A MODEL FOR PRO-NATALIST POLICY IN TÜRKİYE

KAPGEM Series - 2

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PREFACE

Since the early 21st century, the rapid change in the global demographic structure has become one of the main factors determining the direction of public policies. In particular, the decline in fertility rates and the aging of the population force countries to rethink many areas from social welfare systems to economic sustainability strategies. Türkiye is not exempt from this transformation. Declining birth rates, a decline in the proportion of young population and an increasing elderly population reveal a remarkable change in the demographic structure of Türkiye.

This book has been prepared to contribute to the development of holistic and sustainable public policies that will encourage an increase in births in line with Türkiye's current demographic trends. It presents a comprehensive set of policy recommendations, taking into account both successful global examples and Türkiye's social, cultural and economic structure. These recommendations, ranging from financial incentives to cultural norms, from work-life balance policies to intergenerational solidarity, focus not only on numerical increase but also on supporting a qualified, strong and healthy family structure.

We hope that the policy model recommendations in this study will serve as a guiding resource for decision-makers, practitioners and academia. As all the researchers who contributed to the development of this study, we hope that this work will be beneficial for the future generations of our country.

INTRODUCTION

Global demographic dynamics have become one of the most critical topics of discussion in the 21st century. Although it is projected that the world population will continue to grow between 2020 and 2050, it is also known that the rate of this growth will gradually slow down (United Nations, 2019). In particular, the decline in fertility rates and the increase in average life expectancy in developed countries are driving deep changes in social and economic systems (Altun, 2021; Gu et al., 2021). Population aging not only limits countries' capacity for renewal but also raises critical questions about how demographic balance will be shaped in the future (Uyanık, 2017). Demographic transformations, especially in terms of social policy, economic sustainability, population, and social structure, are creating profound effects and have become a significant issue requiring global solutions.

Demographic studies indicate that we are heading toward a global order in which the proportion of the elderly population is rapidly increasing while the youth population is declining (Blencowe et al., 2012; Bulatao & Bongaarts, 2000; Can, 2023). Improvements in healthcare services and medical advancements have extended life expectancy; meanwhile, factors such as family planning, increased labor force participation rates, and declining birth rates point to an ongoing demographic transition (Snopkowski & Kaplan, 2018). Indeed, this demographic transformation is also clearly reflected in the population statistics of European countries. The fertility rate refers to the average number of children a woman can be expected to have during her reproductive years, typically defined as ages 15 to 49. For example, while the total fertility rate in Eastern European countries was 1.38 in 2021, it is projected to decline to 1.19 by the year 2100 (Chadwick, 2024). Considering that the replacement-level fertility rate required to sustain population levels is 2.1, current data indicates that the actual rates fall short of this threshold.

The graph presented illustrates significant demographic trends. For instance, with a fertility rate of 1.66, France is among the countries with the highest fertility rates in Europe. This indicates that France's long-standing family policies, child incentives, and work-life balance measures have been effective in increasing fertility rates (Letablier, 2008). On the other hand, Malta has the lowest fertility rate at 1.06. This figure serves as a critical indicator of population decline and the acceleration of the aging process in Malta Although Romania, one of the Eastern European countries, has a fertility rate of 1.54—above the EU average—fertility rates in these countries are also known to be on a downward trend (Zivic, 2023; United Nations, 2019). The average fertility rate in the European Union, 1.38 (Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), 2025d), is significantly below the replacement level of 2.1 needed to sustain the population (Köksel, 2016; Chadwick, 2024). The data reveals that European countries have an aging population structure and may face challenges such as labor shortages in the long term.
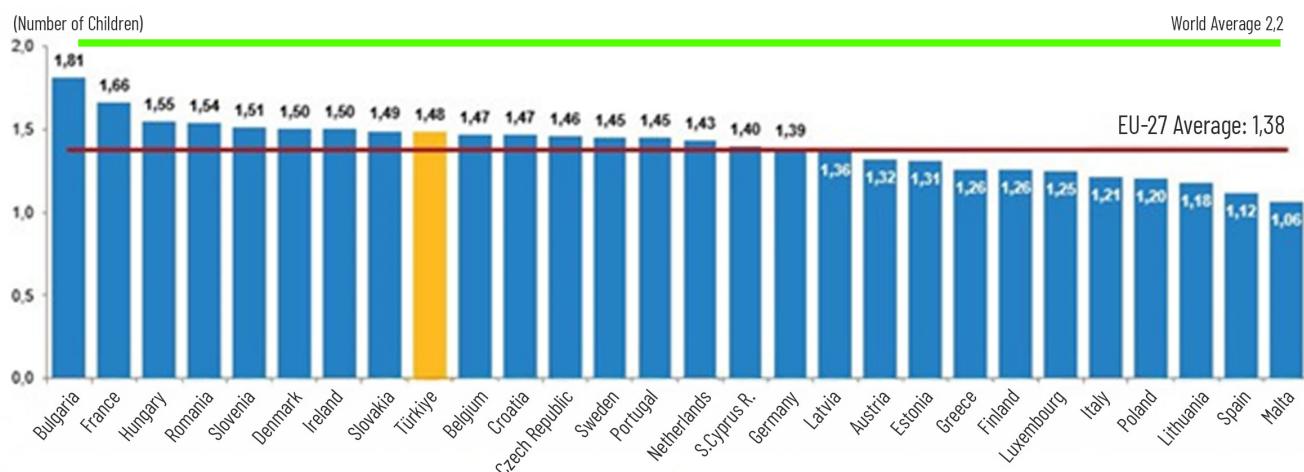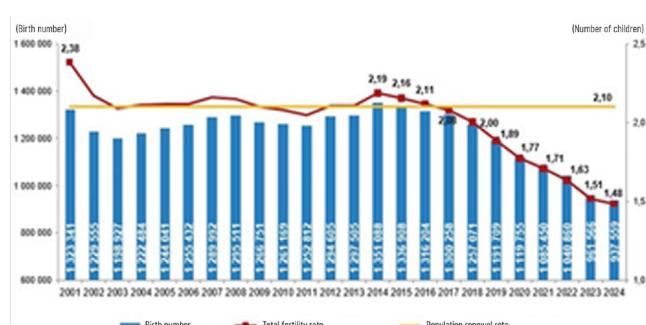
Figure 1: Total Fertility Rate in Türkiye (2024) and EU Countries (2023), (TurkStat, 2025d)

Context in Türkiye

The aging of the population and declining birth rates are not only challenges faced by developed countries but also by developing nations such as Türkiye. The main factors contributing to the aging population structure in Türkiye include declining fertility and mortality rates, increased life expectancy, women's participation in the labor force, advancements in healthcare, and improved living standards (Keskin & Koçak, 2023).According to TurkStat (2025d) data, Türkiye's fertility rate is 1.48—above the EU-27 average (1.38) but below the global average (2.2). The number of births and the total fertility rate in Türkiye between the years 2001 and 2024 are illustrated in Figure 2

According to the graph shown, the total fertility rate in Türkiye decreased from 2.38 in 2001 to 1.48 in 2024. This indicates that the rate has fallen below the replacement level of 2.1, which is necessary for the population to sustain itself, and that the population growth rate is slowing down. Moreover, while the number of births was approximately 1.3 million in 2001, it is projected to fall below 1 million in 2024, revealing a significant change in fertility trends. This decline highlights that a demographic shift is underway. In the long term, it brings risks such as population aging (Can & Avcı, 2021), increased labor shortages (Can, 2023), and a decrease in economic growth potential (Kuloğlu et al., 2022). In Türkiye, where the number of births and fertility rates directly affect the population, the dramatic decline in the proportion of children in the population is clearly illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 2: Number of Births and Total Fertility Rate, 2001-2024 (TurkStat, 2025d)
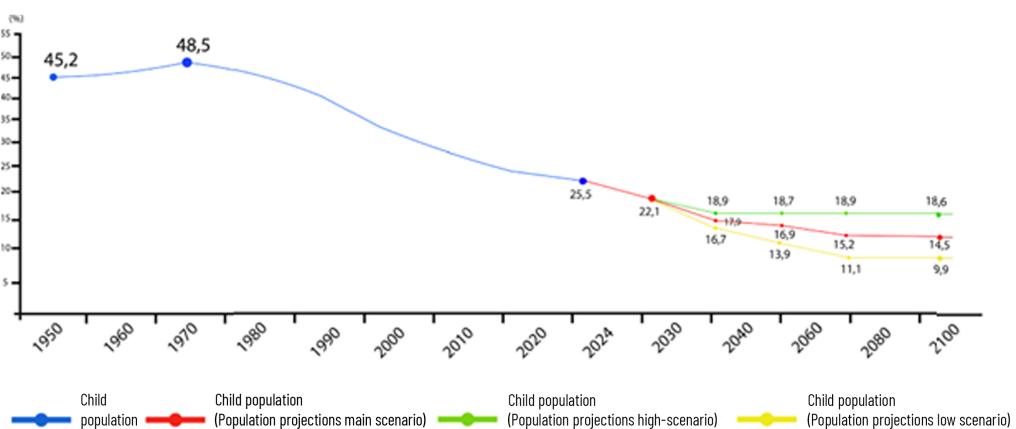
Figure 3: Child Ratio in Turkey with Statistics, 2024 (TurkStat, 2025b)

It is noted that the proportion of the child population (ages 0–17) in Türkiye has been rapidly declining since the 1970s, reaching 25.5% as of 2024. According to projection studies, this ratio is expected to drop to 17.9% by 2040, soon. In an optimistic scenario, the rate may fall to 18.9%, while in a pessimistic scenario, it could decrease to as low as 16.7%.

Since 2019, Türkiye's total fertility rate has, for the first time, fallen below the replacement level (Gökburun, 2020; TurkStat, 2024a). This change in population structure highlights the fact that, to maintain the replacement level, each individual must be replaced by the next generation. At this point, the increasing average age of mothers—particularly in relation to the birth of second and third children—as well as the rising age at which women have their first child over the years, may contribute to the fertility rate remaining below the critical threshold of 2.1 required for population replacement.
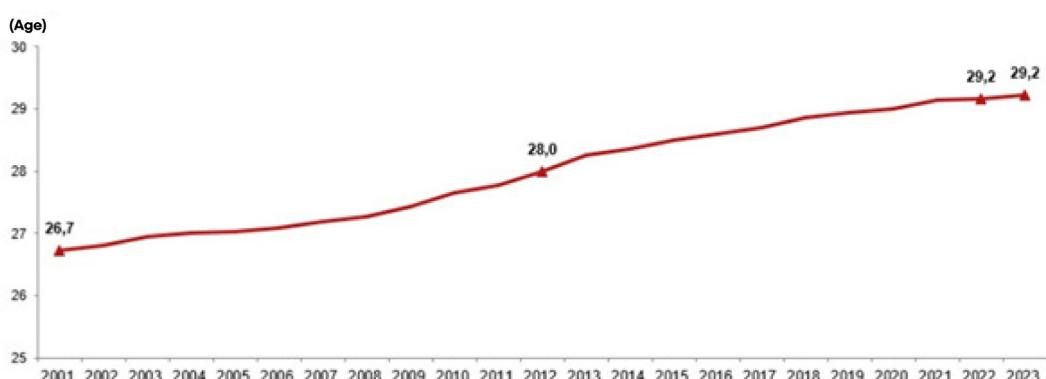
Figure 4: Mean Age of Birth Mothers, 2001-2024 (TurkStat, 2025d)

While the average age of mothers who gave birth in 2001 was 26.7 years, this age increased to 29.3 years in 2024, and the average age of mothers who gave their first birth in 2024 was 27.3 years.
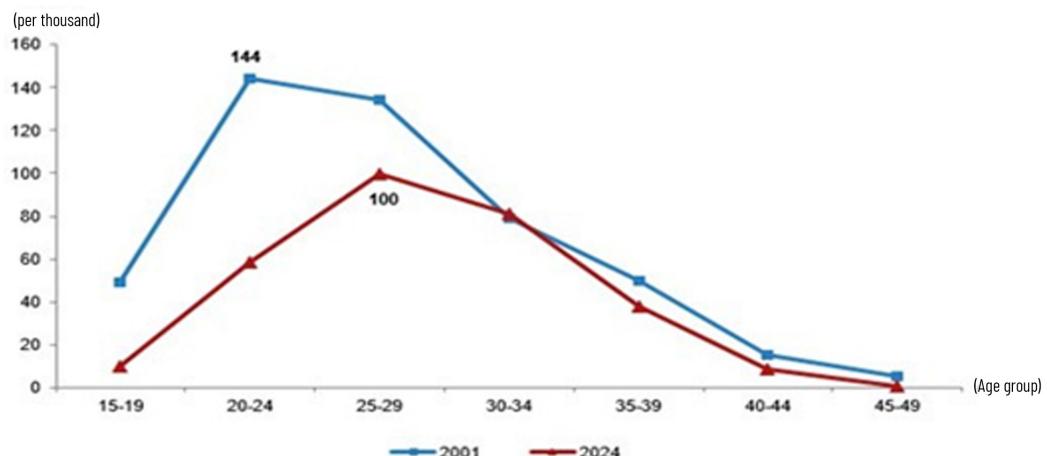
Figure 5: Fertility Rate by Age Group, 2001-2024 (TurkStat, 2025d)

An analysis of fertility rates by age group shows that the highest fertility rate was 144 per thousand in the 20-24 age group in 2001 and 100 per thousand in the 25-29 age group in 2024. The relevant data show that births have been taking place at older ages of women over the years.

At this point, it is important to look at the change in the proportion of young population in Türkiye over the years. Below, the proportion of young population that will be included in the total population between 1950 and 2100 is presented (Figure 6).
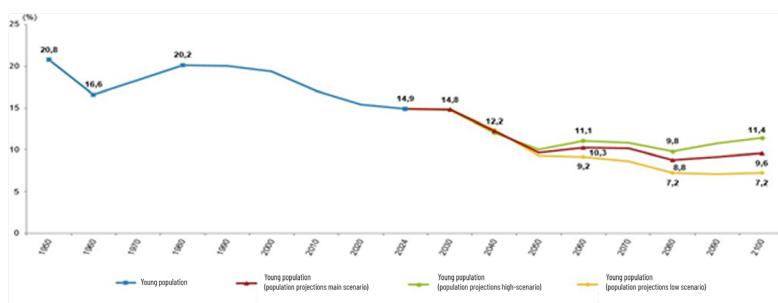
Figure 6: Proportion of Young Population in Total Population, 1950-2100 (TurkStat, 2025e)

Keeping in mind that the youth population rate in Türkiye was 15.1% in 1935 (TurkStat, 2024b), the figure shows that the youth population rate in Türkiye peaked in the 1950s at 20.8% and then began a marked downward trend. This development is broadly in line with the population projections of Tamirisa and Faruqee (2006) for the period 1950-2050. After declining to 16.6% in 2013, the proportion of the youth population declined further in the 2020s, falling to 15.1% in 2023 and 14.9% in 2024. According to population projections, the proportion of the young population in the total population is expected to fall to 12.2% in 2040 and to 8.8% in 2080. The decline in the proportion of young population in Türkiye is shaped not only by the decline in the number of births and fertility rate, but also by socioeconomic factors such as urbanization, economic conditions, prioritization of education and career, and structural transformations such as increased female labor force participation (Köse, 2024). These projections for the young population also raise serious concerns about slowing economic growth and potential risks to social insurance and pension systems (Lee and Mason, 2010).

For example, in an era of rapidly advancing technological developments, a decreasing young population may have negative effects on entrepreneurship, innovation, and creative idea generation. On the other hand, there is also the possibility that the working-age population will retire later and be subject to higher tax liabilities to support the increasing elderly population. As of 2023, the elderly population aged 65 and over in Türkiye has increased by 20.7% in the last five years, reaching 9,112,298, and its share in the total population has increased to 10.6%, and this rate is expected to exceed 20% in 2050. Although the elderly population rate in Türkiye is below the elderly population average of the European Union, it is above the world average (10.2) (TurkStat, 2025c). The fact that the elderly population rate exceeds 10% in the total population is a clear indicator that the population is gradually aging. Figure 7 presents the rates of age groups in the population and the change process of the median age under different scenarios within the framework of Türkiye's demographic projections between 2035 and 2100.

Year	Scenarios	Median Age	0-14 Age	15-64 Age	65+ Age
2035	Low	39,3	15,4	69,2	15,4
	Main	39,6	14,8	69,7	15,5
	High	39,1	16,0	68,8	15,2
2050	Low	44,8	15,1	61,9	23,1
	Main	46,1	12,9	63,2	24,0
	High	43,7	16.6	61,2	22,2
2075	Low	51,5	12.4	55,9	31,7
	Main	56,1	9,2	55,0	35,8
	High	47,4	15,3	55,9	28,9
2100	Low	52,2	11,8	54,6	33,6
	Main	59,7	7,9	49,3	42,8
	High	46,5	15,3	56,5	28,2

Figure 7: Proportion of Median Age and Large Age Groups in Total Population According to Different Scenarios 2035-2100 (TurkStat, 2024c)

Considering this data, it can be said that the median age in Türkiye is currently 34 (TurkStat, 2024c), but this rate is projected to reach 44.8 in 2050, 51.5 in 2075, and 52.2 in 2100 according to the main scenario. In TurkStat's population projections covering the years 2035-2100, it is predicted that the population of Türkiye will be around 94 million in the mid-2050s; however, in 2100, according to the main scenario, the population will fall below 77 million, and according to the pessimistic scenario, the population will fall below 55 million (TurkStat, 2024c). These scenarios reveal that the aging population in Türkiye, as on a global scale, is becoming an increasingly important demographic reality. While changes in the age and gender structure of the population in Türkiye are expected to continue, it is predicted that the demographic opportunity window (Can, 2022), which indicates the period when the total dependent population is less than half of the working-age population, will approach the close. The closure of the demographic opportunity window, defined as the decrease of the proportion of the child population in the total population below 30% and the elderly population below 15%, is a critical turning point for Türkiye's future. In this context, it can be said that the demographic opportunity window will close towards the mid-2030s according to population projections (TurkStat, 2024c). Türkiye's loss of its demographic opportunity window between 2025 and 2035 will cause a contraction in the labor market and a slowdown in economic growth. In addition, this situation will create critical burdens on the country's social security system; It may cause young people to postpone their decisions to marry and have children due to factors such as economic crises, high inflation, unemployment rates and increasing housing prices, and may further reduce birth rates. In fact, of the 67.7 million people aged 15 and over in Türkiye, 41.1 million are married and 19.5 million are never married and single (TurkStat, 2025a).

The demographic, economic, sociological, and political consequences of a reduction in the overall fertility rate and a rise in the elderly population as the proportion of the youthful population in countries decreases will emerge in a complex manner. Countries with low fertility rates confront major challenges such as depopulation, rural abandonment, and rapid urbanization (Lutz et al., 2006; van Wijk and Billari, 2024). In these countries, social links are likely to deteriorate, raising the risk of social isolation for the elderly (Bongaarts and Casterline 2018; Bongaarts and Hodgson 2022). These dynamics emerge as a decrease in labor supply, an increase in demand for healthcare services, and a negative influence on economic growth (Lee and Mason, 2017). Individual preferences, economic progress, societal ideals, and government policies all have a direct impact on declining fertility rates. For example, Pailhé et al. (2019) and Sobotka et al. (2011) argue that greater female labor force involvement, inadequate childcare facilities, and rising living costs have all contributed to lower fertility rates. Even in poor nations, lower birth rates are linked to factors such as higher levels of education, improved access to health care, urbanization, and economic pressures (Bongaarts and Casterline, 2018; Bongaarts and Hodgson, 2022). This necessitates that countries adopt policies that are appropriate for the aging population, as well as execute innovative and multifaceted social programs that support the youthful population to maintain economic growth. Current demographic data and projections suggest that pronatalist policies, as outlined in the next section, will become an increasingly essential tactic.

PRONATALIST POLICIES:
GLOBAL POLICIES AND PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Pronatalist policies are sometimes latent in societal norms and relate to a belief system or policy framework that promotes childbirth and family expansion (Livi-Bacci, 2017). Pronatalist policies, which first emerged in response to demographic concerns, are now acknowledged as a powerful driver in affecting population policies and cultural attitudes about reproduction (Bajaj and Stade, 2023). Pronatalist policies have been implemented for a variety of reasons in many countries at different times. Various authorities may choose measures that stimulate population expansion to obtain labor force, economic, or military dominance.

These plans became popular in European countries following World War II to prevent population decline (Teitelbaum, 2013). Policymakers prioritize fertility increase measures to overcome declining birth rates and aging populations. These policies include fiscal incentives and tax breaks for births, children, and families (Gauthier, 2007; Glass and Fodor, 2022), public health and education services, extended parental leave (Gauthier, 2007), public awareness campaigns (Rakhimova-Sommers, 2014), and campaigns promoting family and cultural values (Lero, 2023).

Policies Involving Financial Incentives

Different governments have devised and executed a variety of financial incentive programs, which are the first policy type that comes to mind when discussing pronatalist policies. Thus, it may be stated that the economy plays a significant role in lowering birth rates, and financial assistance to families is one of the most prevalent fertility-increase strategies. For example, France provided considerable family benefits and tax breaks to its inhabitants, resulting in the highest fertility rate in Europe (Letablier, 2008). Hungary has provided substantial financial assistance, including interest-free loans for young couples, debt forgiveness for large families, housing loans, automobile purchase subsidies, and lifelong income tax exemptions for women with four or more children (Frejka and Gietel-Basten, 2016; Sági and Lentner, 2018). Japan, on the other hand, declared that it will double funding for child-related initiatives to raise fertility rates by 2023 (Zivic, 2023). Similarly, France has an economically oriented family allowance system with tax breaks to help families (Gauthier, 2007). In Bulgaria, parents are paid 90% of their pay for the first 12 months after giving birth and the entire minimum wage for the second 12 months. South Korea is known for its pronatalist policy, which is backed up with cash payments, with each family getting a monthly cash allowance of $745 for each newborn child (Zivic, 2023). In some countries, measures to promote birth rates involve housing subsidies. For example, Russia's "Maternity (Family) Capital" program is a comprehensive package that offers couples financial assistance for housing, schooling, and retirement savings following the birth of a second child (Frejka and Gietel-Basten, 2016).

Policies for Work-Life Balance

Accessible and inexpensive childcare is another significant problem in supporting high birth rates. In nations like Sweden and Denmark, heavily funded daycare systems allow parents to efficiently manage work and family life. These regulations not only help moms find work but also make it simpler for both parents to contribute to childrearing (Andersson, 2004). Pronatalist policies centered on working life are utilized all around the world. These programs, often known as parental leave or maternity leave, are among the tools used to promote childbirth. Sweden has established parental leave, allowing parents to share up to 480 days of paid leave per child, with additional financial contributions to ensure equal distribution (Letherby, 2002; Stråle,

2024). In Sweden, parental leave and enhanced childcare facilities are among the factors that contribute to fertility growth (Thevenon and Gauthier, 2011). Policies that do not address work-life balance fail to meet the demands of families in which both parents desire to work and are insufficient to boost birth rates (Fauser et al., 2024; Nelson and Giger, 2019). Fiscal incentives, such as tax cuts and housing subsidies, have not been sufficient to significantly improve birth rates in Hungary (Glass and Fodor, 2022; Sági and Lentner, 2018). Moreover, the literature emphasizes that birth-increase policies that are not continuous and costly cannot be effective (Loužek, 2003; Höhn, 1988).

Policies Focusing on Cultural Norms

There are also policies that focus on cultural norms to emphasize family relationships and increased childbearing. Japan's birth rate policies reflect cultural norms with a focus on social responsibility, encouraging societal support for childrearing (Nomura et al., 2019; Schoppa, 2020). Singapore's "National Night" campaign, which attempts to target cultural norms using media tools, is a practice that encourages young couples to have children on public holidays using humorous language to address declining fertility rates (McDonald, 2000). Similarly, the "Baby Bonus" policy implemented in Australia aims to encourage young women to have children at an earlier age. The "Baby Bonus" program includes a generous lump sum baby bonus by offering the "give birth and feed" message with a compatible financial support. The study conducted on the subject shows that the "Baby Bonus" bonus has an effect of enabling people to have children at an earlier age (average age 25). Sustainable population growth depends on as many women as possible having a third child. The younger a woman starts having children, the greater the possibility of having "one for the country" by extending her fertility window. It is also stated that the "one for the mother, one for the father and one for the country" message, which appeals to the national spirit and is integrated with social policy in Australia, is effective (Anderson, 2011).

Pronatalist Policies in Türkiye

When we briefly review the history of policies aimed at increasing birth rates in Türkiye, we can say that birth increase policies were dominant until the 1960s. Many practices aimed at increasing the population were implemented until the 1960s. Some of these were exemption from road tax, rewarding with medals (those who had 6 or more children were rewarded with medals), severe penalties for abortion, and lowering the marriage age (in 1938, the marriage age was lowered from 18 to 17 for men and from 17 to 15 for women). In addition, it is noteworthy that faster steps were taken in the transformation process of population policies in the early years of the Republic compared to neighboring countries. Developments such as prioritizing existing socio-economic problems and taking measures against epidemics to reduce mortality rates were quite effective in this process (Eryurt, 2019; Semiz, 2010; Peker, 2016).

Today, it can be said that the "three children" emphasis that our President Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been expressing for years corresponds to the number of children required for the rejuvenation of the population. The "three children" emphasis indicates that studies aimed at increasing birth rates and population policies are at an important point on the authorities' agenda. Similarly, in a statement he made on July 3, 2024, Minister of Family and Social Services Mr. Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş stated that they are considering many alternatives such as increasing maternity leave, supporting nursery and care processes, flexible and remote working to prevent the decline in fertility rates. In parallel, with the Presidential Decree published in the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Official Gazette dated 25.12.2024 and numbered 32763, the "Family Institute" and the "Population Policies Board" were established within the Ministry of Family and Social Services.

[1] https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/turkce/haberler/detay/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-partisinin-istanbul-il-kadin-kollari-7-olagan-kongresinde-konustu

[2] https://www.aile.gov.tr/haberler/bakanimiz-mahinur-ozdemir-goktas-ulkemizde-genc-nufusun-artmasi-dogurganlik-oranlarinin-yukselmesi-icin-ozel-calismalar-yurutuyoruz/

The duties of the institute include protecting and strengthening the family structure and values, increasing the social welfare of the family, creating data with policies related to women, children, disabled people, elderly people, relatives of martyrs, veterans and relatives of veterans, organizing events such as specialization and certification programs, seminars, symposiums and conferences in areas related to the improvement of social services. In addition, the duties and authorities of the Population Policies Board, which was established under the chairmanship of the Vice President and with the participation of many ministers, include the following statements: "keeping the fertility rate above the population renewal rate, comprehensively examining the factors that cause the fertility rate to decrease and the results they bring" (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Official Gazette, 2024), which clearly shows that

the board will serve in the coordination and planning of policies regarding birth rates. In the statements made one after another after the establishment of the Population Policies Board in our country, it was stated that in order to encourage young marriages, young people who will get married will be provided with a 48-month, 2-year non-refundable, interest-free loan support (on the condition that the couples who will benefit from this participate in the education and counseling services provided before and after marriage); that the one-time birth aid given for the first newborn child will be increased to 5000 TL, that families will be supported with a cash aid of 1500 TL every month for the second child and 5000 TL every month for the third and subsequent children. It was also stated that the aid to be given will continue until the child turns 5.
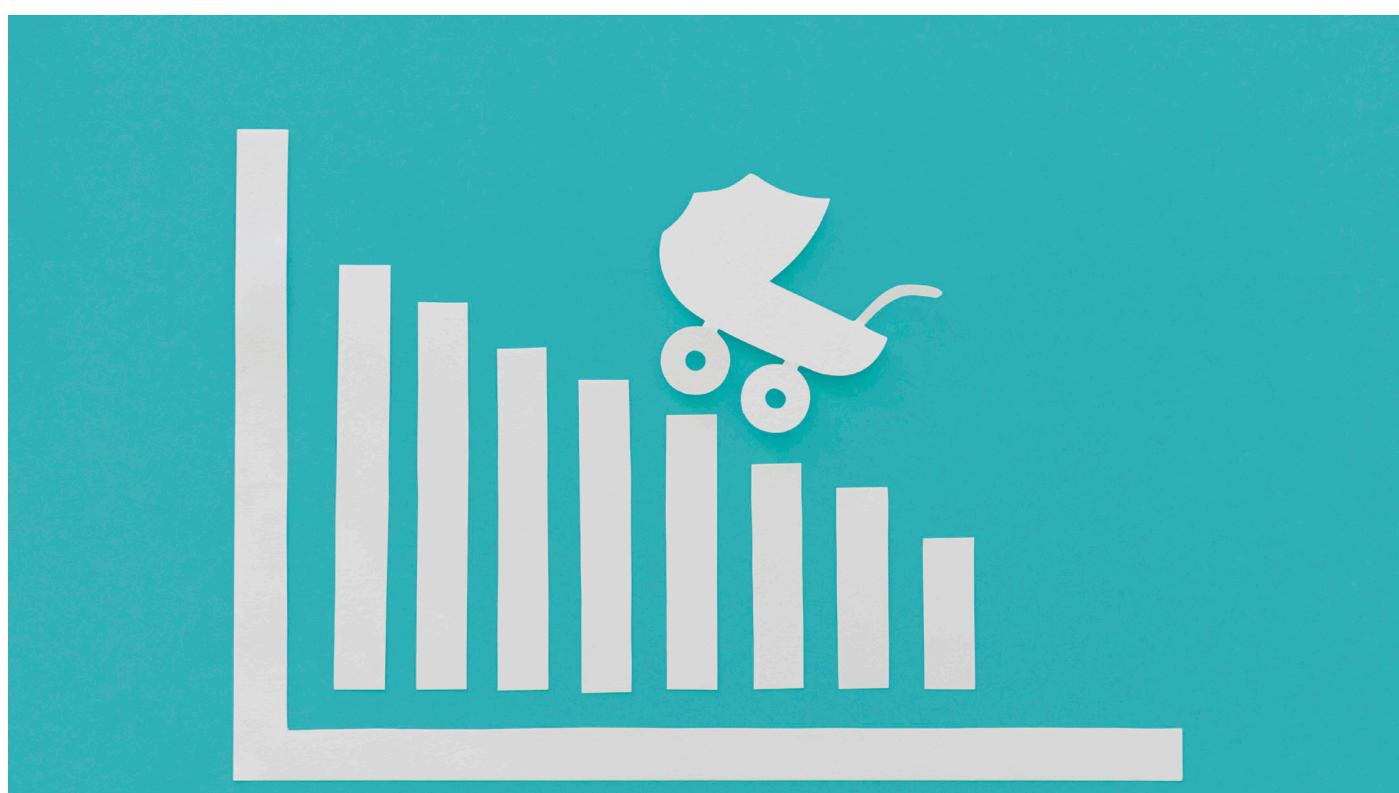
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study, which examines family policies aimed at increasing birth rates in Türkiye and the comparison of these policies with global examples, examines the historical context of birth increase policies, their current practices, and the effects of these policies. Successful examples from European countries are presented along with various suggestions that can serve as models for Türkiye. Demographic changes in Türkiye, such as the decline in birth rates, the aging of the population, and the decrease in the proportion of young people, pose significant risks in terms of economic and social sustainability. The aging of the population can cause a contraction in the labor market, a slowdown in economic growth, and significant burdens on the social security system. In addition, the decline in the young population can have negative effects on entrepreneurship, innovation, and creative idea generation. In this context, holistic and sustainable policies that are appropriate for Türkiye's demographic structure need to be developed.

The study emphasized that countries such as France, Sweden and Denmark have been successful in increasing fertility rates with extended family support and childcare programs. The policies implemented in these countries are presented below, along with various suggestions that can be a model for Türkiye. For example, it is suggested that innovative policies such as a retirement system for women who are employed or unpaid workers at home, social awareness programs for marriage preparation, comprehensive family support programs, grandchild support programs and family counseling services that will focus on increasing birth rates be implemented. Policies aimed at increasing birth rates should not be limited to financial incentives but should also consider factors such as cultural norms and work-life balance. Policies focusing on cultural norms can contribute to increasing social responsibility and social support for raising children. In addition, policies that facilitate work-life balance can increase fertility rates by encouraging parents to participate more in the childrearing process.

In Türkiye, our President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's emphasis on "three children" and the Ministry of Family and Social Services' efforts to increase fertility rates show that population policies have an important place on the authorities' agenda. The establishment of the Family Institute and the Population Policies Board are important steps taken to increase fertility rates and strengthen family structures. Considering all these evaluations, family-centered public policy recommendations aimed at increasing birth rates encountered worldwide and, in our country, and that need to be resolved soon are listed below:

[3]https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/turkce/haberler/detay/aile-yili-kapsaminda-saglanacak-destek-paketine-iliskin-aciklama
[4]https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/ekonomi/istanbulda-evlilik-kredisine-9-bin-kisi-basvurdu/3499126

General Policy Recommendations

1 Scientific research should be conducted to identify the reasons for the decline in birth rates.

2 In scientific research, biological sex characteristics and differences should be taken into account when evaluating the reasons for the decline in birth rates.

3 The research results should be shared with the institutions, organizations, and individuals in our country that develop, implement, and oversee family policies.

4 In order to increase birth rates, inclusive policies should be developed that benefit not only employed women but also women who perform unpaid domestic labor.

Recommendations for Before, During and After Marriage

1- Public information should be provided about the importance of family unity in terms of our society, culture and values.

2- During the establishment of family unity, as a protective and preventive policy, training should be given to couples within the scope of the Marriage Preparation Program.

3- The trainings to be given within the scope of the Marriage Preparation Program should be disseminated and shared with professional groups working in public institutions and organizations.

In order to avoid confusion regarding the concept of "working from home", which is among the flexible working models, the term "unpaid domestic worker" has been used to describe unemployed women, women working without the purpose of earning income, and "unpaid family workers", as preferred by TurkStat.

4- Establishing "Family Counseling Centers" that are easy to access both economically and spatially for every citizen before, during and after marriage will be beneficial in terms of monitoring each family throughout the family life cycle and providing access to a specialist they can apply to when they need help. It is necessary for Family Counseling Centers to be physically close to each family to provide equal service to families from every socioeconomic level. In this context, Family Counseling Centers can be organized entirely by the public sector or through public-private sector cooperation, like Family Health Centers. Social workers, psychologists and psychological counselors who have received family counseling and therapy training and are specialized in this field should be employed in these institutions.

5- In addition to families being able to apply to Family Counseling Centers when needed, it is necessary to ensure the continuity of various group studies specially designed for mothers, fathers, children and couples in open group form.

6- Psychosocial support services should be provided to parents by professionals before, during and after pregnancy in Family Counseling Centers.

7- Online Family Counseling Services should be provided with a system similar to the Central Physician Appointment System (MHRS) to be established within the Ministry of Family and Social Services. In this system, additional privacy options should be provided for individuals and families receiving services, and applicants should be able to receive services by hiding their personal data. Specialists from outside the regions where applicants live should be assigned to appointments made through the system, thus allowing applicants to receive services without having any concerns about privacy.

# Recommendations for Inclusive Family Support Incentives

1-   Inclusive family support programs should be created and the unique demographic, cultural and economic characteristics of our country should be taken into consideration when preparing these programs.

2-   Within the scope of comprehensive family support programs, women, especially those who work unpaid at home, should be supported in economic and social areas.

3-   Women's life centers suggested by Kırışık (2022) should be implemented and the use of these centers, especially by women who do unpaid work at home, should be supported.

4-   Childcare support should be provided to women who do unpaid work at home during the postpartum period, based on the minimum wage for the relevant year and depending on the number of children they have.

5-   The period of paid parental leave that employed parents can take after the birth of each child should be extended.

6-   The father should also be able to benefit from the parental leave period after birth, without it conflicting with the parental leave period that the mother will use.

7-   Pre-school education support should be provided at a rate determined based on the minimum wage for the relevant year, depending on the number of children.

8-   Depending on the number of children, there should be a reduction in Special Consumption Tax (SCT) rates.

9-   Depending on the number of children they have, low-interest or zero-interest housing loan support should be provided to families so that they can own a home.

10-   Families should be rewarded with medals depending on the number of children they have.

11-   Working hours should be adjusted to facilitate the adaptation of employed women to working life in the postpartum period.

12-   Parental leave that employed mothers and fathers can use after the baby is born should be arranged; issues such as family solidarity, bonding with the baby, and sharing the burden of care should be taken into consideration in these arrangements.

13- The retirement system for employed women should be rearranged depending on the number of children they have.

14- In the arrangements to be made regarding the retirement systems of employed women, a retirement premium system should be established depending on the status of having children and the disadvantages that women experience in their retirement rights due to childbirth should be reduced.

15- Card systems should be developed that offer advantages such as discounts on public transportation and free entry to cultural events to women who do unpaid domestic work.

16- Women who do unpaid domestic work should be given a certain amount of benefit for each child from their family's taxable income.

17- Assisted reproductive treatments should be free of charge if the total family income divided by the number of people in the family is below the net minimum wage.

Recommendations for Intergenerational Solidarity
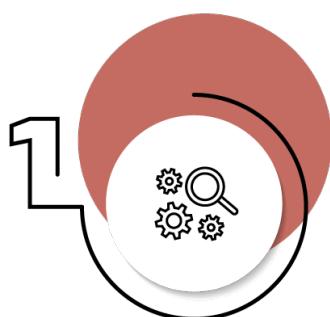
Intergenerational support mechanisms should be established during the postpartum period and should be grounded in both theory and practice.
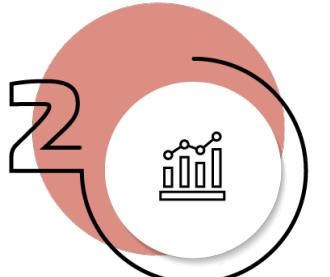
The grandchild support program, which encourages intergenerational solidarity, should ensure that grandparents actively participate in the care of their grandchildren during the postnatal period.
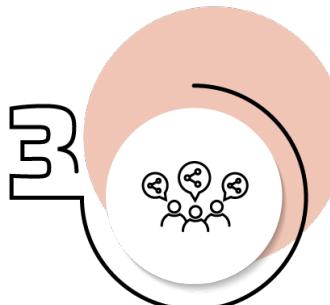
Under the grandchild support program, grandparents who provide support in caring for their grandchildren should receive financial support, and their participation in the workforce should be facilitated through flexible working hours.

Recommendations for Education

1- It should be evaluated that by shortening the duration of compulsory education, the average age of first marriage will be reduced, and the number of children will increase accordingly.

2- Public policies that facilitate and support marriage for young people who receive university education should be produced.

As a result, developing holistic and sustainable policies that are suitable for Türkiye's demographic structure is of critical importance in terms of long-term social welfare, economic growth and demographic opportunity window. Policies aimed at increasing birth rates should include factors such as cultural norms and work-life balance in addition to financial incentives. In this context, supportive public policies should be produced not only for women in employment but also for women who are unpaid domestic workers. Since the proportion of women who are unpaid domestic workers is higher in the total number of women, birth increase policies should be developed in a way that takes them into consideration. In the studies to be carried out on this subject, it is recommended that innovative policies and implementation strategies such as retirement system models, family, child, communication and parent-themed pre-marriage, during and after marriage education programs, inclusive education and childcare services, and family and social support systems be implemented.

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Pronatalism refers to policies that aim to increase birth rates. Throughout history, these policies have been adopted for reasons such as labor, economic and military power. Today, European countries have developed policies such as financial incentives, childcare support and parental leave in response to declining birth rates. Countries such as France, Sweden and Denmark offer successful examples with their extended family benefits and childcare programs. However, it has been stated that financial incentives alone may not be sufficient to increase birth rates and that it is important to ensure work-life balance, and it has also been emphasized that birth increase policies should be compatible with cultural norms. Countries such as Japan, Singapore and Australia have tried to increase fertility rates through media campaigns and cultural incentives. However, criticisms that these policies may conflict with issues such as environmental sustainability and gender equality should also be considered. In Türkiye, birth increase policies were implemented until the 1960s, and the Family Institute and Population Policies Board were established within the scope of population policies. In this study, based on examples from around the world, various recommendations are presented that may be suitable for increasing birth rates in Türkiye.