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Ph.D. study program:
Summary of the Ph.D. Thesis



**Changing patterns of marital and
reproductive behavior of young women in the
urban settlement (on the example of Ust-
Kamenogorsk, East Kazakhstan oblast,
Kazakhstan)**

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Content of the Summary thesis

1	Introduction and goals.....	7
2	Structure of the Dissertation.....	10
3	Materials and Methods.....	
4	The main results from the survey.....	
	4.1. Marital preferences of respondents.....	
	4.2. Fertility preferences of respondents.....	
5	Conclusions.....	
	Selected references and internet sources.....	

Abstract

This study primarily addresses nuptiality and fertility patterns among youth in East Kazakhstan region. The data are obtained from censuses, vital statistics and two surveys “Marital and reproductive behaviour of young women in Ust-Kamenogorsk” conducted in 2009 and 2016. The survey data collection has been supported by Centre of International programs of Kazakhstan “Bolashak” and Charles University in Prague.

The thesis examines demographic behaviours of two main ethnicities (Kazakh and Russian) in East Kazakhstan oblast and influence of such factors like ethnicity, education, place of residence and socio-economic conditions on their marital and reproductive behaviour. East Kazakhstan oblast, compared with other regions of Kazakhstan, has lower birth and marriage rates, higher divorce rates, higher share of non-native ethnicities residing in urban areas and higher proportion of female workers employed in the industrial sector. The author tries to evaluate the importance of marriage to young females and its relation to their reproductive and marital behaviour. The general tendency observed from the conducted survey was that young women wanted to get married rather than stay single pursuing their career or education. Therefore, the author supposes that in spite of last changes in marital patterns it still plays important role in Kazakhstan and marital behaviour should be studied in close connection with reproductive behaviour.

Keywords: Nuptiality, Marriage, Divorce, Fertility, Kazakhstan, East Kazakhstan region, Ust- Kamenogorsk, Youth

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1. Introduction and Goals

The topic of the dissertation is the characteristics of the patterns of women marital and reproductive behavior in urban area of East Kazakhstan oblast and factors influencing on it.

At present, Kazakhstan is a dynamically developing country with a young population that has comparatively favorable indicators of nuptiality and fertility. The sharp decline of birth rate in Kazakhstan in the 90-s has altered to the relative rise in the 2000-s, particularly among Kazakh ethnic group, which has coincided with a period of economic stability in the country (Alekseenko, 2004; Eshpanova, 2005). The birth rate of simple reproduction level is on the rise in Kazakhstan, however, its rate is uneven among regions. It is quite probable that the low population density in Kazakhstan (6.12 people per sq.km.), the uneven settlement distribution and the forthcoming decline of marital and birth rates in large cities will lead to the negative demographic situation of the country.

Therefore, there is a need for a study of demographic situation in Kazakhstan from the scientific point of view, which may assist in development of demographic strategy in Kazakhstan. This kind of analysis should be multifold concerning regional, economic, political and social factors. I hope that this research will contribute to the development of demographic studies in Kazakhstan.

In this study, the researcher seeks to analyze the trends of marital and reproductive behavior based on the data obtained

in the East Kazakhstan oblast. My general hypothesis is twofold. First, the birth rate of a region is largely determined by its ethnic component, such that Kazakhs, a major ethnic group in the Southern Kazakhstan, demonstrate the highest birth rate in Kazakhstan. While Russians, a large ethnic group in the Eastern Kazakhstan, have one of the lowest birth rates along with the highest divorce rates in the country. Second, Russians residing in Kazakhstan are more traditional than Russians residing in Russia, which might be due to the impact of Kazakh ethnicity. Thereby, the researcher will study the difference of reproductive behavior of two main ethnicities of Kazakhstan and their influence on each other, assuming that Kazakhs, who were less influenced by Russian majority, have more traditional behavior than “russified” Kazakhs and Russians.

Another important issue is a changing picture of marriage and birth rates in urban areas, which is related to the increasing inflow of rural migrants. Urbanization is one of the global processes in the modern world. At present, almost all countries in the world have faced this phenomenon in various forms depending on its level of socio-economic development, geographic location and demographic processes. Kazakhstan is the most urbanized country in Central Asia with urban population comprising 50% of total population (Zimovina, 2009). At present, migration rates of rural inhabitants into cities in Kazakhstan are quite high. The mass migration of rural inhabitants to satellite towns made the marital and reproductive behavior of towns more traditional. The reason

for this was, firstly, because the majority of migrants were of Kazakh ethnicity, and, secondly, that the migrants were young which meant that the most part of them had just reached a reproductive age. Because of this trend, we observe that today rural migrants mostly influence on marital and reproductive behavior of cities, and not vice versa. We can say that there is a process of ruralization that is taking place in cities.

The object of the study is marital and reproductive situation in East Kazakhstan oblast and the subject is demographic analysis of nuptiality and fertility, and their factors.

The research is based on the data from official statistics published in National Demographic Yearbooks, on the data from Censuses, on materials from demographic collections of Statistical Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on the data from sociological surveys “Reproductive attitudes of women in East Kazakhstan oblast” published in 2003. The qualitative characteristics of youth from Ust-Kamenogorsk were gathered from two surveys conducted by author in 2009 and in 2016 in Ust-Kamenogorsk, East Kazakhstan oblast, Kazakhstan. Also, when describing the reproductive behavior of the youth existed data were supplemented with data from a sociological survey conducted by the National Centre for healthy lifestyle supported by UNFPA in 2010, named "Analytical study of the reproductive health of adolescents and young adults aged 15-19 in urban and rural areas of the Republic of Kazakhstan, their awareness and safe behavior".

2. Structure of the Dissertation

The main aim of this research is to conduct a comparative analysis of East Kazakhstan for the period 2009-2016 on aspects of marital and reproductive behavior. The analysis is restricted to empirical character of the research and to availability of statistical data.

The first chapter presents basic methodology, such as definitions, theories, and relevant methods. When choosing relevant methods, an important attention was given to data availability, and therefore, the selection is limited to calculation of basic demographic indicators from a cross-sectional perspective for a hypothetical population. When choosing a relevant theory, we analyzed official approaches as well as alternative views. The leading theory that the researcher referred to is the theory of the first and second demographic transition. However, these theories may not always be applicable for situation in Kazakhstan.

The second chapter describes modern trends in marital and reproductive behavior of youth in Kazakhstan generally and in East Kazakhstan particularly. In this chapter the following information is provided: nuptiality dynamics, unregistered marriages and extramarital births, trends of divorce and remarriage. I will also consider the situation with the inter-ethnic marriages taking into account regional differences. The analysis is performed on the basis of published official data provided by the statistical agency of Kazakhstan. The data from the census until 1989 was used for

more in depth analysis. Moreover, the researcher analyzed various socio-economic and political factors which may influence women behavior in the East Kazakhstan. Generally, population differs by number of factors, such as ethnic, territorial, socio-economic, etc.

The third chapter analyzes attitude of Kazakh and Russian youth towards marriage and childbirths, based on results of conducted surveys using the methods of demography. To get the whole picture, a comparative analysis of changes in marital and reproductive behavior for the past 15 years was conducted. Furthermore, the correlation method is used to highlight factors that have impact on marital and reproductive behavior.

The fourth chapter analyzes state policy in the promotion of marriage and family support. In particular, it examines the impact of family policy on marriages, divorces and births. It also offers recommendations for improving state policy to support the family.

3. Materials and methods

The core of this paper is based on the survey that was done by the author. It was decided to conduct a sociological survey aimed to extend our knowledge about marital and reproductive behaviour of youth in East Kazakhstan oblast. The survey was named “Marital and reproductive behaviour of youth of Ust-Kamenogorsk city” and it was conducted in August-September, 2016 in a city of Ust-Kamenogorsk, East

Kazakhstan oblast, Kazakhstan. Ust-Kamenogorsk is a city with a well-developed infrastructure, universities and jobs, which makes it attractive for region's rural inhabitants.

The survey was mainly aimed at young women residing in urban area, but for the purpose of the study, some categories of rural female respondents were included. We proceeded from an assumption that stereotypes of marital-reproductive behaviour of women were formed in the accordance to social reality in which the life experience was gained. Therefore, it is proposed that duration of city residence had some impact on determining fertility processes and reproductive traditions. Generally, the adaptation period of a person to his new residence was considered as 8-10 years. By that time, a migrant had a chance to be acquainted with moral, social norms and to adjust his mentality to a new environment. In order to simplify the objective of the survey, we assumed that women residing in a city since age ten had similar attitude as city residents (Zayonchkovskaya, 1994). However, one kept in mind that family and relatives would still have a significant influence on her behaviour.

Four main respondent groups were formed in the survey as a result of the above-mentioned assumptions: Kazakhs, born in Ust-Kamenogorsk; Russians, born in Ust-Kamenogorsk; Kazakhs, which moved to Ust-Kamenogorsk before age ten; and Kazakhs which moved to Ust-Kamenogorsk after age 10. A distinction, subject to the ethnic group of respondents, is that migratory activity of Kazakh women is higher than of

Russian women. Since the migration rate from rural areas to urban areas is low among Russian population, we only considered native Russian population in the urban area. Generally, Russians prefer to migrate to their historical motherland – Russia, while Kazakhs migrate from rural areas to urban. Thus, proportion of Kazakhs in cities has increased. According to recent research on the issue of reproductive behaviour of women in East Kazakhstan region, Kazakh women who migrated from villages were more likely to find jobs and become city residents after graduating from university, rather than Russian women who were more likely to return to their villages after graduating (Zakharov, 2008).

Since the focus of this study is reproductive behaviour of young women, we restricted the age range in between 18 and 29. According to laws of Kazakhstan, youth is a category of people aged 16-29. But, since marriage is allowed officially from age 18, and nuptiality is still a dominant factor that determines fertility, we constrained age to 18-29.

All women were divided into three age groups (18-21, 22-24, 25-29). In addition, respondents had to disclose their education level with regards to their supposed work activity. The age group of 18-21 was selected, because we assumed that a majority of this group were pursuing their education. The second age group was characterized by women who had already finished their education and had an opportunity either to continue their education to receive graduate degree, or to start working, or to get married and stay at home on maternity

leave. The last age group was represented by the oldest women in our survey. Most of them had already been married and had children.

The obtained characteristics were then analyzed in comparison with their responses on questions about their marital and reproductive behavior. The researcher sought to understand what were the significant factors that influenced marital and reproductive behavior of the youth, such as urbanization level, ethnicity, education level, living standard, and impact of parental family.

For analyzing the data we used SAS procedure. The cross-tabulation was made through procedure FREQUENCY. The method of binary logistic regression was used to compute probability models for being married or having children. Logistic regression describes the relationship between a categorical response variable and a set of predictor variables. The analysis included several different measures of the young women's characteristics at or before the time of marriage.

4. The main results of the survey

4.1. Marital preferences of respondents

Despite current modernization of Kazakhstani society, marriage still remains a significant value to many young women. It is common in our society to marry before having children. However, recently new tendencies have taken place in the formation of families: a rapid growth of cohabitating

couples, an increase of divorce rates and a postponement of childbirths. In this part, an analysis of marital preferences of young women will be made. The survey questionnaire included such topics as marital behaviour of young women, their ranking of values including such values as marriage, childbearing compared with education, career making. All descriptive data were presented in Chapter 3.

The computed model demonstrated that marital behaviour of young women still has more traditional characteristics than modern. The age is great indicator and it demonstrates that mostly women in older age groups will be rather married than single. The probability of being married after 25 years is 10 times higher than in the age group 22-24. The obtained results demonstrated high interest towards marriage but also demonstrated delay in getting married. The highest probability is among the oldest age group. It is obviously connected with requirement to finish some education and to enter first labour market. The young women after age 22-24 only start thinking about family life.

What is interesting is that Russian females have slightly higher probability being married than Kazakhs. It is connected with their approach to marriage institute. We included in the group “being ever married” all responses included being cohabitated. For Kazakhs being cohabitated is still abnormal behaviour because it is not be accepted by the family especially in rural areas and small towns where everybody

knows its neighbours. For Russians this new trend is already normal.

Duration of living in the city does not have such a big influence on being married as it could be thought. This is possibly connected with the equivalent conditions for young women at the start of their independent life. In spite of duration of being city resident of all categories should enter the labour market and obtain some stable position before being independent. Local residents had better living conditions but nevertheless they share their home with parents, they are not able to earn more as newcomers and they depend on parental income. The women from 2nd and 3rd category may not have any residence in the city at all and live on rental premises. All described limit the marital expectations for both groups: urban residents and rural migrants.

Education is an important factor, because it significantly constrains the time frameworks for marriage. Women decided to enter the university have to devote 4-6 years of their life to obtaining a diploma and then need some time to enter the labour market and become a specialist. Women who do not have tertiary education lost only 2-3 years of their life and have more modest expectations concerning career making. So they have a higher probability of being married as demonstrated in the constructed model.

It should be highlighted that we do not receive unexpected results, and our deliverables demonstrate that in spite of

growing emancipation of young women marriage still play important role in their lives.

4.2. Fertility preferences of respondents

The most important finding from the analysis is that marriage still has great significance for having children. Married women have 74 times higher odds of having children than single women. So we can conclude that studying of marriage patterns in Kazakhstan is of great importance for understanding reproductive behavior. As before, for young girls, string of logic “first marriage then birth of a child” keeps doing. The researcher did not aim to see how the behavior of women in a registered marriage differs from the behavior of women in an unregistered marriage, since in absolute terms the proportion of respondents from second group was very low.

It was expected that with age, the likelihood of having a child increases. Thus, women aged 25-29 have 3.5 times higher odds than women aged 18-21. Ethnicity also reflects on the model. Surprisingly, Russians have almost one time higher odds to have more children than Kazakhs. This result is closely connected with the previous model. They support our assumption that Russians could be in a cohabited union and could start their reproductive cycle earlier than Kazakhs.

Length of stay in the city also influence on the chosen indicator. Women moved from rural area demonstrate more traditional reproductive behavior than urban residents. Girls

with a lower level of education are more likely to give birth to a child than girls with the higher education.

Table 1. The results of binary logistic regression (probability modelled is having children)

Effect	Estimate	p-value	Odds ratio	95% Wald Confidence Limits	
Age					
Age group 18-21 vs 22-24	-2.2806	0.0068	0.102	0.020	0.533
Age group 25-29 vs 22-24	0.8075	0.0374	2.242	1.048	4.796
Ethnicity					
Russians vs Kazakhs	0.9152	0.0008	1.220	0.535	3.121
Residential status					
Moved before age 10 vs Local residents	0.2657	0.5859	1.304	0.501	3.392
Moved after age 10 vs Local residents	-0.3550	0.4340	0.701	0.288	1.706
Education					
Secondary or vocational education vs Tertiary	0.7129	0.0779	2.040	0.923	4.507
Marital status					
Being married vs Being single	4.3137	74.718	24.98 9	223.4 07	74.71 8

Notes: Significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Sample Survey Ust-Kamenogorsk, 2016

Thus, we can see that even though the marriage rate among respondents is relatively low, the marriage value is still high. Marriage still remains the core of family life for the

majority of women, and it is associated with births of children. As the survey showed, extramarital births were not very popular among young respondents. The high value of marriage suggests that a number of lonely women will not be large. However, marriage delay by the majority of women automatically shortens generative activity of women, which in its case delays births of children.

At the same time, new tendencies take place in the society: loyal attitude towards cohabitation, divorces, premarital sex and mixed marriages. These new characteristics are easily adopted by Russian women, rather than Kazakh women, which demonstrate more traditional attitude.

Kazakh migrant women have more traditional attitude toward family relations, but their attitude alter in a city life. This is reflected in the delay of getting married and births of children, increase in value of education and job, and weakening of norms of sexual behaviour. Regardless of duration of city residence, the majority of women prefer to have nuclear families. Main obstacles for increasing family size were study or work leading to egoistic approach towards her reproductive behavior in the urban environment.

The value of family (having children) is lower than the value of marriage. After getting married women do not hurry to have children due to financial reasons. Those women, which are not married yet have only abstract notion about having children, though their age is the most suitable for child-bearing.

Family duties are allocated democratically; home workload is divided between couples equally, though a husband preserves a leading role in decision of family issues.

The society has become more tolerant to deviations from the traditional family model, such as growth of premarital sexual relations and divorces. As a result, the number of single mothers has increased and cohabitation has become widespread.

Conclusion

The analysis of marital and reproductive behavior of youth of East Kazakhstan region showed that even if there is a positive development of nuptiality and fertility at the moment, the value orientations of youth may affect this positive trend in future.

In the first part of the research we compared demographic trends of the region with country's situation, and also we studied socio-economic development of the region to determine external factors that may influence demographic behaviour of population. It was observed that national structure of the region with a high proportion of Russian population residing in cities in particular had impact on other demographic indicators, such as nuptiality and fertility. Thus, East Kazakhstan region is ranked the last by fertility level among other regions of Kazakhstan. An average age at marriage in the region is higher than country's average. As a

whole, population of the region has rather modernized marital and reproductive behavior than population of southern regions.

In the last part of the research we analyzed results from conducted sociological survey, the study object of which was women in Ust-Kamenogorsk aged 18-29.

Characteristics of socio-economic indicators of respondents demonstrated that majority of female interviewees (59%) had or were pursuing their first stage of tertiary education (bachelor degree). And these data do not vary with age, which means that there is a stable interest in getting a tertiary education by young women over time. The working females are mainly employed in the public (budgetary) spheres, which has the lowest salaries. The income level of respondents, particularly in the youngest age group, is determined largely by income levels of their parents, which tells about financial dependency of young females from their parents or partners. The same is true about housing. The proportion of women having their house is rather low.

The marital status of respondents varies with age; the older is women, the more chance that she is married. There is a higher portion of married and cohabitating females among Russians in the older age groups, and also they have more divorces. Fertility picture is as following: majority of women of both nationalities do not have any children (77.3%), or have one child (16.7%), two or more children is rare. Marital and reproductive behavior of young females is characterized by postponement of age at marriage and childbearing.

Respondents explain this by the fact that they have to complete their education and find a job. Ideal number of children for women is determined by norms that were inhabited in parental family.

Thus, we may conclude that behavior of young females residing in the city is not homogenous, but depends on many factors. They are nationality, age and duration of being resident in the city. Generally, we may observe that there is a growth of individual values, such as education and prestigious job. At the same time, the role of family is decreasing despite it still remains of high importance to young females.

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