

Oponent's report on master thesis

**Kamila Utegenova: The role of work-family reconciliation policies in female employment and fertility recuperation in selected EU member states**

Over the past few decades, the female labour force participation has increased strongly in most European countries and this phenomenon was closely connected with the fertility transition. The female labour force participation is determined to a large extent by the level of female education, overall labour market conditions and cultural attitudes. However, nowadays new factors also contribute to explaining the differences among EU countries: it is policies promoting the flexibility of working-time arrangements, the system of family taxation, the support to families in the form of childcare subsidies, paid parental leaves etc. The main goal of the submitted thesis is to study the effectiveness of the EU family policy, it means its part affecting female labour force participation.

The thesis consists of five chapters and its extent is 101 pages. First chapter informs about goals, objectives, structure, using methods and gives overview of basic terminology. The basic terminology includes mainly generally known terms (e.g. employment, unemployment) but there is no explanation of using terminology, e.g. work policy, work family policy, labour and employment policy, family policy, gender solidarity etc. Chapter two has theoretical character and describes trends in working policies within EU countries and informs about model of family policy and its varieties by countries. Employment policies and working time flexibility is examined in chapter three. Work –family reconciliation policy, parental leave arrangements and child care policies are discussed in chapter four. Above mentioned chapters (1-4) gives basic orientation in such difficult problem and could serve as a brief guide for understanding similarities and differences among EU countries in this issue. The information reflects rather numerous list of literature.

The last chapter (number five) briefly deals with impact of policies on employment, the second part of chapter five analyzes the impact on fertility changes in selected EU countries. The explanation of fertility trends is rather simple and is again oriented first of all on changes in female labour force participation. Present fertility level in EU countries is the result of different political, economic, and social conditions and reflects also the culture, tradition, religions etc. It is rather difficult to analyze the situation by countries without deeper knowledge of historical development. Besides, there is no general consensus regarding the role of factors mentioned above and the role of population policy measures.

The master thesis represents interdisciplinary approach in demography and gives interesting information about so actual problem - the increasing female labour force participation in EU countries. The thesis of Kamila Utegenova on *The role of work-family reconciliation policies in female employment and fertility recuperation in selected EU member states* meet the basic criteria set for diploma thesis and therefore I recommend accept this work for the defense.

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