Evaluation of Master thesis

Geopolitical Role and Population Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Recent Development and Prospects
presented by
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The presented Master thesis is dealing mainly about geopolitical situation of Kazakhstan; population development was restricted mainly on population size, population distribution and migration. The first glance at the map is sufficient to understand the difficult geopolitical situation of Kazakhstan between Russian federation and China. Kazakhstan has the 9th largest territory in the world but only 15,5 mil. inhabitants, i.e. 6 inh. per km^2; other 3 mil. of Kazakhs are living abroad. The ethno genesis of Kazakhs falls into 10th century, when Kypchaks (ancestors of Kazakhs and Uzbeks) settled the territory between Irish and Dnepr rivers. Uzbek khan enforced Islam in 14th century; the Golden Horde survived up to 19th century when Kazakhstan was colonized by Russians. The history of Kazakhstan was very various what corresponds with its geographical position in Central Asia and we can see its consequences in the contemporary colourful ethnic composition.

The thesis is divided in two part, introduction and conclusions and has 70 pages. The structure is logical. The introduction is well conceived and author gives here description of the content of the whole thesis (definition, research objective and questions, hypothesis, methods, overview of literature and sources of data). The overview of literature in the first part shows author's good orientation. I appreciate also the whole content of this part, namely the description of strategic partners of Kazakhstan, Russia, China and USA. I do not have comments to this part except two: it should be more stressed the inadequate number of inhabitants for such a large territory, which could engender the state integration; it limits the construction of the state infrastructure, especially if the border areas have more economic contacts with the neigbour area abroad. And the second, author omitted the significance of the foundation of Astana as a new capital for the country integration. Small remark: we cannot be sure, what will be the future development of economy and so we cannot say that the inflation will stay up to 2020 within any bounds, the same with GDP. Why the GDP was not expressed in PPP?

In the second part, which is also interesting, I am lacking any attention to the demographic processes in Kazakhstan, although the title promised to deal with the demographic situation. On the other side, the discussion of ethnic diversity and migration is well-done. I am leaving some critical remarks at the end. English is rather flexible language accepting loanwords (e. g. perestroika), but it must be justification for such a case. This is not in using Russian word oblast; it exits the possibility of easy translation, e. g. region, area or district. Some words or joint words using by Rodionov are neologisms; others are understandable, but strange. A few examples: oralman, processing industry, processed goods, perforce character, title component, insulation, population employed in economic etc. Three oil companies were named twice: Chevron Texaco, Exxon Mobil and Agip (page 34); the given share of Kazakh population in 1897 does not correspond with its graphical presentation (page 45).

All main results were repeated in conclusions. In spite of a few critical remarks I recommend the thesis for further defense and I am evaluating it as very good.

Prague, 20 May 2010

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