

# **Aida Baigareva: Reproductive behavior and its patterns in the South Kazakhstan region**

Review of the supervisor

The dissertation focuses on the change in reproductive behavior, including attitudes and trends in South Kazakhstan over the recent decade 1999-2010. The South Kazakhstan region is the most populated part of the whole country showing high fertility levels and traditional lifestyle. The selected period was remarkable due to the increase in the total fertility rate from its low levels at the end of the 1990s. Therefore, it is important to study to what extent the recent change in reproduction was affected by changes in socio-economic conditions (modernization) as well as how those changes impacted people's attitudes and motives related to childbearing. Also the question of convergence with other regions can be raised. The recent increase of fertility indicators in South Kazakhstan (as well as in the entire country) has been related to the recuperative fertility. The recuperative fertility has been shown in the rise of fertility in the second birth order among European group of women and at the third, four and higher birth order among Turkic ethnicity. Substantial increase in first births occurred among younger mothers born in 1980s. New patterns have emerged in reproductive behavior according to the marital status, showing the increase of births outside marriage among the youngest birth cohorts which implies they have started abandoning traditional lifestyle.

The dissertation addresses differences in real reproductive behavior as well as intentions and attitudes according to age, gender, ethnicity, place of residence, religious affiliation, educational attainment, and income. Two kinds of data are used: national statistics and sample surveys. The methods employed are demographic and statistical including multidimensional approach. The PhD thesis consists of 223 pages including the annex. It is divided into seven chapters and the conclusion. The first four chapters consist of introduction, literature review, theoretical framework and data description and methodology. Chapter 5 focuses on fertility analysis of Kazakhstan starting with a presentation of the country in demographic context. Chapter 6 presents analysis related to South Kazakhstan. The most innovative is chapter 7, which consists of the results of the sample survey and the analysis of the empirical knowledge of reproductive intentions and attitudes. The results show that observed reproductive behavior in South Kazakhstan has shifted towards "more modern" reproduction patterns; however, reproductive intentions and attitudes remain rather traditional. Recent increase in fertility has been related to recuperative childbearing, while reproductive plans of respondents have not been as optimistic compared with preferences. Therefore, it can be assumed that patterns of reproductive behavior would move towards two child families.

The author of the dissertation, Aida Baigareva, proved the ability to work autonomously. The thesis is well balanced because it comprises theoretical basis, demographic descriptions and the deeper analysis using advanced statistical approaches. The analytical results as well as the synthesizing conclusions have brought new insights into the topic of this study. Therefore, I recommend the proposed doctoral thesis to be accepted for submission.

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