

Mgr. Dinara Ualkenova: Family structures, trends and prospects in the East-Kazakhstan region

Review of the supervisor

The dissertation thesis addresses the family form differentiation in the East-Kazakhstan region where specific family forms were considered marginal in the past. New forms of families have recently emerged such as: childless families, one-parent families, blended and stepfamilies or families based on non-marital cohabitation. Some researchers consider such a new phenomenon as the crisis of the traditional family. The changes in family structures and marital behavior frequently lead to changes in a fertility behavior. Therefore, to study new family forms in relation to recent trends in divorce, remarriage and repartnering in the East-Kazakhstan region represents an important and relevant topic.

The PhD thesis of Dinara Ualkenova consists of 178 pages including the annex. It is divided into six chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. The dissertation explores modern family types and their contribution to the population development in the East-Kazakhstan region and investigates their structure, size, and factors of origin. Particular attention is paid to divorce, conditions of family dissolution, to the search for explanatory factors that are related to divorce and to the predictors of post-dissolution remarriage, repartnering and childbearing. The first introductory chapter delimits the objectives and the structure of the thesis. The research purpose, research questions and research hypotheses are well defined. Next, the comprehensive overview of literature, basic theories related to the family transformation process and characteristics, and definitions of modern family types and households are presented. The author accurately sketches the theoretical and methodological information concerning family definitions, the concept of family diversity, and an overview of household typology according to the international practice. The history of definitions related to family and households in the Soviet and Kazakhstani censuses is described. Valuable information on the legislation and contexts of family formation and dissolution on the territory of Kazakhstan is integrated including a description of the transition from a traditional family to a modern one. The third and fourth chapter analyzes the survey data. The “Family Transformation” survey on population attitudes and opinions, the role of a woman in society, family formation and dissolution processes, and fertility patterns according to different household statuses, enabled us to extend our classical demographic knowledge. The behavior of respondents (women) was examined according to their age, marital status, education, nationality, place of

residence, and parental family. First, six topics or blocks of questions were checked. In order to draw more complex conclusions the methods, such as ANOVA, Kaplan-Meier, Life-table, Cox proportional-hazards, and regression, binary and ordinal logistic regression models were utilized. The ANOVA test showed that the majority of differences for selected questions (women's number of children, attitudes towards marriage, family, divorce, a partner's nationality, plans to have more children in the future, etc.) were found for respondents stratified by marital status. Attitudes towards family, religion and a woman's position in the society were first described in a graph format using basic statistical distributions. The most innovative part of the dissertation is in chapters 5, 6, and 7 where the author uses multidimensional modeling approaches in order to assess more complex investigation on transitions between marital statuses, on the impact of marital instability on a woman's fertility, and on cohabitation and remarriage after the dissolution of marriage.

There are only few details to be contested. There are several mistakes: the numbering of chapters listed in the outline chapter is different from the real numbering, the data source should be specified in chapter 5 (are transition probabilities based on survey data?), notes and data source below graphs should be systematically the same (Note: Respondents having at least one child under the age of 18; Source: Family transformation survey, 2008); the source SAS output is not convenient; p.72 should be dependent not depended. However, despite those little technical omissions the author, Dinara Ualkenova, proved by the proposed PhD thesis the ability to delimit the topic, to use appropriate methods and more specifically to comment well on the results; therefore I recommend the proposed doctoral thesis to be accepted.

Prof. RNDr. Jitka Rychtaříková, CSc.