

## Demographic integration through intermarriage of Turks and Kurds in Turkey

Due to deep-rooted historical and political reasons, ethnicity in Turkey has largely remained a sensitive subject since the 1960s, not discussed until recently even in academic circles. The last time that national data on ethnicity was collected and published was in 1965, in the Population Census, which included questions on mother tongue. Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in ethnicity studies, in a more relaxed and less censored atmosphere. However, most studies have been speculative and politically driven in nature, especially in terms of quantifying the sizes of ethnic groups and assessing their demographic behaviour patterns. Recognising the potential explanatory power of data on ethnicity on demographic processes, a number of questions on mother tongue and spoken languages were included in the individual questionnaires of the nationwide Turkey Demographic and Health Surveys (TDHSs) conducted in 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008. Data from these four surveys is employed for this study in order to test whether the commonly held belief that Turks and Kurds are like a “hand in glove” is true. In order to realize this test, we examine whether a process of demographic integration of Turks and Kurds is under way in Turkey through intermarriage. Preliminary results indicate that not only are these two groups different in many respects, but also tend not to converge through inter-marriage. Both groups prefer endogamy to a large extent.

**Table 1. Percent Distribution of Language/Ethnic Groups in Turkey**

Language/ Ethnic Group	1935 <sup>1</sup>	1965 <sup>2</sup>	1990 <sup>3</sup>	1992 <sup>4</sup>	1993 <sup>5</sup>	1998 <sup>6</sup>	2003 <sup>7</sup>	2008 <sup>7</sup>
Turks	89.2	90.1	-	85.8	82.7	83.2	82.6	80.0
Kurds	9.2	7.6	12.6	12.4	13.0	14.4	14.5	17.2
Arabs	1.0	1.2	-	1.4	1.7	1.9	1.9	2.1
Other	0.6	1.1	-	0.4	2.6	0.5	1.0	0.7

<sup>1</sup> 1935 Population Census ; <sup>2</sup> 1965 Population Census ; <sup>3</sup> Mutlu, 1995; <sup>4</sup> Ozsoy, Koc and Toros, 1992; <sup>5</sup> Koc and Hancioglu, 1999; <sup>6</sup> Koc, Hancioglu and Cavlin, 2000; <sup>7</sup> Authors' calculations using the data from TDHS-2003 and TDHS-2008.

**Table 2. Percent Distribution of Language/Ethnic Groups by Region**

Language/ Ethnic Groups	Regions					Total	Number of cases
	West	South	Central	North	East		
Turks	43.6	11.7	27.7	8.6	8.3	100.0	8,588
Kurds	26.1	10.7	3.2	0.1	60.0	100.0	1,849
Arabs	2.2	61.5	1.1	0.0	35.3	100.0	224
Other	75.6	1.4	9.1	8.6	5.3	100.0	774
<b>Total</b>	<b>39.9</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10,738</b>

Source: Authors' calculations using the data from TDHS-2008.

**Table 3. Percentages and Populations of the Kurds, by Region**

Regions	1965 <sup>1</sup>		2008 <sup>2</sup>	
	Percent	Population	Percent	Population
West	0.9	88,420	11.2	3,135,925
South	5.0	190,220	14.7	1,300,730
Central	4.1	262,640	2.4	359,785
North	0.5	28,720	0.2	10,408
East	47.6	2,562,380	58.2	7,494,093
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>3,132,390</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>12,300,941</b>

<sup>1</sup> Figures from the 1965 Census were corrected by Mutlu (Mutlu, 1995)

<sup>2</sup> Authors' calculations using the data from TDHS-2008 and population size of Turkey in 2008.

**Table 4. Age Specific Fertility Rates (ASFR) and Total Fertility Rates<sup>1</sup> (TFR) by Language/Ethnic Groups**

Age Groups	Turkey			East	
	Turks	Kurds	Total	Turks	Kurds
15-19	0,0325	0,0351	0,0349	0,0319	0,0465
20-24	0,1147	0,1674	0,1255	0,1457	0,1803
25-29	0,1222	0,1793	0,1328	0,1272	0,1928
30-34	0,0793	0,1558	0,0908	0,0975	0,1767
35-39	0,0299	0,0613	0,0358	0,0538	0,0816
40-44	0,0062	0,0391	0,0099	0,0125	0,0481
45-49	0,0001	0,0110	0,0014	0,0028	0,0186
TFR (TDHS-2008)	1.92	3.25	2.16	2.36	3.72
TFR (TDHS-1993)	2.25	4.57	2.74	2.84	5.27

Source: Authors' calculations using the data from TDHS-1993 and TDHS-2003.

<sup>1</sup> Rates are for 3 years preceding the TDHS-1993 and TDHS-2008.

**Table 5. Childhood Mortality by Language/Ethnic Groups, National Average and the East**

Language/ Ethnic group		Infant	Under-5
<b>TDHS-2008</b>			
Turkey	Total <sup>1</sup>	17	24
	Turks	14	19
	Kurds	27	38
East	Total <sup>1</sup>	25	34
	Turks	20	21
	Kurds	26	37
<b>TDHS-1993</b>			
Turkey	Total <sup>1</sup>	53	61
	Turks	46	54
	Kurds	74	84
East	Total <sup>1</sup>	60	70
	Turks	50	61
	Kurds	68	78

Source: Authors' calculations using the data from TDHS-1993 and TDHS-2008.

<sup>1</sup> "Total" rows include mortality rates of children of mothers of other language/ethnic groups.

**Table 6. Percentage Distribution of Women by Language/Ethnic Group of Husband, by Age Groups**

Age groups	Percentage of Turkish Women Married to:			Percentage of Kurdish Women Married to:		
	A Turkish husband	A Kurdish husband	A husband of another ethnic group	A Kurdish husband	A Turkish husband	A husband of another ethnic group
15-19	98.7	1.5	0.8	88.9	6.7	4.4
20-24	96.9	2.3	0.8	92.6	6.1	1.2
25-29	96.7	2.7	0.6	92.7	6.8	0.5
30-34	98.2	1.5	0.4	95.9	3.6	0.5
35-39	97.6	1.6	0.7	93.3	5.2	1.5
40-44	96.6	2.3	1.1	94.4	5.6	0.0
45-49	97.9	1.1	0.9	92.5	6.5	1.0
Total (TDHS-2008)	97.4	1.9	0.7	93.4	5.7	0.9
Total (TDHS-1993)	96.8	1.4	1.8	90.2	8.3	1.5

Source: Authors' calculations using the data from TDHS-2008.