

THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF STATISTICS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF INTERWAR PRONATALISM IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the history of the formation and institutionalization of the General Directorate of Statistics in Turkey within the context of interwar pronatalism. Among the many factors that shaped interwar pronatalism in Turkey, ‘positioning vis a vis the West’ and ‘limited state capacity’ were the most influential ones that shaped the organization and activities of the GDS. Based on archival research, the article underlines overlooked dichotomies concerning interwar pronatalism: despite the emphasis on the importance of population data and statistical organization, due to limited state capacity, these fields could not be improved during the interwar period.

Keywords: Interwar Turkey, Pronatalism, General Directorate of Statistics, State Capacity, Population Politics

TÜRKİYE’DE İKİ SAVAŞ ARASI DÖNEM PRONATALİZMİ BAĞLAMINDA İSTATİSTİK GENEL MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

ÖZ

Bu makale İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü’nün (İGM) oluşma ve kurumsallaşma tarihine iki savaş arası dönem pronatalizmi bağlamında odaklanmaktadır. Türkiye’de iki savaş arası dönem pronatalizminin belirleyicileri arasında yer alan ‘Batı ile ilişkiler’ ve ‘kısıtlı devlet kapasitesi’, İGM’nün organizasyon ve faaliyetlerinin şekillenmesinde çok etkili olmuştur. Arşiv araştırmasına dayanarak bu makale göz ardı edilmiş çelişkilerin altını çizmektedir: nüfus bilgisi ve istatistik organizasyonunun önemine yapılan vurgulara rağmen kısıtlı devlet kapasitesi nedeniyle bu alanlar iki savaş arası dönem boyunca gelişme gösterememiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İki Savaş Arası Dönem Türkiye, Pronatalizm, İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü, Devlet Kapasitesi, Nüfus Politikası

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Introduction

This article* is on the role and position of the General Directorate of Statistics (GDS)² within interwar pronatalism in Turkey. Pronatalism is a set of ideas and practices based on the argument that the growth rate of the population should be increased. Interwar pronatalism in Turkey was shaped not only by demographic conditions but also by the historical, international, and ideological context within the limits of state capacity, and in return became one of the constitutive fields of discourse and policy of the new regime. As an important institution of interwar pronatalism, the GDS was also shaped by historical, international and ideological context within the limits of state capacity, and this article situates the GDS within these main factors of interwar pronatalism.

The decade before the formation of the Turkish Republic witnessed dramatic demographic changes brought on by wars, immigration from the lost territories to the remaining core of the Ottoman Empire, forced migrations and massacres. These events changed the main demographic characteristics like age structure, gender ratio, birth and mortality rates. It was in this social and demographic context that the new nation-state was founded by a secular and positivist group of military and bureaucratic personnel of the late Ottoman Empire. Modernization and nation-building were the main ideals of the republican project they envisaged.

Starting with late Ottoman Empire, the relationship with the West developed in a pattern where the West was both the model to be followed, the civilization to be a part of, and also a threat to be cautious of. Turkish interwar pronatalism also followed this pattern. Pronatalism was the dominant discourse on population in Europe during the era. Official bureaus of statistics were conducting population censuses, and the international community of statisticians and demographers was trying to understand the trends, current status, and future of the population. In interwar Turkey, direct or indirect pronatalist legislation was enacted inspired by Western countries, and the General Directorate of Statistics (GDS) was founded and developed following the example of foreign official bureaus of statistics. This Directorate sent staff to international scientific meetings on population and statistics, and translated and published works in these fields. All these efforts to follow the Western path and to be an equal and respected part of Western civilization went together with vigilance against the West. Both the atmosphere of rivalry and paranoia in the interwar period, and also the wars fought in the nineteenth and early

* This article is a shortened version of one of the chapters of my PhD dissertation titled *Interwar Pronatalism in Turkey: Its Formation, Discourse, and Institutions*.

² The official statistics organization, founded in 1926 as The Central Statistics Office, became the general directorate under the prime ministry in 1927. Until 1962, when it was named as the State Statistical Institute, it was a general directorate under the changing titles of *İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü* and *İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü*. For the period I study, this official statistics bureau was a general directorate, and I will refer to the office as the General Directorate of Statistics (GDS).

twentieth century until the foundation of the Republic fixed a cautious attitude towards the West, which was not an irrational fear. In this context, increasing the population and its rate of growth, creating a healthy and fit population that would constitute the workforce and military power, were the priorities of interwar pronatalism that saw the West as a threat.

The main focus of this article is the General Directorate of Statistics, its formation and historical development during the inter-war era. I argue that the General Directorate of Statistics was a prime institution of Turkish interwar pronatalism, and the chief example of how Turkey's positioning vis-à-vis the West and limited state capacity shaped Turkish pronatalism. This focus on the institution is not to overstate the capacity of the state, nor that of the GDS. My focus on this scientific/bureaucratic institution shows the gap between aspirations and achievements, both of which were a product of the historical, international, ideological and demographic context, as well as state capacity. Among these factors, state capacity and relations with the West were the most important ones for this institution of interwar pronatalism. I conducted archival research in state archives (Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi). Besides the documents from the state archives, the official gazette (Resmi Gazete), the records of parliamentary sessions (Zabıt Ceridesi), and the archives of the GDS are the basic sources of my research for this article.

1. Official Statistics in Turkey

The process of centralization and institutionalization of official statistics organization was a part of modernization and state institutionalization in Turkey: statistics in this process came to present better tools for government, pointing out problematic areas, and suggesting solutions. Furthermore, increasing use of and reference to statistics promoted the idea of progress through science. All these efforts and concerns could be traced back to the late Ottoman period.

1.1.Ottoman Period

In the Ottoman context, data collection by the state dates back to the 14th century. *Tahrir*- land registration- was done to include a newly added territory into the *timar* system, which was a crucial component of state mechanism during the classic era: Ottoman sultans granted land to members of the military in exchange for services: taxes were collected, order was maintained in the provinces, and soldiers were provided for the wars. The functioning of the system depended on the knowledge of taxes that would be collected from the provinces, hence the importance of *tahrirs*. The *timar* system declined in 17th century leading to the decreasing importance of the *tahrir* system. During this period, the Ottoman state did not have either a population or a statistical office.

The reform movement of Mahmut II inevitably changed the organization of the state regarding the population issue. With the 1831 census, the first census in which individuals, -rather than households- were recorded, the Population Office (Office of Population Registers, Census Department) (*Ceride-i Nüfus Nezareti*) was founded in the

Ministry of the Interior to compile the census records. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman state tried to create a system for data collection and processing through new offices and regulations (Behar, 2000; Karpat, 1985: 29; Toprak, 2000: 97; Yüceuluğ, 1947: 15).

In the early 20th century, in his book *İhsaiyat* (Statistics), Minister of Finance Mehmet Cavid Bey wrote that statistics was crucial for the discovery of laws of nature. He compared the developments in statistics in the Ottoman Empire with advanced countries, complaining that the latter worked for the improvement of the theory and practice of statistics, and that what was produced here was useless. He suggested an option frequently resorted to: we have to join the international scientific community, and we have to work for it. We need a statistics organization. We could start by sending civil servants to Germany, France, Italy, and Belgium to investigate the offices of statistics there (Toprak, 2000: 101). His suggestion was to be put into practice with the formation of the General Directorate of Statistics during the early Republic.

1.2. The Statistics Organization in Turkey

For interwar pronatalism in Turkey, population data was central: without population statistics that would show the problems like infant mortality or spread of disease, a pronatalist policy would be impossible. The state needed reliable data on population for its pronatalist policies, but also wanted this data to be completely under control, so that the quantity and ethnic composition of its population would not be ‘misrepresented’ to the foreigners in the atmosphere of fear and paranoia of the interwar. Therefore, the GDS was an indispensable aspect of Turkish interwar pronatalism. Among the factors that shaped pronatalism in Turkey, relations with the West and state capacity were the ones most influential on the history and functioning of the GDS during the interwar era.

In interwar Turkey, the institutionalization of statistics and of statistics organization was a continuous process of centralization, paved with efforts for efficiency, and struggles for more budget and personnel. The incorporation of the statistical organization into the official structure did not happen automatically. The parliament enacted laws, but it was the Prime Ministry that regulated the relation between the General Directorate of Statistics (GDS) and other state offices. In its initial phase of formation, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü supported the GDS. Camille Jacquart, the first director of the GDS, wrote letters to him, complaining about specific issues, and the Prime Ministry issued circular notes, and sent orders to other ministries and state offices, reminding them of and supporting the central position of the GDS, thus mediating relations of the GDS through its authority.

The scope of centralization was not pre-determined: rather, increased centralization reappeared as the solution to the problems of the functioning of the statistical system. Efficiency, improvement of the scientific quality of statistics, and control over data were the main benefits that were hoped to be brought with centralization. However, due to both

lack of resources and shortsightedness, the problems mentioned by the Directorate were not seriously addressed, contributing further to inefficient use of resources.

The central statistics organization of the Turkish Republic was founded in 1926. Until then, each ministry and state department had their own statistics offices working for specific needs. A 1957 report on the development of statistics since the beginning of the Republic describes the pre-1926 period as follows: there was a lack of technical personnel, know-how, and technical tools; there was a lack of standards and efficiency deriving from decentralization, since every statistical office carried out the orders of the affiliated ministry; and, finally, the concept of statistics and its benefits had not yet been understood by the public yet; all this led to unscientific and useless statistics (1923–57 report, Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi [BCA]/ Turkish Prime Ministry Republican Archives 30..1.0.0/95.598..3.). Description of pre-GDS statistics in this fashion starts as soon as the GDS is formed, and continues until the 1970s when the initial research on Ottoman statistics was conducted, and the latter began to be regarded as a valuable source.

After the foundation of the GDS, several laws, decrees (*kararname*) and ordinances (*talimatname*) were enacted for its gradual centralization. It was founded as the Central Statistics Office (*Merkezi İstatistik Dairesi*) with the decree no 3517. Even in the first ordinance defining the responsibilities of the Office, it was stated that the Office was to be in contact with foreign statistical bureaus which should be presented to the Prime Minister beforehand. Centralization, scientific accuracy, and integration into the international community of statistics were the founding premises. With this initial ordinance, the Statistics Commission –composed of the representatives from the ministries– was established to advise on changes in statistical methods (DİE, 1976: 7–8).

This ordinance was an initial step towards centralization. Rather than being the center that collects and compiles all quantitative data, the GDS was founded as the supervisor of statistical activity. Its responsibilities were conducting censuses and publishing the statistical yearbooks –the minimum requirements of a modern state’s statistical organization. Belgian statistician Camille Jacquart, then a member of International Institute of Statistics³, was invited to become the director of the GDS (BCA

³ Jacquart served at various positions in the General Directorate of Statistics in Belgium between 1899 and 1926. Before his arrival to Turkey, he was the director general. He became the secretary general in the Ministry of the Interior and Health when he returned to Belgium (DİE, 1976: 34).

30..18.1.1/14.40..16.). Celal Aybar⁴ and Selim Sabit Aykut⁵ became assistants (*müşavir*) to Jacquart, and the General Directorate of Statistics was founded with 17 personnel. Before coming to Turkey, Camille Jacquart directed three censuses in Belgium (Toprak, 1991), and with his expertise, in its first year, this office organized the first census of the Turkish Republic in 1927, conducted trial censuses for agriculture and industry, compiled marriage and price statistics, and prepared statistical yearbooks.

Three laws were enacted, in 1927, 1930 and 1933, on the organization, structure and responsibilities of the GDS⁶. With each law, the statistical offices of different ministries were gradually included to the GDS, and the central position of the GDS was thus strengthened. With the 1930 law, the departments of statistics in various offices continued to exist and produce statistics, but the General Directorate controlled their results and no statistics could be published without the approval of the General Directorate.

However, apparently, this de jure priority given to the Directorate did not have de facto results. There are numerous letters written by the directors of the Directorate addressed to the prime ministry on issues of centralization and the central authority of the General Directorate. For example, when newspapers published population statistics of İstanbul that were not taken from the publications of the GDS, Camille Jacquart wrote a letter to the prime minister and warned that these contradictory numbers damaged the credibility of Turkish statistics. Immediately after this, in March 1929, İsmet İnönü circulated a note to the ministries reminding them that the GDS was the sole producer of population statistics, that any publication on this matter could only be done with the control and approval of the GDS, and that any statistics that contradicted those of the GDS could not be published. In his circular note on the subject, Prime Minister İnönü warned that the uncontrolled publications that showed the number of deaths as higher than the number of births were a declaration of the decreasing population of Turkey (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.147..1.). In those pronatalist days, the implication of downward trend of population was not acceptable. This emphasis on the GDS as the sole authority also meant

⁴ Celal Aybar graduated from İstanbul Law School, and studied in the Department of Statistics and Demography Sciences at Brussels University, Faculty of Political Sciences. He served in various state positions. After Jacquart he became the general director of the GDS, and served in this position until his death in 1947 (DİE, 1976: 35). He wrote and translated many works for the Analysis Series (Tetikler Serisi) of the GDS.

⁵ Selim Sabit Aykut studied in the Departments of General Sociology and Statistics and Demography at Brussels University. He served as translator, deputy director, and assistant director at the Directorate. His books on statistics and statistical studies on Turkey were published in the Analysis Series, for which he also translated many texts.

⁶ Law no1153 in 1927 (Law Concerning the Responsibilities to be taken by the Government, Special Administrations, Municipalities, Civil Society and Firms Regarding the Compilation of Statistics), (Resmi Ceride, 17.7.1927, no: 635); The 1554 Law on the Mission of General Directorate of Statistics (Resmi Gazete, 8.2.1930, no 1418), and the 1933 law no 2203 “Law on the Organization of the General Directorate of Statistics” (Resmi Gazete, 24.5.1933, no 2409).

state control over population data, which was crucial when population and its trends were a matter of international competition and security in the interwar period.

Another case regarding the regulation of the relation between the GDS and other state departments derived from the problems of data transfer to the GDS. Various times, upon the request of Camille Jacquart, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü issued circular notes ordering the ministries to provide required data to the GDS⁷. Celal Aybar –the new director and former advisor to Camille Jacquart– complained about erroneous data given to the GDS⁸, and state departments' continuation of compiling statistics⁹.

In 1929, leaving his position as the General Director of Statistics in Turkey, Jacquart wrote a letter to Prime Minister İsmet İnönü suggesting a roadmap to maintain and to further the improvement of statistics in Turkey (BCA 30..10.0.0/24.135..5.). He advised the conduct of population and agriculture censuses in 1930, the completion of the draft bill for the centralization of the statistics organization, and a project to establish a country-wide organization to properly register births and marriages. Jacquart said that statistics should be done by qualified personnel in the GDS, rather than the scattered departments of various ministries. Centralization, he added, was a prerequisite for a modern organization of statistics. A few months later, at the beginning of 1930, the law regulating the responsibilities of the GDS (Law no 1554) was enacted.

The Preamble of this law shows the enduring problems in the GDS (Zabıt Ceridesi, 23.1.1930, p 9). The technical inadequacy and lack of standard order of the statistics compiled by various offices was asserted as the main reason for the proper centralization of statistics in an authorized office. According to the Preamble, the statistical tables were too detailed and complicated; the questions and tables did not have continuity, which led to irregular compilation over time. Most of the time statistics could not be published since they were not reliable; there was no agreement between the statistics compiled by

⁷ Circular notes (*tamim*) were issued for the first statistical yearbook, that of 1928 (BCA 30..10.0.0/24.134..16.), for the second statistical yearbook (BCA 30..10.0.0/24.135..2.), and for the delay of sending data (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.147..2.).

⁸ In May 1930, Celal Aybar complained about the Denizli Chamber of Commerce's erroneous data on prices, and sent an example circular note to the Prime Minister to be distributed to the ministries. The circular note said that the Denizli Chamber of Commerce gave data for future periods that could not be known then. The circular note then underlined the importance of accurate data for reliable statistics, mentioned the penalty clauses of the new law no 1554 enacted a few months ago, and requested the maximum care and attention of the personnel. The prime ministry circulated the note as sent from the GDS (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.147..3.).

⁹ After the 1930 law, Celal Aybar wrote an official letter to the prime minister, stating that some departments were still compiling statistics without the opinion and approval of the GDS (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.147..9.). On November 9th, 1931, in another letter to the Prime Minister, Celal Aybar complained about the statistics compiled by the General Commandership of the Gendarme. The next day the Prime Ministry wrote a note to the ministries that the opinion and approval of the GDS should be received before compilation of any kind of statistics (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.147..11).

different offices. Lack of trained personnel – a problem the General Directorate repeatedly complained about– aggravated these issues. The further centralization that would be brought by this law would provide accuracy, since it would guarantee the use of scientific methods at the center. Central control and production of statistics was associated with scientificness and accuracy. The Preamble admitted the impossibility of complete centralization at that moment due to lack of resources, and projected a gradual process. The training of personnel and their education in Europe was also suggested in the Preamble.

Following the law 1554, a series of decrees and ordinances were enacted. In line with the law, an ordinance was enacted regulating the obligatory statistics courses that would provide scientific training to the civil servants employed in state statistical offices. This was an important effort to cope with the lack of trained personnel. The courses were also open to other civil servants, students, and to the public in general (Article 4). The trainees were licensed after a final exam (Article 7), and the licensed would be preferred for statistics positions in state offices and for promotion (Article 8). In 1932, publication of population statistics without the Directorate’s control and approval was banned. The decree stated that statistics on death that were compiled and published by non-state institutions caused misunderstandings both in the country and abroad (Resmi Gazete, 8.8.1932, no 2169). This ban is a part of the process of creating a powerful central authority in the field of statistics. It also explains how the ruling elite took numbers seriously and wanted a state monopoly on them. Centralization meant efficient use of resources and more useful data. But in the context of the interwar period, centralization also meant efficient control of numbers.

The 1933 law (no 2203) “Law on the Organization of the General Directorate of Statistics” (Resmi Gazete, 24.5.1933, no 2409) is the most important document for centralization of the statistics organization, since all statistics departments– except health, construction, and transportation/communication– were thereby attached to the Directorate. The Law’s preamble compared centralized and decentralized organization of statistics and listed the disadvantages of the decentralized system in terms of efficiency and the motivation of the personnel¹⁰. With this law, all the statistics offices under various ministries were transferred to the General Directorate, and became specific departments: financial statistics, foreign trade statistics, classification, population statistics, education statistics, justice statistics, industrial and trade statistics, agricultural statistics, publication

¹⁰ According to the Preamble (Zabit Ceridesi, 20.5.1933), statistics was not the primary concern of the scattered offices of statistics, whereas it is the first and the last job of the central organization. In a central organization, the personnel would work to improve themselves in statistics, since this is the way for upward mobility and promotion. However, in a decentralized organization, the statistics personnel would not have motivation to improve their statistical knowledge, and would try to transfer to other offices. Since the statistics by the decentralized organization were not compiled with the general problems and issues of the country in mind, they could not be related to each other, and thus were not commensurable. Furthermore, the statistics machines that ease and fasten the process could not be provided for each individual statistics office. Therefore, in every aspect central office would be much more efficient.

and intelligence, and lastly the department of documentation (Article 3). Every year –for five years– two people would be sent to foreign countries for statistics training for a period to be defined by the Directorate. These people would, upon their return, be employed in the Directorate. The law tried to solve the basic problems regarding centralization and trained personnel, but as we will see in the following pages, the regulations did not bring the projected results.

1.2.1. The Annual Reports: Self-description of the General Directorate

Starting in 1930, the Directorate prepared reports in accordance with Law no 1554's Article 9, which stated that "the General Directorate presents annual reports to the Prime Ministry, especially on centralization and the relation between the Directorate and other state offices". The first report on the activities of 1930 was presented on February 1, 1931. This 1930 report is quite positive on the issues that appear to be main problems in the future. The second one was a decennial report presented in 1933¹¹ (BCA 30..10.0.0/28.160..9). From 1931 to 1943, the Directorate presented 11 annual reports¹². At the beginning, the general tone of the reports was mostly glory: praising every achievement of the Directorate. In all reports, the lack of qualified personnel is a concern, and towards the end these are accompanied with the complaints about the problems in the registration of population data by the Population Office in the Ministry of the Interior. Centralization, provincial organization, formation of departments, and relations with the West (i.e., foreign experts, training, and relations with foreign statistics offices and the international community of statistics), were the main issues that were raised in these reports. The official regulations mentioned in the previous section present the plans and ideals of the ruling elite regarding the GDS. A detailed reading of the GDS annual reports provides an opportunity to see to what extent the laws, decrees and orders could be put into practice. The gap between the plans and achievements designates the problems regarding state capacity, which was the main constraint for interwar pronatalism in Turkey, as well as for one of its primary institutions, the GDS.

¹¹ It was the tenth year of the Republic. In 1933, many state institutions were preparing 10 year reports. The accomplishments of the first decade of the Republic were regarded as indicators of the Republic's future success.

¹² The report of the year 1935 does not exist in the Prime Ministry Archives. The one written in 1933 is a decennial report. 1938's was signed by the deputy director, Sabit Aykut. The 1930 report: BCA 30..10.0.0/24.135..13; The 10 year report in 1933: BCA 30..10.0.0/28.160..9., 1933 and 1934 BCA 30..10.0.0/26.148..2; 1936 BCA 30..10.0.0/24.137..12; 1937 BCA 30..10.0.0/24.138..8.; 1938 BCA 30..10.0.0/26.148..10.; 1939 BCA 30..10.0.0/25.140..1; 1940 BCA 30..10.0.0/25.141..5.; 1941 BCA 30..10.0.0/25.141..14.; 1942 BCA 30..10.0.0/26.148..15.. In addition to these reports presented to the Prime Ministry, in 1948 the directors of three departments in the General Directorate and the advisor presented a report to the General Directorate on measures for rationalization (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.148..26.). Lastly a 1957 report (BCA 30..1.0.0/95.598..3.) summarizes the developments in the Directorate.

1.2.1.1. Centralization and the Central Office

Completing the process of centralization was stated to be as important as the statistical work itself in the annual reports. In 1933, with the law no. 2203, the statistics work of the state institutions was transferred to the Directorate¹³, with the exceptions of public works, railroad¹⁴, health, and mail and telegraphy statistics. It was assumed that with the development of the Directorate and increase in the number of the qualified personnel, and especially with the return of those who were sent abroad for statistics education, these exceptions would be included in the Directorate, and the centralization would be achieved. However, in 1947, Ratip Yüceuluğ, then the head of Industrial Statistics Department in the GDS, wrote a small volume composed of three short articles, the last one being “The Statistics Organization in Turkey and Its History” (Yüceuluğ, 1947). He stated that health and transportation statistics were still not included in the GDS, and added that except foreign trade statistics, almost no scientifically useful document was brought to the GDS by the statistics units of various state institutions, which showed the failure of both the decentralized organization and the centralization effort. Despite these problems, he praised centralization as a total success. Some statistics that could not be collected previously (such as industry, agriculture, husbandry, civil servants, mortality, divorce, and marriage) could now be done regularly, and some others (trade, education, justice, prices, finance, and savings) improved drastically.

The Directorate employed only 17 people until 1929¹⁵, but with centralization and the inclusion of the statistics offices into the Directorate, the number of positions increased¹⁶. The number of personnel was a constant problem in the face of the increasing scope and detail of statistical work¹⁷. For the conduct and tabulation of censuses, additional part-time positions were opened in the GDS. The reports mention that due to lack of personnel, issues like wages, working hours and accidents, the cost of living (1937 report), unemployment, social insurance, tourism, migration and birth (1938 report) could not be addressed.

¹³ The department of finance statistics was already transferred to the GDS in 1931(BCA 30..10.0.0/26.147..6.).

¹⁴ The GDS made certain attempts to include the railroad statistics. Celal Aybar wrote to the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works that the GDS needed a tabulation machine –Tabulatrix- to accelerate compilation of statistics. He offered that rather than buying a statistics machine for the Administration of Railroads, the statistics of this office should be transferred to the GDS, and the new machine that would be added to the GDS could also do the foreign trade statistics. Despite all his arguments on the efficiency of his proposal, apparently this offer was not accepted (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.147..14.).

¹⁵ 1929, law no 1452, 13 statistics staff were added to the personnel.

¹⁶ In 1933, with law no 2203 that regulated centralization and created departments in the Directorate, the number of personnel increased to 62. In 1939, with law no 3656, the number of personnel increased to 76, three of whom were directors in the provincial organization.

¹⁷ In the 1941 report, the Director explained the increase with the example of education statistics: in 1933, 3548 tables were formed with 16 categories; whereas in 1941, 120,000 tables with 46 categories.

The two world wars, but especially the first one, affected the population discourses of the interwar period, placing both the reality and possibility of war at the center of politics and economics. In Turkey, the Second World War verified the concerns, and furthermore came with strict economic measures limiting public expenditure. Like the rest of the state offices, the GDS was influenced by cutbacks. In 1939 and 1943, the GDS presented draft bills on the organization of the directorate, suggested an increase in the number of employees due to the increasing workload of the GDS, and the necessity of employing full-time personnel instead of part-time. This way, the personnel would be more experienced and qualified, and also the GDS would continuously make use of this expertise. However, these proposals were not approved by the Ministry of Finance, since the required budget was not allocated. (30..10.0.0/26.148..11.) (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.148..16.)

Not only the number of personnel, but also the promotion system was problematic. Since the number of positions were limited, personnel were not promoted based on length of service and qualifications. This resulted in transfers to other state departments, and thus loss of qualified personnel. The employment of part-time personnel was a common temporary solution to the shortage of labor, an issue that arose especially during census periods, as we see in the table.

Table 1: Number of the GDS personnel over time

| Years | Salaried full time personnel | Wage part-time personnel | Total |
|---------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| 1933 | 61 | 14 | 75 |
| 1937 * | 62 | 34 | 96 |
| 1938** | 62 | 47 | 109 |
| 1939 | 76 | 59 | 135 |
| 1941*** | 73 | 38 | 111 |
| 1944 | 135 | 26 | 161 |
| 1950 | 204 | 96 | 300 |
| 1952 | 204 | 153 | 357 |
| 1954 | 204 | 192 | 396 |
| 1955 | 204 | 312 | 516 |
| 1956 | 204 | 420 | 624 |
| 1957 | 204 | 477 | 681 |

Source: 1923–1957 reports (BCA 30..1.0.0/95.598..3.) *1937 report, ** 1938 report, ***1941 report

Although the field of statistics was praised for its indispensability in the pronatalist cause, state incapacity and the further limits brought by WWII made lack of personnel an enduring problem for the GDS. State capacity was more influential for the organization of the central office, whereas in the centralization process, modernization could be observed.

1.2.1.2. Provincial Organization

After the inclusion of the various state offices of statistics to the General Directorate, efficiency and accuracy problems still persisted. The centralized system needed branches in the periphery to provide accurate data. However, the General Directorate did not have any provincial organization until 1937. Required data was provided by the provincial organization of the related ministry. Starting with the first report of 1930, the shortcomings of this system were repeatedly explained in annual reports: the data was prepared by those who did not have statistical training and who did not take statistics seriously, and was thus unreliable, and this method led to loss of labor and time. As a solution to this problem, the establishment of provincial bureaus of statistics –to compile statistics and do regional statistics– was suggested by the Director, emphasizing that this format existed in other countries. In the 1934 annual report, Celal Aybar said that one of the students sent abroad was studying the establishment of provincial bureaus of statistics, and that they would wait for him for the establishment of provincial organization, trying to show that the Directorate had a well-thought out plan for this project. In the 1936 report, the Director suggested the annexation of the statistics

offices of General Inspectorates¹⁸ to function as the provincial bureaus of the General Directorate. With these bureaus, statistics would be compiled on site by qualified personnel with special control, instead of the reluctant and unqualified personnel of different state institutions. With this offer, the General Directorate aimed to make most of the existing state resources, in the context of limited state capacity and a compelling need for provincial organization.

In 1937, with a decree, the statistics offices of the General Inspectorates were attached to the General Directorate of Statistics (Resmi Gazete 4.5.1937, no 3595). It is important to note that these four General Inspectorates were created to first establish, and then to deepen the authority of the state, in order to bring the central state closer to the regions that were difficult to penetrate; and that they all had positions for statistics personnel¹⁹. The contribution of data collection to the administration in making regions – that were not accessible by the state– knowable, and to the institutionalization of state power, was thus acknowledged. Whereas the General Directorate of Statistics had to repeatedly complain about lack of provincial offices or their inefficient location of for years, the General Inspectorates were established with statistics personnel right away. Limited resources necessitated a ranking of tasks, and the realized alternatives –as opposed to the delayed ones– indicate what the priorities of the ruling elite were.

The 1937 report, which was presented to the Prime Ministry in early March in 1938, stated that the General Directorate had four branches attached to the General Inspectorates (BCA 30..10.0.0/24.138..8.). The statistics personnel of the General Inspectorates stayed in their places, and continued to serve the General Inspectorates, but were officially included in the General Directorate staff. These branches collected the data deemed necessary by the General Inspectorates, and prepared the data gathered from the provinces for the Directorate.

After this, the reports appreciated the inclusion of these offices to the GDS, since they provided reliable data from the periphery. However, the Inspectorates were founded for “administrative purposes”, writes the reports, namely for assimilation and strict control, and that their centers were located in Diyarbakır, Edirne, Erzurum and Elazığ.

¹⁸ The establishment of the General Inspectorates (*Umumi Müfettişlikler*) was among the efforts to strengthen the centralization of the state, by dividing the country into large regions which would be governed by appointed governors, who would be the highest authority in that region, and an extension of the central authority. The first one was founded in 1927 in south-east Anatolia, the second one in 1934 in Thrace, the third in 1935 in northeast Anatolia, and the fourth in 1936 in the Dersim region. These were regional administrative units “whose authority prevailed over all civilian, military, and judicial institutions under their domain” (Çağaptay, 2006: 47). External threat and internal assimilation were the main motives.

¹⁹ Law no 2865 defined the organization of the first, third and fourth General Inspectorates (Resmi Gazete, 24.12.1935, no 5871). Accordingly, the First and Third General Inspectorates each had a statistics director and civil servants. The organization of the Second General Inspectorate was defined by the law no 2883, and a position for director of statistics was assigned to the Inspectorate (Resmi Gazete, 2.1.1936 no5891). In 1947, Ratip Yüceuluğ reported on the statistics personnel of the Inspectorates: each Inspectorate had one director, one chief, three civil servants and a servant (Yüceuluğ, 1947: 20)

These locations were appropriate for the security and control concerns of the state, but not for the data collection purposes of the GDS. The Directorate repeatedly suggested that regional bureaus would better be located in accordance with the economic regional divisions of the country, and thus should be transferred to İstanbul, Western Anatolia, Seyhan, and the Black Sea Region, to make this provincial organization much more efficient²⁰. However, most probably both for financial reasons and to keep the statistics bureaus in the Inspectorates, the state could not and did not establish the desired bureaus, and the Directorate made use of the statistical personnel of the Inspectorates. The Inspectorates were abolished in 1952 and the personnel were sent to the center. The GDS did not have a provincial organization until 1962, law no 53 (DİE, 1976: 177). The problem of provincial administration and the solution formulated for it shows how state priorities and administrative capacity were a main factor in shaping the implementation of pronatalism in Turkey. The GDS was a prime institution of pronatalism, and lack of resources further contributed to its inability to collect data from the provinces.

1.2.1.3. The Departments and Population Statistics

In 1933, with law no 2203, specific departments were founded in the GDS to compile statistics in particular fields, like education, justice, industry, etc. The annual reports praised the success of certain departments and compared them to their European counterparts. Among the departments, finance, education, justice, industry, and agriculture²¹ functioned properly. The department of foreign trade is a specific case: with mechanization, the monthly and annual reports could be finished very fast, and the Directorate repeatedly mentioned that the Foreign Trade Department functioned better than all Balkan and some European countries. Another department the reports mention proudly was the Department of Classification, which “became a factory of statistics” (1934 report), and “its performance came closer to its counterparts abroad” (1933 report). Statistics in various fields, and census classification, was done more regularly and faster than in other countries.

The annual reports of the Directorate also focused on the process and problems of this specialization effort. The problems faced by the population statistics department show how state capacity, both in terms of resources and also in terms of the ability to ‘access’ society, had shaped interwar pronatalism in Turkey. The field of population statistics barely improved until the 1950s, and as described in the 1936 report: “we are in total darkness regarding the population’s increase, strengths and weaknesses”. In this

²⁰ After the Law no 53 (1962), five regional directorates were founded: four in 1964 in İstanbul, Adana, İzmir, Samsun; and one in 1965 in Antalya. Others followed in Ordu, Bursa, and Eskişehir in the late 1960s (DİE, 1976: 184).

²¹ Until 1950, the GDS could not conduct a census of agriculture after the trial one in 1927. Except for the tobacco statistics from the agriculture census of the Directorate, agricultural statistics relied on the estimates of the agriculture civil servants, who did not have the opportunity to inspect their areas of responsibility even once a year. Either increasing the number of agriculture civil servants or the establishment of Regional Bureaus under the Directorate was necessary according to the 1933 report.

field, divorce statistics were the least problematic since divorce took place in courts and automatically became registered. Mortality numbers got relatively better when burial permits (*defin ruhsatiyesi*) were issued in certain places (the 1933 report writes of 33 centers; the 1948 report, of 25 centers). For marriages, the ones solemnized by municipalities were registered, but this constituted a small portion; marriages in the villages were not registered. And finally, birth statistics remained unknown until the surveys conducted in 1960s by other scientific institutes. “Births in Turkey are registered for legal purposes, but the registration information is not cumulated for national statistical purposes and published” (Shorter and Macura, 1982: 13).

The reports point to two reasons for the poorness of population statistics: population offices and established customs. Population offices attached to the Ministry of the Interior were responsible for the registration of these life events, but they did not function well. Secondly, people did not register their births, deaths and marriages, and the new Republic could not change this as easily as it expected. The frequency with which the issue was discussed highlights the importance of numbers on mortality and fertility. The 1942 report stated that “Birth and mortality statistics are crucial for state policies since they indicate the status of ‘*population wealth*’, these numbers show where the problems and improvements are, and the possible explanations for these cases. All other statistics become more meaningful together with population statistics; these are the backbone of all statistics in every country”. The report refers to Camille Jacquart’s suggestion in his letter of a nation-wide system of registration of births²² (1942 report, BCA 30..10.0.0/26.148..15.). These numbers were necessary both for an effective population policy, and also for health, administrative, economic, and financial policies.

The reports mention certain efforts for solution. Similar to the solution for provincial organization, the GDS formulated strategies to utilize the personnel of other state institutions like the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. The GDS tried to collect data from nurses, but that did not work out. The Directorate contributed to the preparation of a draft bill by the Ministry of the Interior on population organization, and the proposal that mobile personnel to register the population in villages. In another report the Directorate considered cooperation with the Ministry of Education, so that teachers in villages would send data, and the GDS could have rough numbers²³.

²² As we understand from the letter, the project was forming an “organization of civil status” (*halimedenî teşkilatı*): Unless we have this organization, wrote Jacquart, accurate records of births and deaths would not be possible. The initial step of the project was to organize in cities, and the later step was the appointment of civil status personnel (*halimedenî memurları*) to districts where they would be responsible for putting the registration books in order, and making new registrations in a systematic way. Jacquart deemed this project very significant to determine whether the population is increasing, and the number of births, deaths and life conditions of people (BCA 30..10.0.0/24.135..5.).

²³ This was suggested in the 1943 report. As we learn from the conference paper summary of Celal Aybar, in 1945-46, with the order of President İsmet İnönü, a survey of births and deaths was conducted in eight thousand villages by village teachers (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.148..24.).

Correspondences in the archive indicate another effort by the GDS. The Director of the Population Office in Erzurum (Fevzi Bey) made the following suggestion to the Governor of Erzurum: population personnel in the districts (*nahiye*) could spend 15 days of the month visiting the villages and registering marriages there, because after the adoption of the Latin alphabet (1929), *muhtars* in villages –who were responsible for this registration- could not fulfill their duties since they were not literate in the Latin alphabet. The Governor conveyed this suggestion both to the Ministry of the Interior and to the GDS. The GDS wrote letters to the Ministry of the Interior and Prime Ministry, suggesting that this procedure should not be limited to Erzurum, but population personnel should, at least once in three months, visit the villages and register life events, and in this way the population organization would ‘reach’ people. The Ministry of Interior found the proposed budget of 60,000 liras too much, the GDS then suggested an amount of 15-20,000 liras to be allocated, so they could have a rough idea of the population events of the country (BCA 30..10.0.0/24.135..10.; BCA 30..10.0.0/24.135..11.), However, this also remained as an unrealized suggestion.

Limited state capacity -in the form of lack of educated personnel, the lack of budget, and the incapacity of other state institutions to provide data- was the main problem. The major pattern in relations with the West, namely taking the West as the model and making an effort to integrate into the international community, appeared as a feasible and convenient solution.

1.2.1.4 The GDS and the West

Interwar Turkish pronatalism was a part of both the general pronatalist discourse of Europe and Turkish modernization, embodying the basic patterns of Turkey’s relation to the West. The relations between the GDS and the West rested on taking the West as the model, and also on Turkey’s efforts of integration into the international community as an equal and respected partner. Inviting foreign experts and sending trainees abroad aimed at a more effective and scientific functioning of the Directorate. Furthermore, these relations increased contact with, and approval from, the West added to the status and credibility of the GDS. In this section, I will explain the relations with the West under three subtitles: foreign experts, training in the West, and integration into the international community of statistics.

Foreign experts:

In the early Republican period, foreign experts played a crucial role in filling the lack of technical expertise, and in the import of Western knowledge and experience. However, in the case of statistics, foreign experts and especially Camille Jacquart had a *foundational* role. He was a Belgian statistician and a member of the International Statistical Institute, and was invited to Turkey to found a modern statistical office. The GDS was founded immediately after his arrival, and then, he started the preparations for the first population census of the Republic. Trial censuses were conducted in several cities and Jacquart inspected the procedures on site, and toured the country to investigate the

problems of the statistical organization. This technical investigation was not the only aspect of his census preparations. He deemed propaganda essential for the successful conduct of the census: he gave talks, and wrote in journals and popular magazines to explain the indispensability of conducting censuses to know and manage the population as “national wealth”. He wrote reports and official letters to Prime Minister İnönü to explain the problems, and suggested solutions²⁴. His suggestions on centralization, the necessity of provincial bureaus, and training of personnel both in courses organized by the GDS and abroad, were either executed or repeatedly discussed by the directors of the GDS as measures to be taken. He served as the general director of the GDS until 1929. He died in 1931: a Turkish diplomatic deputy in Brussels attended Jacquart’s funeral (BCA 30..10.0.0/239.614..6.), and an official letter of condolence was sent to the Belgian state (BCA 30..10.0.0/239.614..7.) appreciating his contributions.

After Camille Jacquart returned, another foreign expert was sought. The Turkish diplomatic deputy in The Hague contacted the International Statistical Institute on this issue, and the director of the Institute, Henry W. Methorst, tried to find another expert for the GDS (BCA 30..10.0.0/201.375..5.).

Apart from Jacquart, the GDS employed several foreign experts for various positions. In 1928, a contract was signed with an electrical engineer to set up and run calculating machines for processing the data from the 1927 census (BCA 30..18.1.1/29.34..9). In 1934 another expert, Bruschwiler– the director of the Swiss Federal Statistics Bureau, was brought for the census of the following year (BCA 30..18.1.2/49.72..15.) (BCA 30..18.1.2/57.61..1.). In 1949 a statistics expert from the Ministry of Agriculture in the U.S. came for the preparation of the agriculture census of the following year (BCA 30..18.1.2/120.69..10.). The same year another expert from India came to the GDS (BCA 30..18.1.2/120.55..4.).

Training:

As the lack of qualified personnel in the face of the increasing workload of the Directorate was a pressing issue, the Directorate developed additional strategies, such as opening courses within its organization, and sending university graduates to the West for specialized statistical education. The statistics courses were introductory level courses for the personnel employed in the General Directorate. In the 1933 report, it was stated that they had opened two courses, one in 1930 and the other in 1931, and almost 200 civil servants attended (BCA 30.10.0.0/28.160.9).

²⁴ The 13.12.1926 report on possible problems and preparing people for the census via propaganda (BCA 30..10.0.0/25.145..5.), 06.03.1927 report on trial census in Mersin and Jacquart’s visits (BCA 30..10.0.0/25.145..10.), on Tekirdağ, Ödemiş and İzmir trial censuses (BCA 30..10.0.0/25.145..17.), 07.07.1927 report on his visit to eastern provinces, how to register nomadic tribes, and the necessity and methods of census propaganda (BCA 30..10.0.0/25.145..20.), and 18.10.1927 report on the current status of the organization and future plans (BCA 30..10.0.0/24.134..9.).

According to the 1937 report, the GDS sent 10 students to Rome, Paris and New York for statistics education²⁵. The 1943 report stated that four of them were employed, one was sent to the Ministry of Trade, two would return from the US soon, one of them paid the education costs and resigned, and education of two was interrupted by the war. In 1938, another personnel, funded by the Rockefeller Institute, was sent to Berlin and Stockholm for 6 months to investigate different methods for the standardization of statistical systems in different countries (BCA 30..18.1.2/82.1..12).

International Relations:

The relations of the GDS with foreign statistics offices and the international community of statistics were very similar to the overall approach of the early Republic towards the West. The GDS took the Western statistics offices as its model, and wanted to learn from their experiences; it aimed to be integrated into the international community of statisticians, exchanged publications, and expressed pride when these efforts were acknowledged by foreign institutions.

Sending personnel to the West to investigate the functioning of offices was a very common practice. In 1926, the General Director of Population, Abdülmüttalib Bey, was sent to Europe to examine the organization of statistics and population affairs (BCA 30..18.1.1/19.41..15.). The Analysis Series (Tetkikler Serisi) of the GDS, also includes a subseries on the organization and functioning of statistics bureaus in other countries.

In the annual reports, being acknowledged by foreign institutions, sending data to the League of Nations and to other foreign institutions, and being recognized as the sole provider of data on Turkey were proudly mentioned. The GDS's efforts of integration into the international community proceeded at many levels. In 1933, Celal Aybar, the general director of the GDS, was selected as a member of the International Statistical Institute²⁶. Aybar notified İnönü of his membership, saying that he had the honor to be the first member to the Institute from Turkey (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.147..13.). In 1936, for international comparisons, the GDS started using Brussels classification system in foreign trade statistics. In 1950, Turkey also participated in the worldwide census of agriculture²⁷.

In 1929, the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society published a short article on the development of statistics and statistics organization in Turkey, celebrating the Turkish state's recognition of the importance of statistics for the modern state. The article spoke

²⁵ According to an official letter from the GDS to the prime ministry, Şefik İnan and Şevket Kaya, two graduates from the Statistics Institute at Sorbonne University, would be in training for 6 months at the statistics offices in France (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.148..8.).

²⁶ Nixon explains the strict process of membership: The Institute had 150 members until 1901, when it was increased to 200. "The limitation of membership was still jealously guarded" until 1934, says Nixon, which makes Aybar's membership even more valuable (Nixon, 1960: 19).

²⁷ In 1947, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization sent Valantino Dore, the head of its Statistics department, to Turkey for inspection and preparations (BCA 30..10.0.0/25.142..19.).

of the invitation of Camille Jacquart, and the preparations and the conduct of the first census of the Republic in 1927. The GDS sent a translation of this article to the Prime Ministry, showing the international appreciation of the Directorate's success (BCA 30..10.0.0/24.135.3.). In 1937, a journal in Italy mentioned the GDS as "an institution approaching perfection each and every day", and praised its publication "Annuaire Statistique de Turquie", suggesting it to those who wanted to know about the economic development, population, and climate of Turkey. The GDS again translated the paragraph, and sent it to the Prime Ministry (BCA 30..10.0.0/24.137..16.). As seen from the immediate notification of these praises to the prime ministry, international recognition was a powerful source of support and legitimacy for the GDS.

Publications were exchanged with various statistics offices. A 1936 official document listed the countries where statistical yearbooks were sent: Czechoslovakia, Ireland, Italy, Holland, the US, Argentina, Canada, and Greece (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.148..5.)²⁸. Relations and publication exchange were apparently interrupted by WWII. In 1946, the GDS sent letters to foreign institutions to resume relations²⁹.

Participation in international congresses was another scientific activity, which also contributed to the Directorate's international status. The GDS attended almost all meetings of the International Statistical Institute after 1927³⁰. In 1927, the GDS attended the 17th World Statistics Congress in Cairo with a committee led by the Turkish ambassador to Egypt. Jacquart made a presentation on the 1927 census and was awarded by the King of Egypt (BCA 30..18.1.2/1.7..4.). All these events were underlined with praise in the official documents. In August 1929, Selim Sabit attended the 18th World Statistics Conference in Warsaw. Sabit wrote a report on the congress addressed to the Prime Ministry, stating that the international congresses were important both in terms of scientific improvement³¹ and international status. Selim Sabit noted that one of the reasons he attended the congress was to make the Turkish statistical achievements, the revolution, and national existence known to the statistical community of the world (BCA 30..10.0.0/24.135.4.). Celal Aybar attended the 20th meeting in Madrid in 1931 (BCA

²⁸ The Ministry of Trade in Paris, Statistics office in Palestine, Stockholm Statistics office, Population Committee in Rome, and Statistics Office in Argentine were other offices where the GDS sent yearbooks.

²⁹ The GDS wrote letters to the London Telegram Limited Company, Paris Chamber of Commerce, and Columbia University in New York, about sending the GDS publications and statistical yearbooks. In the letter to the Alliance nationale contre la dépopulation (National alliance against depopulation) in Paris, the GDS thanked the Alliance for their invitation to a meeting about depopulation, but declined the invitation "for certain reasons". The GDS wrote to the General Directorate of Statistics in France, Trade Council of the French Embassy, and Statistics Office of Yugoslavia, that they hoped to continue the good relations and publication exchange between the institutes prior to the War.

³⁰ In the archives, I could not find any documents regarding the GDS attendance to two congresses of the ISI in the interwar period: the 19th meeting in 1930 in Tokyo, and the 22nd meeting in 1934 in London.

³¹ The congress formed three commissions: demography and methods, economic statistics, and social statistics. Each prepared reports on standards of compiling statistics on certain issues in their field. Thus, the attendance also meant integration into the scientific community.

30..18.1.2/21.49..4.), the 21st meeting in 1933 in Mexico City (BCA 30..18.1.2/37.44..12.), and the 23rd meeting in 1936 in Athens where he presented a paper on the 1935 census and mechanized classification system³². Later, he examined the Statistical Office of Greece, its organization and working principles (BCA 30..10.0.0/229.541..18). After the 24th World Statistics Conference in Prague in 1938, which Celal Aybar also attended (BCA 30..18.1.2/84.72..1.), the meetings ceased until the end of WWII. In 1947, Celal Aybar was invited to the 25th World Statistics Conference to present on international classification of data, and in his report to the prime ministry he stated that two papers were being prepared to be presented, one on the censuses in Turkey and the other on the survey of births and deaths through sampling method. The one on the censuses would focus on the methods used that were different from the European censuses due to the specific conditions in Turkey, and the positive results of these methods. The second paper would be on the survey conducted in 8 thousand villages in 1945–46 by teachers working in villages (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.148..24.).

Apart from these, the GDS personnel attended the International Conference on Economic Statistics, Geneva, 1928³³; International Congress on Population in 1937³⁴; and 7th International Labor Statistics Conference³⁵. In 1936, Selim Sabit, assistant director, was sent to Rome for a statisticians' meeting held to determine the basic principles of the World Congress on the Agricultural Census to be gathered in 1940 (BCA 30..18.1.2/68.76..13.). In 1937, the GDS wanted to send Sabit Aykut to the Labor Statistics Conference of the International Labor Organization, since the GDS would compile labor statistics and these should match those of the international project. But the travel fund was not granted (BCA 30..10.0.0/26.148..6.). In 1947 Şefik İnan, one of department chiefs in the GDS, attended the meeting of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council in New York, and presented a report on the meeting to the Prime Ministry (BCA 30..10.0.0/25.142..20.)³⁶.

³² In 1937, the GDS published the translation of this paper in the Analysis Series (Tetkikler Serisi, no:54).

³³ Celal Aybar attended (BCA 30..18.1.1/30.59..17.).

³⁴ Celal Aybar attended (BCA 30..18.1.2/77.63..1.).

³⁵ In 1949, Şefik Bilkur attended (BCA 30..18.1.2/120.60..16.) Şefik Bilkur became the general director of the GDS after Celal Aybar, and served in this position from 1947 to 1954. He studied at the School of Trade and Accounting (*Ulumi Aliye-i Ticariye Sanayi ve Muhasebe Şubesi*), the High Trade School in Paris, and the Academy of Finance. He did the national income calculations which were published in the Analysis Series. Before coming to the GDS, he was the director of the Conjuncture Service, which did the national income calculations (DİE 1976, 37, 59).

³⁶ In 1948 and 1949, Şefik Bilkur, who was appointed as the general director to the GDS in 1947 (BCA 30..11.1.0/195.31..9.), represented Turkey in the meetings of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council in New York (BCA 30..18.1.2/115.98..8.), and in Geneva (BCA 30..18.1.2/119.23..19.). In 1950 after attending the meeting in New York, he visited the GDS personnel in Washington, who were being trained for agriculture, industrial and population censuses to be conducted in 1950 (BCA 30..18.1.2/122.31..2.).

For the few decades following its foundation, the GDS had to deal with major problems. Centralization, lack of resources, and lack of efficient provincial organization were fixed problems of the interwar era. Both the GDS and other state authorities wanted the GDS to be the sole authority on the production, analysis, and control of numbers in the country. Although this demand was also supported by the political elite, the gathering of all statistics in the center took a long time. Besides centralization, the creation of a form of a provincial organization that would be able to provide reliable data to the center was another problem the GDS had to deal with. It tried to use the available resources: the statistics personnel of the General Inspectorates. But since the latter was created for a cruder functioning of the relation between power and knowledge, it did not quite fit the requirements of the GDS. Ironically, the central institution of interwar pronatalism could not obtain basic population data: the number of births. During the interwar era, the GDS had to struggle with problems deriving from state capacity to proceed on its path of pragmatic and ideal/ideological modernization.

Conclusion

The focus of this article was the history of the GDS during the early Republican era. The context that molded and limited Turkish pronatalist biopolitics in general also shaped the GDS. The GDS was a vital institution of interwar pronatalism in Turkey, since data showing the trends and problems of the population was an indispensable aspect of state intervention in, and regulation of the population. This intervention was the distinctive aspect of interwar pronatalism.

The Directorate was a product of modernization in Turkey. The Western official bureaus of statistics were taken as a model, and centralization and standardization became the main ideals of the GDS. The Directorate tried to become part of the international community of statistics, and each effort contributed to its legitimacy. However, as we saw, every aspect of its institutionalization faced problems of state capacity, which was also a limiting factor for Turkish pronatalism in general.

Centralization –one of the primary aims of the Directorate–, aimed at efficient use of resources, creation of useful data, and easier control of statistics. The responsibilities of the central organization increased in the face of limited budget and lack of qualified personnel, and complete centralization could not be achieved for a long time. Provincial organization was a consistent problem until 1960s. An attempt was made to solve this problem through the incorporation of the statistical offices of the General Inspectorates, which proved to be not as efficient due to the location of the Inspectorates. This problem and its solution constituted another example of how state incapacity affected the functioning of the GDS, and hence pronatalism.

The pronatalist Republic aimed to increase population, and the politicians and educated elite emphasized this at every opportunity. This article brings a dichotomy to the foreground: despite the emphasis on the importance of population data, birth rates

remained unknown during the interwar period. So much hope was invested in the GDS for pronatalism, yet the weakest aspect of the Directorate was population statistics. Due to problems of population registration, the state and the GDS were unable to figure out how many babies were born each year. These show us how limited state capacity and taking the West as a model were the main factors shaping the GDS during interwar period.

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