Forecasting international migration in Kazakhstan till 2050
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Forecasting migration is an important yet very difficult task. International is especially a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon characterised by a large degree of uncertainty and high errors in forecasting (Willekens, 1995), and poor data quality (Kupiszewski, 2002) which should have to be properly addressed and quantified. In this paper, I intend to apply the judgmental method of obtaining future migration numbers in combination with time series extrapolation.

Data that will be used in this paper are compiled in the vital statistics registry maintained by the Statistics Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Migration data are obtained by the processing of the documents supplied by the internal affairs bodies and containing statistical records of arrivals and departures, these being compiled regularly at the time of registration of the population by place of residence. Some aspects of data quality in Kazakhstan such as timeliness, reliability and accessibility, are problematic. The most acute is the situation with timelines due to constant delays in the release of raw and processed data.

The overall quality of the demographic data has experienced some improvement since the demise of the Soviet system; Kazakhstan has increased the availability and level of detailing of the demographic statistics until 2013. However, after that, the specificity and quality of data by population components have declined considerably. For example, demographic yearbooks became considerably shorter. All the basic data on numbers of population, births and deaths became available only in three main abridged age groups. Life tables are not available at all starting from 2013 onward. As a result, in the Post-soviet countries such as Kazakhstan it is rather problematic to carry out any individual research or make independent analyses because with few exceptions, only aggregate data are available and more detailed data are viewed as the property of government statistical committees and there is a lack of tradition of making more detailed demographic data publicly available.

Like many other countries that have undergone economic and social development, Kazakhstan has experienced an increase in the movement of people during economic booms. There is growing recognition that these processes – development and migration - go hand in hand. Migration drives, as well as results from, a country's social and economic development.

The economic boom in the mid-2000s coincided with an immigration boom with 23-33 thousand legally registered arrivals in 2005-2006 respectively. Nowadays a number of immigrants fluctuate around 10 thousand people per year, a peak of immigration already gone there remains little hope of another immigration boom in the near future. However, inflow from close-bordering countries (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan) will always exist, but often in illegal, uncontrolled form and with only faint effect on the overall situation in the country.

At the end of the 1990s, emigration from Kazakhstan was still in full force from northern, central and eastern regions until in the mid-2000s when its volume considerably lessened and in the year 2006, the least number of people left the country. However, with the economic crisis which hit Kazakhstan most seriously in the mid-2000s, the emigration

process again stimulated, but the rise was temporary because its intensity is again gradually falling at the present days.

The age and sex composition of international migration have remarkably changed during the last several decades. On average people entering Kazakhstan have become much younger these days than before and the biggest increase took place among the youngest age groups and ages 20-25 also the proportion of female immigrants have much risen.

In the case of emigrants, the situation is not so obvious because the shift took place both among working-age groups and also among elderly people. The bulk of emigrants at working age groups looks like the brain drain process or more precisely since the increase is most at age 20 it is probable that at this age people generally go to study abroad which became very fashionable lately in the country since more parents can afford to fund the education of their children.

Making consistent and reasonable assumptions about the future course of population components is the most crucial stage of the population forecasting process. The proper assumptions about the demographic future are more important for the success of a forecast than a sophisticated model (Ascher, 1978). Migration is a population component which is influenced not only by socio-demographic changes but also by modifications in the legislation system, alterations of the economic and political situation. Thus, a prediction of future migration development could rather be erroneous compared to other components. During the last decade, the number of international migrants from the total population of Kazakhstan has fallen to less than 0.5%. It is assumed that despite a quite volatile recent migration history of the country which was marked by a massive emigration, in the following several decades the country probably keep gradually losing population to emigration as the volume of brain drain will accelerate and most of the foreign immigrants of previous years have already emigrated right after the Soviet Union dissolution.

As for the immigration, it could be categorised as of nationals and foreigners. It means that the volume of national immigration would depend on the volume of national emigration in previous years (de Beer, 2008). Many ethnic Kazakhs fled the country during the establishment of the Soviet Union in the early 20th century. After gaining independence the government launched the repatriation programme. The peak of ethnic Kazakh repatriation coincided with the economic improvements of the mid-2000s. During the twenty years of the programme's run, less than one million ethnic Kazakhs returned to Kazakhstan. The programme lost its popularity around 2012 when the allotted quotas were left unclaimed. Consequently, the main immigration potential of Kazakhstan could be said to be exhausted by now.

Overall, currently, Kazakhstan is experiencing gradually but steadily growing number of national emigrants and very closely dependent on business cycles a small number of labour immigration from the neighbouring countries. For almost a decade the country has a negative net migration rate. Despite all those facts, international migration numbers are very negligible in relation to the number of the total population in Kazakhstan.