

The opponent's review on the diploma thesis of Anuar Kerembayev "Changing view on future population development of the Republic of Kazakhstan according to the United Nations World Population Prospects since the 1992 till the 2008 revision"

The diploma thesis of Anuar Kerembayev "Changing view on future population development of the Republic of Kazakhstan according to the United Nations World Population Prospects since the 1992 till the 2008 revision" consists of 142 pages of text and 8 pages of appendices. The text is organized in eight numerated chapters including the introduction and conclusions. It is completed by the lists of abbreviations, tables, figures, references and the above mentioned appendices.

The diploma thesis is thematically focused on population development of Kazakhstan as a whole as it was seen in the series of the United Nations World Population Prospects revisions being produced since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the beginning of the 1990's. The submitted 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 and methodological frameworks necessary for successful solution of the diploma thesis tasks. These partial topics are covered by the first four chapters. The second part, the core of diploma thesis comprises chapters 5, 6 and 7. In the first of them the retrospective as well as perspective values of the basic indicators estimates by components of population development are presented and discussed. In the chapter 6 the author describes and discusses the basic changes within the resulting processes: total population change and sex and age structure. The chapter 7 is devoted to assessment of reliability of the UN population forecasts results concerning Kazakhstan. The final part of the diploma thesis (Conclusion) covers the author's major findings.

The aim and objectives of the work and the related research questions are clearly identified by the author in the introductory part. The outline of the work has its firm logical structure and is sufficiently compact. Moreover, the text is written in fully understandable, quite rich and cultivated English. Potentially valuable are the authors' attempts for detailed comprehensive insights into estimates and assumptions changing revision by revision in the context of the fact that population development of Kazakhstan is mostly described in more or less fragmentary way. Recognition deserves also author's critical view especially on the question of official data quality, regardless his argumentation has some weaker points.

Besides clearly positive moments, however, one can find in this diploma thesis many imperfections and even errors. Most of them are of a formal nature, some are concerning of the content. Unfortunately, the number of imperfections and errors is countable in dozens and their list would take several pages. Not mentioning frequently incorrect format of text and graphic objects, the defects of the work can be divided into several groups:

1. It is practically completely unclear to what moment of the year the stock numbers are related – beginning, middle or end of the year.

2. Many statements remain without proper quotation (identification of the resource) or some evidence (e.g. the second paragraph of the Chapter 3, the first paragraph on the page 30, pages 32 and 33, the first paragraph on the page 38, etc.)
3. Not clearly arranged part on forecasting methodology – it is not clear what is concerning forecasting of parameters and what of a comprehensive population forecast (see, for instance, “time series” of the page 28).
4. Under the chapter Fertility the author judges indicators of population growth and characteristic of the overall reproduction (CRR, NRR etc.).
5. Not unified or incorrect quotations (e.g. in the last rows on the page 36, Shkolnikov, Becker, Urzhumova 2004 on page 78 – does not exist in the list of literature, plus compare with the format of the following quotation (Musabek, Skokbayeva, 1999), Tatimov without the year on page 134, etc.).
6. Incorrect construction of some graphs, e.g. in the Fig. 18 – compare values for each sex and for both sexes, or Fig. 23 – why do you have two axes for the same indicator on the same graph?
7. Complete confusion in displaying higher order numbers – thousands, millions or billions and disorientation in real values of some common indicators. See, for instance, p. 128 – China (1.354 mln. people)...Russia 140.4 mln. people ... India (1.214 mln. people...); the same errors are repeatedly on pages 131 and 132!

In sum, the work has a solid base and undoubtedly is a result of an extensive work and effort of its author. Unfortunately its value is significantly devaluated by too many imperfections and errors. Regardless them I agree with submission of the diploma thesis of Anuar Kerembayev “Changing view on future population development of the Republic of Kazakhstan according to the United Nations World Population Prospects since the 1992 till the 2008 revision” for the defence.

Prague, September 20, 2010

RNDr. Boris Burcin, Ph.D.

opponent