population, which is significant for both our country and the world, to follow a balanced course in respect of quality and quantity. In this context, it is quite important for the population to reach the optimum level. The optimum population is the amount of population which a region or country with defined borders could have by using all of its natural and human resources in the most efficient way. At this point, the field's areal magnitude, natural resource abundance, situation in terms of location, transportation, commerce and industrial areas, its climate, water resources, soil and agricultural characteristics are crucially important.

While overpopulation leads to various problems in the world, little increase or decrease in the population threatens the existence and future of the countries (Doğan M., 2011:295). Reaching the optimum amount of population is also the main goal of all the countries today. Optimum means the most favorable. Accordingly, catching and maintaining the most favorable amount of population will increase the economic development rates of the countries and help them get strong socio-culturally. The population that reaches the optimum level obtains the ideal conditions in every aspect. For instance, the problems like unemployment, inadequate education and sanitary requirements, which affect the social life, decrease. Therefore, reaching the optimum population must also be the main target in Turkey.

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