

Zhaniya Karmenova: Differentiation of marital and reproductive behavior in East Kazakhstan

Demographic indicators related to fertility and nuptiality levels have recently shown an increase in Kazakhstan. This surprising trend deserves though some more profound investigation. The master thesis of Zhaniya Karmenova has brought some clarifications to this unexpected phenomenon focusing on the situation in East Kazakhstan and the city of Ust Kamenogorsk. Her master thesis consists of two main parts: the first gives us the information about selected demographic and socioeconomic conditions in Kazakhstan, East Kazakhstan and Ust Kamenogorsk. The second part presents the results of the survey conducted by the author in the city Ust Kamenogorsk.

The master thesis comprises 109 pages. It is divided into three big chapters: Theoretical framework, General description of demographic trends in the East Kazakhstan region, and General description of the survey. It includes also an introduction, conclusion, and other relevant parts. The structure is logically designed. The author starts with the overview of the literature, definition and types of marriages, fertility issues and data sources completed by a description of methods used in the analytical part. The third chapter represents the most valuable part (also it has been time consuming) because the results are based on her own survey. In this part the author examines family and marriage values of women depending on demographic characteristics such as age, nationality, education, duration of city residence and analyzes the impact of external factors (parents opinion, religion affiliation, and government interventions) on reproductive and marital behavior of young women.

The overview of the literature is satisfactorily rich and shows the points of view not only of “western” scientists but as well as former Soviet Union researchers. The first analytical part provides to a reader a clear portrait of the recent and current conditions based on GDP, income, employment structure, consumer expenditure, household types, school and preschool enrollment, population structure and population trends. Those figures are mostly specified for Kazakhstan, East Kazakhstan and Ust Kamenogorsk, eventually for all regions. The survey results despite the limited sample size but opposing behavior of Kazakhs and Russians and those living from birth in Ust Kamenogorsk against those moving in before or after the age of 10. The sub-chapter dealing with value orientation and attitudes shows the differences between the two major ethnicity but also the shift over time.

To conclude, the author, Zhaniya Karmenova, proved by this master thesis the ability to delimit the topic, to investigate it with appropriate methods, and more particularly to comment the results with an understanding of the essence. It is worth saying that thanks to the survey she enriched the conventional measures with new perspectives. Therefore, I recommend the thesis to be submitted.

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