

Zhanyl Mukhtarova:

Mortality patterns and trends in postcommunist countries compared with low mortality populations

The thesis deals with the issue of recent mortality trends in selected populations representing different types of mortality patterns and experiencing different historical trajectories. After the break up of the Soviet Union, post-communist countries have faced diverging trends in survival. The gap started being more apparent between Central Europe, Baltic States, and Central Asia. On the other hand low mortality populations have continued the trend of a steady decline. To study mortality changes among post-communist countries contrasted with the USA, France and Spain in the period between 1990 and 2006 is therefore a relevant topic.

The analysis consists of investigating mortality patterns and trends. It shows recent demographic and socio-economic situations, and focuses on differences in the main age-specific indicators of mortality level, and includes also the issue of excess male mortality. The master thesis (108 pages) is structured as follows: **Introduction**; **Theoretical part** (*Overview of literature, Theoretical background of research, Methodology and data*); **Historical overview and population longevity** (*Historical overview of mortality development in the selected countries, Population longevity*); **Demographic and socio-economic background in the selected countries** (*Recent demographic development in the selected countries, Socio-economic situation in the selected countries, A hierarchical analysis based on all selected indicators*); **Analytical part** (*Changes in life expectancy at birth in the selected countries between 1990 and 2006, Mortality patterns and trends in post-communist countries compared with low mortality populations, Excess male mortality in selected countries*); **Conclusion**.

The author starts with formulating research hypotheses about mortality change and about the impact of socio-economic conditions or a lifestyle. Next, main mortality characteristics of each country are presented. Selected indicators of human development reports provide more specified look at the investigated countries. The differences in socio-economic settings and health conditions are summarized with cluster analysis approach. However, here the title of the graph 10 (*Dendogram resulting from main age-specific indicators of mortality level in the selected countries for both sexes, 2007*) does not correspond to the description of the entry data. Mortality topic presented in the fourth chapter starts logically with descriptive indicators and is followed by country grouping based on multidimensional approach using the cluster analysis. Next the country groups are examined and analyzed. The study is completed by investigating excess male mortality which showed interesting results.

The master thesis proves very good ability of Zhanyl Mukhtarova to master more advanced methods, and accordingly to make appropriate interpretations. It is also very well written. Despite the somber topic, a reader can find interesting conclusions presented in academic but friendly style. Therefore, I recommend the thesis to be submitted.

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