

Opponent's Assessment of a Doctoral Dissertation

Mgr. Fariza Tolesh: Population prospects of Kazakhstan till 2030

The theme of the thesis is very important task for any national statistics – the forecast of the population development in Kazakhstan in the next two decades taking into account the differences between the urban and rural population and its demographic behavior as well as the regional differences. It is the first time when such type of population forecast has been computed and published.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. The introductory first chapter contains the overview of literature concerning the forecasting of population development, the basic terminology and related theoretical concepts concerning the changes in demographic behavior in the past are mentioned in the second chapter. The following chapter is dedicated to the remarks of the availability, quality and accuracy of the data sources.

The fourth chapter describes relatively particularly several existing approaches, models and methods of computing population forecasts. Special attention is paid to the cohort-component method where the computation algorithm is described by matrix equations. But these equations don't contain the effect of migration.

The main part of the next chapter describes the demographic development in Kazakhstan in last decades, especially in the time when Kazakhstan has become independent country. The analysis of the development is relatively particular but it would be better to illustrate it also by some tables, graphs, eventually maps. At the end of this chapter there is a very interesting part containing the cluster analysis of the Kazakhstan's regions by fertility and mortality and also a SWOT analysis.

The sixth chapter is dedicated to the construction of the patterns of age specific fertility rates sex and age-specific probabilities of dying and sex and age structure of interregional migration. Projection scenarios of fertility, mortality and migration are described in the next chapter.

The last chapter contains the main forecast results concerning the population size, sex and age structure and urban – rural distribution. But also some remarks of accuracy of the forecast are mentioned.

More particular results of several types of the forecast are given in the tables and graphs in the annex. But no figures of migration are presented here.

Numerical results of the population forecast are presented in a number of tables and graphs. But in some graphs there is a little difficulty to distinguish the individual lines. It would be better to use not only continuous lines, but also dashed or dotted lines. The results presented are accompanied by rich verbal commentary. The number of references indicates that the author read large amount of books and papers concerning the topic.

The work has been written in very understandable manner, it is well organized and has noticeably good graphic arrangement.

Despite this deficiencies mentioned above I think that the thesis satisfies the requirements for doctoral dissertation. Therefore I recommend to accept it.

In Prague, September 10, 2013

RNDr. Tomáš Fiala, CSc.
Department of Demography
Faculty of Informatics and Statistics
University of Economics, Prague