

Oponent's review on dissertation thesis

Aida Baigarayeva: Reproductive behaviour and its patterns in the South Kazakhstan region

The South Kazakhstan region had kept the traditional way of life and also traditional demographic behaviour for a long time. During the last decades it is possible to observe changes in reproductive behaviour due to the process of development and modernization. The main goal of the thesis is to evaluate changes in demographic reproduction in the South Kazakhstan region and to identify and explain existing trends and patterns in reproductive behaviour.

The thesis consists of 8 chapters (including Introduction and Conclusion) and has all requirements needed for good orientation in the text - list of figures (87 figures), tables (38 tables), and list of abbreviations used in the text. The extent of the presented research is 223 pages. Introductory chapter is devoted to the information about aim of the research and its relevance, author puts research questions and hypotheses and informs about the structure of the thesis. Literature overview on the basic problem under study is given the following chapter. Theoretical framework of the research is discussed in the chapter three and includes also information and discussion on economic approach in fertility theories. Fourth chapter has methodological character and informs about data availability, their quality and methods used in the research. Information about methodological framework of the sample survey used for the evaluation of changes in reproductive behaviour is also included. This chapter concludes so called "introductory and technical" part of the thesis.

Following chapters represent basic part of the theses and deals with the main subject of the research. The title of chapter 5 is "The position of Kazakhstan among neighbouring countries" but in fact, the chapter is first off all oriented on population development in Kazakhstan, more precisely on fertility development in Kazakhstan in the period 1991(1999) - 2010. Chapter 6 is already oriented on the region under study, it means on South Kazakhstan region. This chapter includes not only general demographic information about region but gives information also about regional system of Kazakhstan and the position of South Kazakhstan region from this aspect. Main attention is devoted to the fertility development and the ethnic differences in fertility. Speaking about the ethnic differences, I miss basic information about measuring ethnicity in Kazakhstan. This information would be important first off all for foreigners. Usually the way of enumeration of ethnic minorities influences the quality and accuracy of ethnic data.

The core of thesis represents the chapter 7, which informs about results of the sample survey about reproductive attitudes (ideals, preferences, intentions, and reproductive thoughts and their realization). Each part of this chapter is introduced by short theoretical view and sample survey results are given for South and North Kazakhstan region. In last chapter (Conclusion) author briefly summarizes main results and findings of the research as it is standard. In this part I miss answers on research questions and hypotheses in a well-arranged form and author's opinion on this issue.

List of literature is numerous and documents author's good orientation in the problem under study. As Annex, questionnaire of the sample survey is attached (without no information or title of the questionnaire).

The thesis is well structured and involves all important information and findings on changes in reproductive behaviour in South Kazakhstan. Additional information would be interesting:

1. Reproductive behaviour is closely connected with family planning and contraceptive methods used by couples. There is no information on situation in Kazakhstan from this aspect.

2. Reproductive behaviour concerns not only the female population, but also the male population (couples). It would be interesting to know opinions of male population on number on children (intended, desired, wanted...), on family planning, family regulation etc.

In the presented thesis, there are several “technical” shortages:

- It is necessary strictly follow the general instruction given for quotation of literature. The source “Statistika” is many times quoted without number, pages (see References: Belova 1975, Belova and Darsky 1972, Volkov 1968).
- Chapter 7: Numbers given inside volumes are sometimes illegible (e.g. Fig. 59, 73, 81 etc.)
- The title of chapter 6.2.3 is unusual: south fertility (?)
- Summary of Ph.D. Thesis: on the title page there are not all necessary information given by instruction (it is not Dissertation thesis but Summary of Ph.D. Thesis).

Critical notes mentioned above concerns mainly technical requirements and have no influence on the quality of the dissertation. Author has fulfilled the thesis objectives and there are no serious deficiencies of the thesis. The presented research of Aida Baigarayeva fulfils demands put on doctoral thesis and I recommend it for defense.

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