Review of doctoral thesis

Population Development of Kazakhstan: Geographic, Economic a Geopolitical Aspects

presented by

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The presented work has 165 pages of text, 6 pages of literature and 7 pages of appendices, all together 163 pages (incl. 64 tables, 30 graphs and 26 maps). It was divided into 9 chapters. I understand the logic of author, but I would have preferred to join the first four chapters in one (chapter 2 has only 2 pages), and also join the chapters 5 and 6, and 7 and 8. However, this is minor comment, but I will deal with the text in these parts.

The selection of literature is representative. I appreciate the discussion of modernization and demographic revolution and description of its specific features in Kazakhstan. As it will be seen in the second part the differences among various parts of Kazakh population are important. I fully agree with the presented hypotheses that Kazakhstan cannot count on a much larger population in the foreseeable future, that the plans on development of Northern and Central regions are unable to influence changes in the migration flows, that the growth of spatial disproportions of population is a reflection of spatial and economic structure of the country (influenced by geopolitical situation and geographic conditions) and only high wages in oil-producing region could attract the population.

The analysis of main recent population development is concentrated in the second part (chapter 5 and 6). We can clearly see that the period since 1991 (the year when the Kazakhstan became independent) can be divided into two parts: 1991-2001 and 2002-2009. The first period could be characterizes by huge emigration and consequently by decrease in the number of population, the second one by rather important immigration and rising increase of natural change. The reasons and consequences of these trends are obvious and well described: the emigration especially of Russians and Germans, and the rising level of fertility especially among Kazakhs. The author should underline here that the demographic revolution is still under way among Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Uyghurs. Their level of mortality is already low, but the level of fertility still high and increasing.

The following part was devoted to regional analysis and regional policy. Kazakhstan is the eight largest country in the world with 2.7 mil. km² and so the regional aspect is of great importance. I consider this part as the best one in the work. The population of Kazakhstan is very heterogeneous from all possible aspects: ethnic, confessional, economic, social, by the level of urbanization etc. These conditions affect the demographic development. The analysis here is clear and concise. I appreciate also the analysis of international migration according to educational level, economic indicators.(Gross regional products, unemployment rate, average wages etc.) and the use of correlation and cluster analysis. The last part reflects the difficult geopolitical situation of Kazakhstan. I recommend the present work for further defense.

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