

IRSTI 03.81.35

[https://doi.org/10.53360/3107-0493-2025-4\(6\)-1](https://doi.org/10.53360/3107-0493-2025-4(6)-1)

REGIONAL SPECIFICITIES OF URBANIZATION AND ETHNIC STRUCTURE IN THE REGIONS OF KAZAKHSTAN (1959-1989)

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Abstract. This study examines the historical stages and regional specificities of Kazakhstan's demographic development between 1959 and 1989. The processes of industrialization, urbanization, the Virgin Lands campaign, migration flows, and major social reforms of the second half of the twentieth century are analyzed as key factors that significantly influenced the country's ethnodemographic structure. Based on archival sources, census materials, and statistical data, the study identifies changes in the population size, ethnic composition, the ratio of urban to rural inhabitants, as well as interregional differences. The study also highlights that the demographic transformations were closely linked to regional disparities in economic development and settlement patterns.

The research findings demonstrate that between 1959 and 1989, the population of Kazakhstan increased by a factor of 1.77, while the share of Kazakhs rose from 30% to 39.7%. These trends were largely driven by high natural population growth, the concentration of Kazakh populations in rural areas, and shifts in migration dynamics. At the same time, Soviet industrialization policies led to the predominance of Slavic ethnic groups in the northern and central regions of the republic. In contrast, the southern and western regions retained a demographic structure in which Kazakhs constituted the majority.

Keywords: demographic development, ethnic structure, urbanization, migration, regional specificities, population census, twentieth century

Introduction

The demographic development of Kazakhstan's population is one of the key factors directly shaping the country's economic, social, and political trajectories. In particular, the large-scale socio-economic processes of the second half of the twentieth century – such as industrialization, urbanization, the Virgin Lands campaign, collectivization, and migration – significantly transformed the demographic structure of the republic. During this period, not only the population size but also its ethnic composition, the ratio of urban to rural residents, and the social roles within society underwent substantial changes.

The period between 1959 and 1989 is characterized as one of the most dynamic phases of demographic change in the history of Kazakhstan. During these decades, the social structure of the republic began to acquire new features. Urbanization and migration processes intensified more than ever before. As a result of internal and external migration driven by Soviet policies, the ethnic composition of the population underwent significant transformation. Regional demographic specificities also became more pronounced, leading to the formation of distinct ethnodemographic profiles in each province and region. Archival documents preserve detailed records concerning the preparation for the 1959 population census, the rules for conducting the census, the number of personnel involved, and the remuneration they received. For example, each region appointed between two and six individuals responsible for supervising the census. Preparations for the census had already begun in 1957 (OMA. F. 698. Op. 20. D. 74. L. 15). The archival protocols also list the individuals

assigned to this work, including their names. In East Kazakhstan Region, for instance, the persons responsible for organizing the census included I.A. Ni, L.T. Pak, and E.K. Idrisov, with their respective salaries also documented (OMA. F. 698. Op. 20. D. 74. L. 26).

Materials and Methods

Materials. The source base of the research is composed of the results of the All-Union Population Censuses of 1959, 1970, 1979 and 1989, as well as documents from the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan and regional archives. The archival materials include reports, protocols, memoranda, and personnel lists that describe the preparation, organization, and implementation of the census campaigns. In addition, regional socio-economic indicators obtained from official sources – such as data on industry, agriculture, population structure, levels of urbanization, and migration flows – were used for analytical purposes. Scholarly works by domestic and foreign researchers on demographic development, urbanization, and ethnic structure were also incorporated into the study.

Methods. The methodological framework of the study is based on historical, statistical, and comparative analytical approaches. The historical-retrospective method was employed to examine the evolution of demographic processes in the second half of the twentieth century and to distinguish their developmental stages. The statistical method enabled a quantitative assessment of census data and the dynamics of ethnic composition. The comparative method was used to identify demographic differences across provinces and regions. In addition, a cluster analysis was conducted to classify ethnodemographic regions using the Fuzzy Class program model proposed by Zh.S. Aubakirova. The combination of these methods made it possible to analyze the complexity, multidimensionality, and regional variations of the research subject in a comprehensive manner.

Discussion

One of the primary issues influencing the study of any region's history is the formation and development of its population. The end of the demographic crises of the 1950s-1980s stimulated progress in demographic development and facilitated the emergence of a modern sovereign demographic system. A number of processes – such as population growth, the development of functional structures, and the formation of architectural and artistic features – directly affected the evolution of urban planning systems. These processes were shaped not only by local conditions but also by broader global factors occurring beyond the boundaries of individual settlements. Such determinants include the region's economic, social, and physical-geographical characteristics, its connections with other localities, and the historical patterns of territorial settlement. Overall, despite their heterogeneity and diversity, these factors collectively shape settlement systems. It is well established that the socio-demographic development of the population influences many aspects of societal progress. At the same time, ecological, economic, and socio-political conditions exert significant influence on population growth indicators. Kazakhstan has historically possessed distinct regional characteristics, and demographic indicators constitute one of the key factors enabling conditional differentiation of the country's territory. Zh.S. Aubakirova applied cluster analysis using the Fuzzy Class program to classify Kazakhstan's territory into demographic regions for the period between 1979 and 1999, based on statistical data. The analysis resulted in two megatypes comprising five classes:

1. North-East Ethnodemographic Region: Akmola, East Kazakhstan, Kostanay, and North Kazakhstan oblasts;
2. Central Ethnodemographic Region: Karaganda and Pavlodar oblasts;
3. Southern Ethnodemographic Region: South Kazakhstan, Atyrau, and Kyzylorda oblasts;
4. South-Western Ethnodemographic Region: Aktobe, Almaty, Zhambyl, and West Kazakhstan oblasts;
5. Western Ethnodemographic Region: Mangystau oblast (Aubakirova Zh.S., 2017: 55–68).

The principal reference point in the proposed demographic classification of regions was the ethnodemographic indicator. The regional specificities of demographic development in Kazakhstan

are shaped by pronounced ethnic differentiation. Such distinct ethnic stratification within regions introduces significant variation into population processes across the republic (Tatimov M.B., 1978). On the other hand, geographically proximate regions do not always exhibit similar developmental characteristics. For instance, the country's south is typically understood to include the oblasts of South Kazakhstan, Kyzylorda, and Zhambyl. In their article "Contemporary Socio-Demographic Trends in Population Development in Southern Kazakhstan," Z.M. Dzhanpaizova and A.B. Esimova analyze the population dynamics of these oblasts through indicators such as fertility, mortality, marriage, and divorce, concluding that regional distinctions in Kazakhstan's demographic development are clearly evident. Their statistical analysis demonstrated that even within a single region, multiple patterns of demographic development may coexist (Dzhanpaizova Z.M., Esimova A.B., 2011: 214). The task of regionalization is further complicated by the heterogeneity of administrative-territorial units themselves. Researcher N.L. Krasnobaeva, examining East Kazakhstan Region, identified the historically formed administrative-territorial division and the Soviet-era characteristics of population formation as key factors producing distinct ethnic, geographical, and economic differentiation within the region. She demonstrated that East Kazakhstan can be analytically divided into "Northern" and "Southern" subregions (Krasnobaeva N.L., 2009: 212).

The period from 1959 to 1989 represents a time of major socio-economic transformation in the history of Kazakhstan. During these decades, the republic experienced a new stage of industrialization: cities expanded, and new industrial centers were established. However, these changes did not unfold uniformly across all regions. While some areas underwent intensified urbanization, others saw an increase in the share of the rural population. Significant shifts occurred in the distribution of urban and rural residents across the oblasts and their respective ethnodemographic regions (Table 1).

Table 1. Dynamics of Urban and Rural Population by Oblasts of Kazakhstan (1959, 1970, 1979, 1989) (%)

Regions	1959		1970		1979		1989	
	urban	rural	urban	Rural	urban	rural	urban	rural
Akmola	71,2	28,8	65,43	34,57	43,0	57,0	47,2	52,8
Aktobe	69,69	30,31	68,98	31,02	46,9	53,1	54,1	45,9
Almaty	82,7	17,3	84,44	15,56	28,8	71,2	32,7	67,3
Atyrau	64,02	35,98	60,2	39,8	59,2	40,8	60,3	39,7
West Kazakhstan	77,07	22,93	65,4	34,6	37,1	62,8	42,5	57,5
Zhambyl	73,58	26,42	71,25	28,75	44,5	55,5	47,3	52,7
Karaganda	56,09	43,91	55,21	44,79	82,4	17,6	81,7	18,3
Kostanay	79,1	20,9	70,29	29,71	45,5	54,5	50,5	49,5
Kyzylorda	68,26	31,74	64,67	35,33	61,4	38,6	60,2	39,8
Mangystau	*	*	*	*	87,1	12,9	88,6	11,4
Pavlodar	77,57	22,43	67,26	32,74	56,6	43,4	64,0	36,0
North Kazakhstan	74,5	25,5	72,43	27,57	32,2	67,8	35,9	64,1
South Kazakhstan	73,44	26,56	71,99	28,01	39,1	60,9	40,5	59,5
East Kazakhstan	65,08	34,92	63,54	36,46	54,6	45,4	58,4	41,6
Note – Compiled on the basis of the literature (Vsesoiuznaia perepis naselenia 1959 g. // SGA RK. F. 1568, Op. 21, D. 4, L. 1-42) (Statisticheskii, 1991)								

*Mangystau Region was part of West Kazakhstan Region until 1973.

Based on statistical data, the oblasts were classified into four major regions according to their geographical and demographic characteristics: the North and East, the West, the Center, and the South. Each of these regions is examined separately below:

The regions included in the North and East group are Akmola, Kostanay, North Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, and East Kazakhstan. During the Soviet period, these areas had a high proportion of Russian and other Slavic populations. Urban development in the region accelerated during the Virgin Lands campaign, which focused on agricultural expansion. In 1959, many oblasts within this region had a relatively high share of urban residents. For example, Pavlodar Oblast consistently maintained a high level of urbanization, with the urban population reaching 64% by 1989. This stability can be attributed to the oblast's heavy industrial sectors, including electric power generation and aluminum production. In Kostanay (79.1%) and North Kazakhstan (74.5%) oblasts, urban residents constituted the majority. However, by 1989, these figures had decreased significantly: to 50.5% in Kostanay and only 35.9% in North Kazakhstan. This decline is associated with population growth in rural areas as well as a slowdown in migration to cities. Although the share of the urban population in East Kazakhstan also declined slightly, the region maintained a relatively high level of urbanization (*Vsesoiuznaia perepis naselenia 1959 g. // SGA RK. F. 1568, Op. 21, D. 4, L. 1-42.*). Between 1970 and 1989, the share of rural residents began to increase gradually; however, the urban population remained dominant. In North Kazakhstan and East Kazakhstan, the proportion of urban residents in 1989 ranged between 35% and 58%, which is considered a relatively high level. Urbanization in these regions began early and was closely linked to industrial development. Nevertheless, in subsequent years, the population of rural areas started to grow again.

The western region includes the oblasts of Atyrau, Mangystau, West Kazakhstan, and Aktobe. In this area, the oil and gas industry played a dominant role in shaping demographic and spatial development. Mangystau Oblast, which was established later (in 1973), became the most urbanized region in Kazakhstan. In 1979, the share of urban residents reached 87.1%, increasing further to 88.6% by 1989. This exceptionally high level of urbanization was driven by the region's dependence on the oil and gas sector and the rapid development of urban centers such as Zhanaozen and Aktau. The proportion of rural residents amounted to only 11.4%, the lowest figure in Kazakhstan. Although the share of the urban population in Atyrau and Aktobe stood at 64% and 69% respectively in 1959, the proportion of rural residents increased in subsequent decades. In West Kazakhstan, the urban population accounted for 42.5% and the rural population for 57.5% in 1989. Although urbanization in Aktobe and West Kazakhstan was initially relatively high, it gradually slowed over time. Demographic dynamics in Atyrau differ from those of other western oblasts. A distinctive feature of the region is the predominance of the rural population. As such, its demographic profile resembles that of southern-type regions, where a single ethnic group is more dominant. These patterns were directly influenced by economic policy, the distribution of industrial centers, migration flows between rural and urban areas, and fertility levels. Thus, within this region, Mangystau experienced extremely high urbanization, whereas the other oblasts exhibited moderate and more unstable urbanization trends. The overall economy remained heavily dependent on industry, particularly the oil sector.

The Central region is represented by Karaganda Oblast. Karaganda is the center of the coal industry and one of the flagships of Soviet industrialization. A distinctive feature separating this region from others is the continuous growth of urbanization. This trend is especially evident in Karaganda Oblast: the share of urban residents increased from 56% in 1959 to 81.7% in 1989. This rise is closely linked to the rapid expansion of the coal and metallurgical industries and the growing demand for labor. The Central ethnodemographic region is also characterized by a sharp decline in population dynamics. It can be described as a region that consistently loses population. Over the last two inter-census periods, population decline in this area reached 303.2 thousand people, making it the second-highest rate of population reduction after the North-East. Thus, the Central region stands

out for its distinct pathway of ethnodemographic development. Karaganda remains one of the most urbanized oblasts in Kazakhstan, where migration from rural to urban areas was exceptionally intense.

The southern region includes the oblasts of Almaty, Zhambyl, Kyzylorda, and South Kazakhstan. These regions were characterized by the predominance of the Kazakh population, as well as the persistent dominance of rural residents. For example, although the share of the urban population in Almaty Oblast reached 82.7% in 1959, by 1989 it had decreased to only 32.7%. This shift is explained by the administrative separation of the city of Almaty as an independent territorial unit. In Zhambyl Oblast, the urban population accounted for 47.3% and the rural population for 52.7% in 1989. In South Kazakhstan, the proportion of urban residents was very low – only 40.5%. In Kyzylorda, although the urban share increased slightly (reaching 60.2% by 1989), rural lifestyles remained dominant. These regions maintained an economic profile largely oriented toward agriculture – cotton production, rice cultivation, and livestock farming (Demograficheski, 1990: 7-11). Consequently, migration to urban areas remained limited, and rural settlement patterns persisted. Additionally, these oblasts were characterized by relatively high fertility rates.

Overall, a comparative assessment of urbanization levels and regional characteristics allows the following conclusions to be drawn:

1. North-East: high (Virgin Lands campaign, industrial development, Slavic/Russian demographic influence);
2. West: medium to high (oil industry; extremely high urbanization in Mangystau);
3. Center: very high (urban dominance; a region of miners and industrial workers);
4. South: low (agricultural orientation; traditional rural lifestyle of the Kazakh population).

Growth in the urban population was observed in two ethnodemographic regions: the North-East and the Center. The Central region can be classified as a highly urbanized area, with two-thirds of its population residing in cities. A decline in the urban population occurred in two regions: the South and the West. Despite a 9% decrease in the number of urban residents in recent years, Mangystau Oblast remains one of the most highly urbanized regions of Kazakhstan. The urbanization process had a more significant impact on Aktobe and North Kazakhstan oblasts, where the share of the urban population increased by 20% and 17%, respectively, during this period. Overall, Kazakhstan is developing in line with the general global trend of increasing urbanization (Sarsembaeva G.A., 2020).

A key feature of the period under analysis is that the ethnic groups of the republic had, by this time, accumulated the potential of distinctive demographic, cultural, historical, and geographical patterns of development. This accumulation of potential emerged over a long historical period as a result of natural demographic dynamics and their inherent regularities. At the same time, state intervention also influenced population movement processes. The state directly or indirectly regulated certain demographic processes – such as population distribution, population size, and migration.

Results

The historical retrospective of ethnodemographic processes is of great significance for identifying contemporary demographic development trends in Kazakhstan. Statistical data for the period between the 1959 and 1989 population censuses – which corresponds to nearly one full demographic generation – show that the population increased by a factor of 1.77 (77.14%) over these forty years.

Between 1959 and 1989, the ethnic composition of Kazakhstan underwent complex and rapid transformations. The numerical strengthening of the Kazakh population through natural growth, alongside the long-term demographic dominance of Russians, significantly shaped these changes. The period was also marked by the notable presence of other ethnic groups, including Germans, Ukrainians, Uighurs, and Tatars. This era constitutes an important historical foundation for understanding the national and ethnic policies of contemporary independent Kazakhstan. Throughout the 1959–1989 period, the ethnic composition of Kazakhstan's regions changed considerably. When examining the ethnic profiles of individual oblasts, they can be categorized into four groups based on their similarities (Alekseenko A.N., Aubakirova Zh.S., 2020: 15–20).

If we examine the changes in the ethnic composition during this period, the following figures are observed (Table 2).

Table 2. Population Size and Ethnic Composition of Kazakhstan According to the All-Union Population Censuses of 1959, 1970, 1979, and 1989 (thousand persons)

Ethnic groups	1959		1970		1979		1989	
	number	%	Number	%	number	%	number	%
Total population	9294,7	100	13008,7	100	14684,3	100	16464,5	100
Kazakhs	2787,3	30,0	4234,2	32,5	5289,3	36,0	6534,6	39,7
Russians	3972,0	42,7	5521,9	42,4	5991,2	40,8	6227,5	37,8
Ukrainians	741,3	8,2	933,5	7,2	898,0	6,1	956,2	5,8
Germans	659,8	7,1	858,1	6,6	887,4	6,1	957,5	5,8
Other ethnic groups	1134,3	12,2	1461,0	11,2	1618,4	11,0	1788,7	10,9
Note – Compiled on the basis of the literature (Vsesoiuznaia perepis naselenia 1959 g. // SGA RK. F. 1568, Op. 21, D. 4, L. 1-42.) (Statisticheski, 1991)								

The period between 1959 and 1989 represents one of the most significant phases in Kazakhstan's ethnodemographic history. Over these thirty years, the population of the republic increased from 9.3 million to 16.5 million. However, this growth was not uniform across all ethnic groups. The demographic shifts of these decades were directly shaped by Soviet migration policies, socio-industrial projects, natural population growth among the indigenous population, as well as the consequences of repression and deportations (Itogi, 1994). The proportion of Kazakhs increased from 30% to 39.7%. One of the main drivers of this rise was the high natural population growth, particularly in rural areas where Kazakhs were densely concentrated and fertility rates remained high. Moreover, during the 1970s and 1980s, Kazakh youth increasingly pursued educational opportunities, leading to stronger integration into urban environments. As higher education expanded, part of the younger generation migrated to cities, becoming active participants in the urbanization process. In the 1960s, however, the share of semi-literate and illiterate residents in the republic remained relatively high. Archival statistics confirm this. According to reports from 1964, the total number of illiterate individuals in Kazakhstan was 4,072, of whom 2,875 were women. The number of semi-literate residents was 6,682, including 4,213 women. These data indicate that women's access to education was limited at the time, largely due to their restricted involvement in public life and predominant engagement in domestic duties. This phenomenon can be attributed to socio-cultural factors of the period—specifically, traditional gender roles and insufficient educational infrastructure in rural areas, which hindered women's educational advancement (Aubakirova Zh.S., Alekseenko A.N., 2020: 29). During this same period, the Kazakh population, which had sharply declined as a result of repression and famine, began to recover starting in the 1950s. Nonetheless, several factors limited the increase in the Kazakh share. One of these was the mass influx of Russians and other ethnic groups during the Virgin Lands campaign (1954-1965), which slowed the proportional growth of the Kazakh population. Another limiting factor was the dominance of the Russian-speaking environment in urban areas, which hindered the pace of Kazakh urbanization. The proportion of Russians decreased from 42.7% to 37.8%, although their absolute number increased. This was primarily due to two major processes. First, the Virgin Lands campaign of the 1950s-1960s brought a large influx of Russian settlers into Kazakhstan. Second, industrialization played a crucial role: during the 1960s-1980s, many of the engineers and workers who arrived to build factories and industrial enterprises were ethnic Russians. However, their natural population growth remained slower than that of Kazakhs. By the 1980s, some Russians began migrating to their historical homeland. The next largest ethnic group in Kazakhstan was Ukrainians, whose share declined from 8.2% to 5.8%. Similar to Russians, many Ukrainians arrived during the Virgin Lands campaign. However, a significant number of them were

temporary settlers who later returned to their historical homeland or moved to other Soviet republics. Another notable ethnic group was the Germans, whose share decreased from 7.1% to 5.8%, although their absolute number increased. Several factors contributed to this trend: Germans deported en masse to Kazakhstan during the Stalinist period settled permanently in the republic and developed strong community structures between the 1950s and 1980s. Due to their high levels of labor discipline and relatively high fertility rates, their population continued to grow. Nevertheless, by the late 1980s, the German population also began to decline as repatriation to their ethnic homeland (migration to Germany) increased (Alekseenko N.V., Alekseenko V.N., 2009:131).

As for other ethnic groups (Uighurs, Tatars, Koreans, Chechens, Kurds, and others), they accounted for approximately 11-12% of the population. This proportion reflects the presence of ethnic communities that were relocated to Kazakhstan for political reasons during the 1930s-1950s. Many of these groups settled in the southern and eastern regions of the republic, where they established national-cultural centers and maintained strong community structures.

Overall, the changes in the ethnic composition during this period can be characterized through the following demographic and political factors:

Virgin Lands campaign (1954-1965): led to the mass arrival of Slavic populations in Northern, Central, and Eastern Kazakhstan;

Deportations (1930s–1950s): Germans, Koreans, Chechens-Ingush, and other ethnic groups were forcibly resettled in Kazakhstan;

Industrialization: resulted in a large influx of Russian-speaking populations to cities such as Karaganda, Pavlodar, Oskemen, Semey, and Zhezkazgan;

High natural population growth in rural areas: among Kazakhs led to an increase in their numbers and a gradual shift in the overall ethnic balance.

The first group consists of regions where Kazakhs formed the majority, but Slavic populations remained significant (Western and Central-Western zones). The oblasts in this group are Aktobe, West Kazakhstan, and Mangystau. Their general characteristics were as follows: in 1959, Kazakhs constituted 40-70%, while Russians accounted for 25-45%; by 1989, Kazakhs comprised 55-78%, and Russians 15-35%. Main trends: During the Soviet period, the development of the oil and gas industries attracted Russians and other ethnic groups to these regions. Nevertheless, Kazakhs retained demographic dominance due to high natural population growth and strong rural concentration. By the 1980s, outmigration of Russians and Slavic populations to their historical homelands accelerated, leading to a further increase in the share of Kazakhs.

The second group consists of regions where Slavic populations were predominant (Northern, Eastern, and Central Kazakhstan). This group includes the oblasts of North Kazakhstan, Kostanay, Akmola, Pavlodar, East Kazakhstan, and Karaganda. Their general characteristics were as follows: in 1959, Kazakhs accounted for 20-35%, Russians 45-60%, and Ukrainians and Germans 10-20%; by 1989, Kazakhs made up 30-40%, while Russians accounted for 37-51%. Main trends: These regions were the primary targets of the Virgin Lands campaign and Soviet industrialization policies. Millions of migrants arrived from Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Kazakhs remained concentrated mainly in rural areas and constituted a minority in urban centers. From the 1980s onward, the share of Kazakhs began to increase gradually, yet in many oblasts they continued to remain a minority.

The third group comprises regions where the Kazakh ethnic group was clearly dominant (Southern and Western Kazakhstan). The oblasts in this category include Atyrau, Kyzylorda, Zhambyl, and South Kazakhstan (now Turkistan). Their general characteristics were as follows: in 1959, Kazakhs accounted for 70-90%, while other ethnic groups constituted 10-30%; by 1989, the share of Kazakhs had increased to 80-95%. Main trends: These regions historically represented the traditional settlement areas of the Kazakh population. Ethnic groups such as Uzbeks, Uighurs, Dungans, Tatars, and Russians tended to reside primarily in urban centers. Strong rural settlement patterns and high fertility rates enabled Kazakhs to maintain and further strengthen their demographic dominance.

The fourth group consists of regions with a mixed ethnic composition, where the proportion of Kazakhs was steadily increasing. This group includes Almaty Oblast and the city of Almaty. Their

general characteristics were as follows: in 1959, Kazakhs accounted for 25-50%, Russians 35-60%, and Uighurs 5-8%; by 1989, Kazakhs comprised 45-60%, Russians 30-50%, and Uighurs 7-8%. Main trends: As Almaty served as the capital, it attracted a significant number of Russian-speaking intellectuals and specialists. In Almaty Oblast, Kazakhs and Uighurs lived in mixed settlements. During the 1980s, Kazakhs increasingly migrated to urban areas, contributing to the rise in their share of the population.

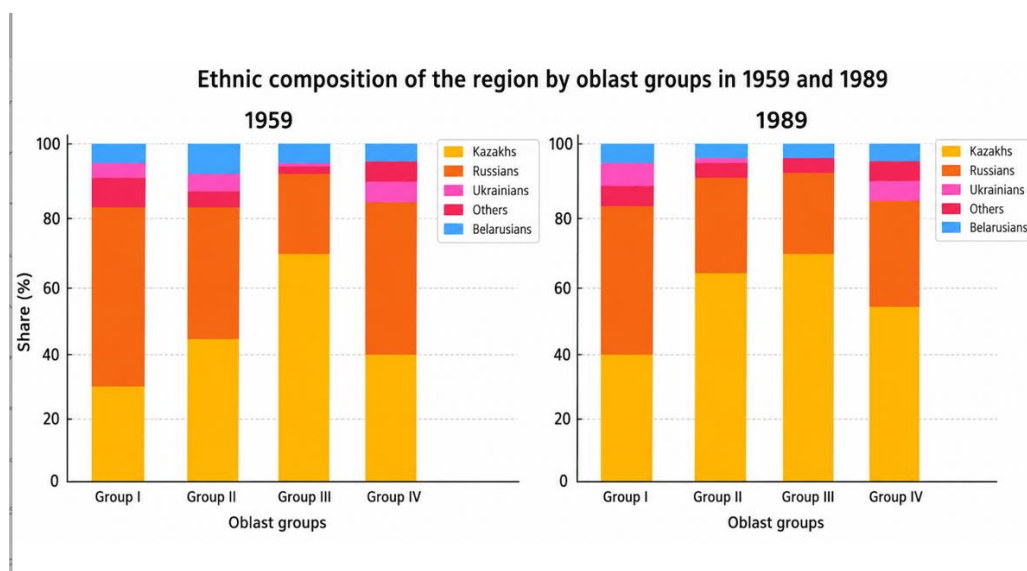


Figure 1. Ethnic Composition of Regional Groups of the Republic of Kazakhstan (1959 and 1989)

Note – Compiled on the basis of the literature (All-Union Population Census of 1959 // Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan. F. 1568, Op. 21, D. 4, L. 1-42.) (Statistical, 1991)

As shown in the diagram above (Figure 1), during the period from 1959 to 1989, Russians and other Slavic ethnic groups constituted a large share of the population in the northern and central regions of Kazakhstan, whereas Kazakhs predominated in the southern and western regions. However, over the course of these thirty years, both the number and the proportion of Kazakhs increased steadily across all regions. The main factors influencing this trend include:

- high natural population growth among Kazakhs;
- migration from rural to urban areas;
- decline in the intensity of Soviet migration policies;
- the beginning of return migration of certain ethnic groups to their historical homelands (Germans, Russians) (Asylbekov M.H., Kozina V.V., 2001).

Statistical data indicate that during the 1950s-1960s, Kazakhs experienced a demographic explosion. The ethnic stratification of the socio-economic conditions formed during this period played a decisive role. Industrial and manufacturing functions were carried out predominantly by “non-titular” ethnic groups, while the majority of Kazakhs remained rural residents. State social preferences – such as free healthcare and education, state allowances, and support for large families – contributed to qualitative changes in the demographic characteristics of the ethnic group. Against the backdrop of sustained high fertility, the rapid decline in mortality rates (particularly infant mortality) led to accelerated population growth. During this period, the share of Russian-speaking populations increased significantly, especially in industrial regions. However, in the 1970s-1980s, natural population growth among Kazakhs, along with the increase in the number of Kazakhs returning to the republic, contributed to changes in the national structure.

During the period from the 1950s to the 1980s, Kazakhstan underwent profound socio-economic transformations – particularly industrialization, urbanization, agricultural collectivization, and internal migration processes – that shaped the demographic characteristics of different regions.

The demographic dynamics of each region varied according to factors such as local natural resources, the level of industrial development, the condition of agriculture, and the scale and direction of migration flows. This period witnessed fundamental changes in Kazakhstan's economy, which in turn intensified regional differences in demographic structure. In the course of the research, the territory of the republic was conditionally divided into four major regions according to their ethnodemographic characteristics: the North-East, the Center, the West, and the South. The demographic features of each region were closely linked to historical development trajectories, economic policies, migration patterns, and ethnic composition. In the northern and central regions, the proportion of Slavic ethnic groups remained high, alongside rapid industrialization. In contrast, the southern region was characterized by strong natural population growth among Kazakhs and a high degree of ethnic homogeneity. The western region, distinguished by its oil and gas industry, represented a model of both accelerated urbanization and mixed ethnic composition.

Between 1959 and 1989, the proportion of Kazakhs increased gradually across all regions of the country. This trend was driven, on the one hand, by high natural population growth and, on the other, by changes in migration patterns. The decline in Soviet migration policies, the return migration of various ethnic groups to their historical homelands, and internal rural-to-urban migration all had a significant impact on the national composition and regional demographic structure. Thus, the period under study represents a decisive historical stage in the formation of Kazakhstan's contemporary demographic profile. Processes of urbanization, migration, ethnic restructuring, and social transformation intensified regional differences and laid the foundation for the country's current social, economic, and ethno-political stability. Regional demographic differentiation plays an important role in shaping the nation's social structure and future development strategies and remains highly relevant today. The findings of this research should be regarded as an important scientific and practical basis for ensuring demographic security, developing regional development strategies, and fostering harmonious interethnic relations.

Among the regions of Kazakhstan, the demographic development of East Kazakhstan is particularly distinctive and can be regarded as a micro-model of nationwide demographic processes. This is because the key factors that shaped the country's overall demographic landscape – industrialization, migration, urbanization, ethnic transformation, and socio-state reforms – intersected most clearly in this region. Consequently, from the perspective of conducting a comprehensive analysis of national demographic trends, East Kazakhstan emerges as a representative model region.

Conclusion

Kazakhstan's demographic development in the second half of the twentieth century was shaped by profound socio-economic transformations. This period fundamentally altered the country's ethnic composition, settlement patterns, urbanization trajectories, and regional demographic characteristics. Industrialization, the Virgin Lands campaign, the acceleration of urban development, intensified migration, and the priorities of Soviet social policy became the main driving forces of demographic change.

The research demonstrates that each region developed its own distinct demographic model. In the northern and central regions, the effects of industrialization and in-migration were more pronounced, leading to significant changes in ethnic and social structures. The western region, shaped by the development of the oil and gas industry, experienced rapid urbanization. In contrast, the demographic structure of the southern regions was defined by historical settlement patterns, a predominantly rural way of life, and high natural population growth.

Changes in the ethnic composition were also shaped by a number of historical factors. State policies, internal and external migration flows, transformations in the social structure, and the expansion of the urban environment all contributed to the reconfiguration of the ethnodemographic balance. The propensity for natural population growth among Kazakhs and their predominance in rural areas influenced the long-term transformation of the overall ethnic structure, while the presence of other ethnic groups in industrialized regions further intensified regional differences.

The process of urbanization was one of the key factors shaping Kazakhstan's demographic landscape. Cities became centers of industrial development, migration, and social transformation, contributing to the deepening of demographic differences between regions. The role of rural areas persisted to varying degrees across different regions, exerting a distinct influence on the country's spatial structure.

Overall, the period under study laid the historical foundation for Kazakhstan's contemporary demographic system. The ethnic, social, and urbanization differences among the regions diversified the country's development trajectories and highlighted the need for region-specific policy approaches. This historical continuity serves as an important methodological basis for understanding current demographic trends and for informing future strategic planning.

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ҚАЗАҚСТАН Өңірлеріндегі Урбанизация және Этникалық Құрылымның Аймақтық Ерекшеліктері (1959-1989 жж.)

Аңдатпа. Бұл зерттеуде 1959-1989 жылдар аралығындағы Қазақстан халқының демографиялық дамуының негізгі кезеңдері мен аймақтық ерекшеліктері қарастырылады. XX ғасырдың екінші жартысында елде жүргізілген индустриаландыру, урбанизация қарқынының күшеюі, тың және тыңайған жерлерді игеру науқаны, көші-қон процестерінің бағытталуы және әлеуметтік реформалардың жүзеге асырылуы республикадағы этнодемографиялық жағдайға елеулі ықпал еткен маңызды факторлар ретінде талданады.

Зерттеу барысында архивтік құжаттар, кеңестік кезеңнің халық санағы материалдары мен ресми статистикалық мәліметтер қолданылып, халық санының динамикасы, этникалық құрамдағы өзгерістер, қалалық және ауылдық тұрғындар арақатынасы, сондай-ақ өңірлер арасындағы демографиялық айырмашылықтар анықталды.

Нәтижелер көрсеткендей, 1959-1989 жылдары Қазақстан халқы 1,77 есеге артқан, ал қазақтардың үлесі 30%-дан 39,7%-ға дейін көбейген. Бұл өсім ең алдымен табиғи көбейістің жоғары деңгейімен және ауылдық жерлердегі қазақ халқының шоғырлануымен түсіндіріледі. Сонымен қатар зерттеу индустриаландыру саясатының Солтүстік және Орталық аймақтарда славян этностарының үлесін арттырғанын, ал Оңтүстік пен Батыс облыстарда қазақ халқы басым сақталғанын көрсетеді. Жалпы алғанда, бұл демографиялық өзгерістер Қазақстанның әлеуметтік-экономикалық дамуына ұзақ мерзімді ықпал еткен маңызды тарихи үрдістер болды.

Түйін сөздер: демографиялық даму, этникалық құрылым, урбанизация, көші-қон, аймақтық ерекшеліктер, халық санағы, XX ғасыр.

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УРБАНИЗАЦИЯ И РЕГИОНАЛЬНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ЭТНИЧЕСКОЙ СТРУКТУРЫ В РЕГИОНАХ КАЗАХСТАНА (1959-1989 гг.)

Аннотация. В данном исследовании рассматриваются основные этапы и региональные особенности демографического развития населения Казахстана в 1959-1989 годы. Во второй половине XX века индустриализация, ускоренная урбанизация, освоение целинных и залежных земель, направленные миграционные процессы и проведение социальных реформ стали ключевыми факторами, оказавшими значительное влияние на этнодемографическую структуру республики.

В ходе исследования использованы архивные материалы, данные всесоюзных переписей населения и официальные статистические сборники, на основе которых проанализирована динамика численности населения, изменения в этническом составе, соотношение городских и сельских жителей, а также выявлены демографические различия между регионами.

Результаты показывают, что в 1959-1989 годы население Казахстана увеличилось в 1,77 раза, а доля казахов возросла с 30 % до 39,7 %. Такой рост объясняется прежде всего высоким уровнем естественного прироста и концентрацией казахского населения в сельской местности. Кроме того, исследование выявило, что политика индустриализации способствовала преобладанию славянских этносов на севере и в центре республики, тогда как в южных и западных областях сохранялось доминирование казахского населения. В целом данные демографические изменения представляют собой важный исторический процесс, оказавший долговременное влияние на социально-экономическое развитие Казахстана.

Ключевые слова: демографическое развитие, этническая структура, урбанизация, миграция, региональные особенности, перепись населения, XX век.

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Received: 15.10.2025

Revised: 03.11.2025

Accepted: 25.12.2025