Opponent’s assessment of the diploma thesis „Mortality trends and patterns in the Caspian region of the Republic of Kazakhstan“ by Fariza Tolesh

The thesis of Fariza Tolesh with the title „Population distribution and interregional migration in Kazakhstan“ consists of 67 numbered pages and has no appendixes. Its text is organized into four core, further divided chapters plus introduction, conclusion, lists of abbreviations, figures and maps, tables and the references.

The submitted work is thematically focused on a very attractive theme of population distribution in Kazakhstan and the role of a one component of overall migration process in its formation. Selected topic is original and provides to the author’s findings wide potential applicability, especially in the field of regional development studies and administration. The presented analyses covers the period 1999-2008 which represents the actual inter-census period and allows to trace the processes in question during the entire period of current economic reconstruction of the country. The structure of the thesis is rigorously logical and the work looks very compact by its contents.

Linking migration and territorial population structures to the economic (and also demographic) processes is based on properly selected theoretical framework consisting of the neo-classical economic theory, network theory and especially on human capital theory (Chapter 2). The practice of data collection and sources of data on migration are discussed in detail, together with brief but interesting discussion of approaches to and the basic tools for their analysis (Chapter 3).

The core chapters of the work submitted (Chapter 4 and 5) starts with an overview of relevant historical facts and discussion of territorial-administrative division of the country and continues with brief but pregnant characteristics of the regional system regarding current demographic and economic situation of its particular parts. The 5th Chapter is fully devoted to description and analysis interregional migration flows and patterns including demographic characteristics of migrants. Very interesting and well elaborated is the part discussing the impact of an extraordinary phenomenon – relocation of the capital city – more precisely an administrative centre of the country for about one thousand kilometres and splitting the leading administrative and economic role between so called new and old capitals, Astana and Almaty. The links drawn between (socio-) economic and migration variables are drawn successfully in the last part of the thesis.

The entire text of the reviewed thesis including its format is documenting Fariza Tolesh’s effort and professional approach to the selected topic and its research. Except some less clear formulation appearing time to time in her text, few misprints and not sufficient/proper size (proportion) of some tables and other graphic objects inserted into the text there is practically nothing being worth of critical remarks of the opponent.

In sum, there is no doubt that student Fariza Tolesh fulfilled successfully her task and proved her abilities for professional work in Demography on the level of master degree. Therefore I recommend her thesis „Population distribution and interregional migration in Kazakhstan“ for defence and positive evaluation by the Commission for State Examinations.

Prague, October 9, 2009

RNDr. Tomáš Kučera, CSc.

opponent