The opponent’s review on the diploma thesis of Ayaulym Sagynbayeva on „The role of migration in demographic development in the East Kazakhstan region“

The diploma thesis of Ayaulym Sagynbayeva „The role of migration in demographic development in the East Kazakhstan region“ consists of 113 pages of text and 20 pages of appendices. The text is organized in ten numerated chapters including the introduction and conclusions. It is completed by the lists of tables, figures and schemes, references and the above mentioned appendices.

The diploma thesis is thematically focused on the theme of migration and its role in population development in the East Kazakhstan region, which belongs among the regions of Kazakhstan with population development strongly affected by migration during past two decades. The work is divided into two basic parts. The first part, which could be understood as a technical one, contents problem definition, specification of research objectives, structure of the work and basic terminology as well as an attempt to set wider conceptual or theoretical frameworks necessary for successful solution of the diploma thesis tasks. In the following two chapters (the fifth and sixth ones) data availability is discussed and methodological foundations of the study are presented. The second part, the core of diploma thesis comprises chapters 7, 8 and 9. In the first of them the East Kazakhstan region itself is introduces in wider historical and geographical context and the territorial division of the region for purpose of this diploma thesis is outlined. The 8th chapter provides an overview of population development of the region as a whole, the sets of its urban and rural settlements and of the individual administrative districts of the region. Presented overview creates a background for evaluation of the migration role in population developments on all three presented levels of territorial division/classification in the 9th chapter. This part of the diploma thesis covers the author’s major findings being summarized in the following chapter devoted to the study conclusions.

The aim of the work and the related research questions are clearly set by the author in the introductory part. The proposed and followed structure of the work has its firm logical structure and is enough compact. In comparison with the previous submitted version of the diploma thesis I can state that the principal defects found in the text were despatched and English language of the author underwent relatively successful redaction. In spite of it, the text is not enough understandable in several places. Partially it is a problem of the language; partially it is related to incorrect interpretation of facts or author’s way of thinking. The overview of some problematic formulations is provided in the following notes. Unfortunately, a weaker top view of the author and her reduced ability to hierarchize the questions and issues addressed by the diploma thesis are still reflected in several parts of the text. In some places, especially in the subchapter 4.1.1 specifying population development and in the chapter 8 when describing population size and sex and age structure development, the author is paying too detailed attention to elementary or trivial problems ablating the room for more important themes.

My principal specific remarks concerning the imperfections are as they follow:

p. 13 – … author uses sophisticated methods of cluster analysis including statistical software SPSS (SSW SPSS is not a method)

p. 16 – … In this paper … (Diploma thesis is not a paper. – also p. 28)

p. 19 – … Ravenstein, 1885 … (Did you ever keep this book in your hands? If not, you should quote the source of this quotation.; p. 25 – He was not English but German geographer)

p. 21 – … Chernysh… (missing year of publication)
p. 23 – … first person who was interested in these changes was the American demographer Warren
Thompson in 1929 (Mostert et al., 1999:14)… (The quoted work of Mostert et al. was published
in the year 1998 and on the page 14 I did not find such a statement.)

p. 29 – the author did not understand what it is and what does it mean “replacement migration”

p. 37 – needles description of sex and age pyramid

p.39 – classification of the districts by the prevailing type of settlement is unclear – how cities by name
can have partially rural population?!

p. 40 and following – unclear type of stock numbers (mid-year or other?!!)

p. 46 – why one graph and some other on the following pages are black and white when others are in
colours?”

p. 49 – tab. 4, 2008: males + females = 1,424.5 thousand; in other tables it is equal 1,417.4 thousand

p. 50 – … keeping in mind that people in older ages migrate with very low intensity, then probably
the gap in proportion of males and females in older ages was the reason of males’ mortality… (What
is a meaning or idea behind this statement?)

p. 52 – incorrectly constructed both age pyramids

p. 56 – the split table 7 (and several following ones) – please what does the expression “(and also repeat
table’s header)” mean?

p. 62 – the table highly probably comprises inconsistent numbers

p. 67 – … in addition, maternity and child benefit can solve financial problems of the family and
women, since the child benefit rises till 250 dollars (http://mirtv.ru/content/view/21826/62/)
…it is not true, this allowance is not a child benefit but a birth (and pregnancy) grant, i.e. lump-
sum benefit

p. 69 – … Probably, females want to have healthy posterity… (why probably?)

p. 72 – … from this point of view infant mortality is the most important problem in healthcare system in
the East Kazakhstan region as well as in Kazakhstan … (adults mortality especially of men is
much bigger issue in Kazakhstan nowadays)

In sum, regardless my critical remarks listed above, I am convinced that the thesis of Ayaulym Sagynbayeva
„The role of migration in demographic development in the East Kazakhstan region‖ meets the basic
requirements set for the diploma theses from Demography submitted at the Faculty of Science, Charles
University in Prague and therefore I recommend to the Commission for MA state exams to accept this work
for a defense.

Prague, 16 June 2010

RNDr. Boris Burcin, PhD.
opponent