

МРПТИ 06.71.07

JEL Classification: I38

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52821/2789-4401-2025-4-29-39>

**MECHANISMS OF STATE REGULATION AND COMPETITIVENESS
ENHANCEMENT OF SOCIALLY SIGNIFICANT PRODUCTS: A CASE STUDY
OF MEAT AND DAIRY PRODUCTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the state policy aimed at increasing the competitiveness of socially significant products in Kazakhstan, analyze the main factors affecting the competitiveness of social products such as meat and dairy products, determine the dynamics of their development, as well as identify problems in the field of socially significant food products and propose solutions.

Methodology: comparative and statistical methods of analysis were used when writing the article.

The uniqueness of the study is the analysis of the main factors determining the competitiveness of such socially significant food products as meat and dairy products, the identification of problems and the definition of the main mechanisms of government regulation aimed at supporting the competitiveness of such products.

As a result of the research, problems in the field of socially significant products were identified and ways to solve them were considered to ensure the competitiveness of such products.

Keywords: state regulation, competitiveness, socially significant products, mechanisms of state support

Acknowledgments: This research is funded by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Grant No. AP23489368).

INTRODUCTION

The State competition policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan is aimed at developing mechanisms that ensure the development of fair competition in the economy, prevent abuse of market power, limit monopolism, stimulate innovation and protect the interests of consumers. To achieve these goals, the State sets itself such tasks as promoting effective competition, preventing market monopolization and protecting consumer rights, creating conditions for equal access to markets for all economic entities, regardless of their forms of ownership, and reducing administrative barriers to doing business.

One of the important areas of government activity in terms of ensuring competition is antimonopoly regulation aimed at controlling the activities of large companies and preventing mergers and acquisitions leading to monopoly. Another aspect of government activity in this area is related to the regulation of natural monopolies in such strategically important sectors of the economy as gas supply or rail transport, where it is technically impossible or very difficult to ensure a competitive environment. In such industries, the government sets tariffs and monitors the quality of services.

At the same time, according to the World Bank, there is a slowdown in economic activity in Kazakhstan, one of the main reasons for which is the insufficient development of the private sector due to an unfavorable competitive environment and the excessive presence of state-owned enterprises in the market. The World Bank experts use the Bertelsmann Transformation Index to assess the competitive environment and the competitive policy of the state. This index determines the degree of compliance with the rules of market competition and all countries are rated from 1 to 10 points. In Kazakhstan, the Bertelsmann transformation index rose from only 5 to 6 points between 2006 and 2022. [1;2;3]

The main reason for such a low result is the predominance of state ownership in the economy. In addition, according to an Analytical Report on quasi-public sector reform, in Kazakhstan, state ownership is present in 20 out of 30 sectors of the economy, while in OECD countries this indicator averages 13. At the same time, the industries where state ownership prevails include manufacturing, transport, and the sphere of subsurface use. In addition, the above-mentioned report notes the inefficiency of state-owned companies in terms of low productivity and their irrational use of funds. For example, the loss of quasi-public sector entities owned by the republic and local authorities in 2020 alone amounted to 200 billion tenge, and the volume of their debt obligations reached 17.2 trillion tenge [1; 4].

In this regard, it should be emphasized that the effectiveness of enterprises with state participation significantly depends on the form and degree of state ownership. Companies with private investors in their capital demonstrate higher performance indicators compared to enterprises that are wholly or predominantly owned by the state. Moreover, enterprises with indirect state participation, as a rule, operate more efficiently than those under its direct control. On average, the level of productivity and employment growth in state-owned companies is lower than in similar private structures. The significant presence of the state in the economy correlates with a decrease in aggregate productivity and a decrease in competitive dynamics, especially in industries with a high level of competition. Therefore, in order to ensure the sustainable development of the private sector, government intervention in the economy should be minimized and attention should be focused on the implementation of reforms aimed at creating a competitive environment and the functioning of free markets [5].

The problems of the state's competition policy are considered in the research of both foreign and domestic authors. The research by Monti, G., Parcu, P. L., Botta, M., [6] examines the problems of the relationship between competition and government regulation in industries such as telecommunications, the energy sector, and pharmaceuticals; new trends in digital and infrastructure policy are identified, and the practice of EU and national institutions in the development of competition policy is analyzed. Motta, M. [7] conducts an integrated economic and econometric analysis of competition policies, including merger assessment and market analysis, while Fox, E. M. [8] examines how states and international bodies coordinate antitrust practices, including mergers and digital challenges. The works of Philippon, T. [9], a researcher from Harvard University, criticize the concentration of market power in the digital sector, the influence of digital giants on markets and consumers, and analyze the strategies of large platforms. The works of American researchers Cowgill, B., Prat, A., Valletti, T. [10] are also devoted to the problems of market concentration in certain industries and lobbying the interests of individual economic entities. As a result of their research, all of the above-mentioned researchers call for an updated competition policy and improved mechanisms of antimonopoly regulation by the state.

Among the domestic authors, the works of Aitzhanov A. T., Dobriyan E. I., Mukhametova D. L. are devoted to the development of competition policy, which analyze the application of the provisions of legislation in the Republic of Kazakhstan regarding the functioning of cartels, market dominance of individual economic entities and the specifics of compliance processes [11; 12].

The presented scientific article will examine the specifics of the state policy of ensuring the competitiveness of socially significant products in Kazakhstan. The competitiveness of socially significant products is not only an economic, but also a social indicator. It requires a balance between the interests of producers, consumers and the state.

The specifics of competitive relations in the market of socially significant goods are studied in the research article by Suleymanov A.M. and Tsareva V.M. [13] The authors note that the key factor determining the competitiveness of socially significant goods, including medicines, is innovation, but domestic manufacturers face problems related to financial constraints and strong competition from foreign companies. In the research paper by Alon Eden et al. the problems of setting optimal prices for socially significant goods that benefit not only the buyer, but also others are considered. The authors propose a pricing model and strategies that take into account the effects of external social influences on price changes for socially significant goods [14].

Eleanor Doyle and Mauricio Perez-Alaniz propose an approach to measuring the sustainable competitiveness of goods that includes economic, social and environmental components. They develop the concepts of Global Competitiveness Index and Sustainable Competitiveness [15].

In the book by Matthias Kalkuhl et al. the authors investigate the impact of price changes on socially significant food products in the short and long term. According to the authors, in the short term, an increase in

prices for social goods enhances poverty, and in the long term, on the contrary, an increase in prices can reduce poverty due to the adaptation of the economy [16].

The works of Minenko A.V., Seliverstov M.V., Ivanov G.G., Efimovskaya L.A., Kryshchalev V.K. are also devoted to price issues of socially significant products, which analyze the legal mechanisms of regulation and measures to reduce food prices, as well as factors influencing price increases for social products and the possibilities of its state regulation [17; 18]

MAIN PART

Increasing competitiveness in this area has a direct impact on living standards, social stability, and national security. Therefore, it is very important to implement a rational state policy in this area. The State policy in the field of ensuring the competitiveness of socially significant products and goods is related to measures aimed at supporting the production, accessibility and quality of vital goods while simultaneously controlling prices and protecting the interests of socially vulnerable groups of the population. At the same time, this government policy is aimed at ensuring the affordability of essential goods; supporting national producers of socially important products; guaranteed availability of these products in all regions of the country and prevention of shortages and speculation, as well as reduction of dependence on imports, especially in conditions of external restrictions. In the context of the implementation of this state policy, the analysis of the dynamics and factors affecting the competitiveness of certain categories of socially significant products is of particular importance.

In Kazakhstan, in 2022, a list of 19 socially significant food products (SSFPs) was approved, for which the state sets maximum retail prices [19]. In addition to direct price control, there are restrictions in the form of margins on SSFPs, which should not exceed 15% of the selling price from the manufacturer or distributor. Kazakhstan also has an authorized antimonopoly authority, which regulates the Law on Competition, which prohibits monopolistic agreements and abuse of a dominant position.

Next, a comparative analysis of the dynamics of changes in the main indicators of socially significant products such as dairy and meat products in Kazakhstan for 2015-2024 is carried out.

Statistics show that Kazakhstan has seen a decline in dairy production over the past 10 years. Thus, in 2024, the production of dairy products in the country decreased by 69% compared to 2020 and by 45% compared to 2015. As observed, the shortage of this type of product due to a decrease in its domestic production was compensated by imported products, which is confirmed by an increase in imports of dairy products into the country. Imports of dairy products in 2024 increased by 4.8% compared to 2020, amounting to 818.2 thousand tons. At the same time, it is necessary to note the increase in the volume of exports of dairy products during the analyzed period. Dairy exports are particularly growing in the country's border regions. It should be noted that a 42% exports rise of Kazakhstan's dairy products in 2020-2024 indicates an increase in demand for Kazakhstani dairy products, which proves an expansion of the domestic dairy products competitiveness in foreign markets [20]. For comparison, the volume of dairy products exports in Russia increased by 1,4 % [21; 22; 23].

The next important industry that forms socially significant products in the country is the meat industry. According to statistics, Kazakhstan has seen an increase in the production of meat products in 2015-2024. During the analyzed period, the production of meat products in Kazakhstan increased by 36%. It should be noted that the volume of exports of meat products during the analyzed period increased from 13.4 thousand tons to 82.7 thousand tons, that is, by 6.2 times, while the volume of imports increased from 153.5 thousand tons to 220 thousand tons, that is, by 43,3 % [23; 24; 25; 26]. An increase in demand for Kazakhstani meat products on the foreign market may demonstrate a rise in competitiveness of domestic meat products on world markets. If we compare the growth of exports of meat products from Kazakhstan with Russia, then in Russia this indicator increased by 26% in 2015-2024 [27].

However, despite the positive trends associated with the growth of exports and increased demand for Kazakhstani meat and dairy products in foreign markets, there are a number of problems hindering the competitiveness of domestic meat and dairy products both inside and outside the country. Before considering the problems, we will focus on the main factors affecting the competitiveness of domestic meat and dairy products. These include the following:

- Prices of products, in particular, to what extent the prices of meat and dairy products are combined with their quality, and how competitive they are compared to similar products from manufacturers of other countries. In this part, the possibility of manufacturers providing discounts, promotions, and loyalty programs may also be considered.

- Product quality, which can be characterized by shelf life and freshness of products; organoleptic properties such as taste, smell, texture, appearance, etc.; protein, fat, vitamins and other nutrients, and the absence of harmful additives and GMOs; certification and compliance with international and national quality standards; the use of innovations, that is, the introduction of new formulations containing less fat and lactose, the development of functional products such as probiotics and sports nutrition, taking into account dietary requirements and other nutritional needs, etc.

- Production factors related to the availability and use of environmentally friendly and safe agricultural raw materials, the use of modern processing and packaging technologies, automation and production efficiency, quality control, etc.

- Marketing, logistics and sales aimed at brand awareness and consumer trust, effective advertising and PR strategies, availability of product series (premium, standard, economy) for different segments and groups of consumers; availability of products in retail chains and online platforms, reliability of supplies and compliance with storage conditions, timing and convenience shipping, etc.

- Government regulation and support, environmental and social factors related to the level of government subsidies to the meat and dairy industries, favorable customs duties and the absence of trade barriers, the availability of legislation in the field of product quality and safety, participation in government programs to support local producers and farmers; as well as factors aimed at sustainable livestock production and agricultural processing products, responsibility to society, and compliance with ESG principles.

Next, we will analyze the state of the above-mentioned factors that directly determine the competitiveness of socially important goods, such as meat and dairy products, and the first of these factors, as already mentioned, are product prices. In the Figure 1 below, you can see the dynamics of price changes for beef, chicken and milk, which are included in the list of 19 socially significant products in the country for 2019-2024.

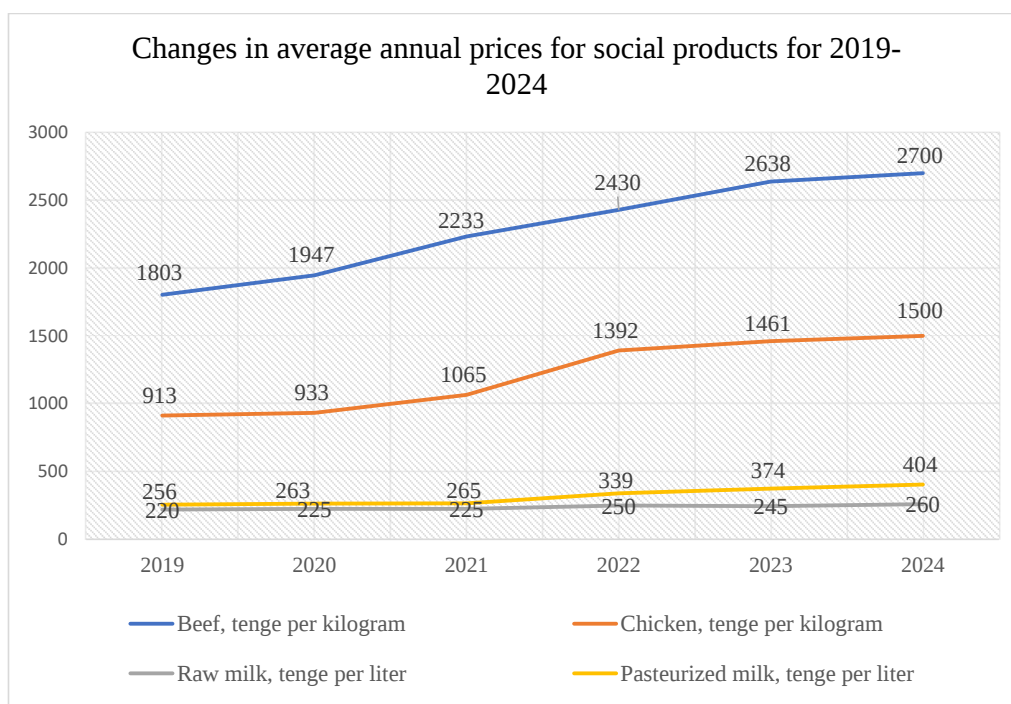


Figure 1 – Changes in prices for meat and dairy products included in the list of SSFPs in Kazakhstan for 2019-2024 [28]

As the chart data show, during the analyzed period (2019-2024), prices for beef increased by 49.8%, chicken – by 64.3%, pasteurized milk – by 57.8% and raw milk increased by 18.2%. The increase in prices for meat

and dairy products during this period is due to a number of factors: firstly, this is due to the weakening of the national currency and rising prices for imported feed, veterinary medicine, packaging and machinery. Also, the increase in prices for fuel, electricity and logistics has affected the rise of production costs; secondly, during the global pandemic (COVID-19) since 2020 and the war in Ukraine since 2022, there has been a jump in world food prices; thirdly, an increase in the cost of wheat, barley and a decrease in feed and grass yields in many regions due to the drought in 2021-2023 led to the rise of food prices. All these factors have led to a significant increase in prices for meat and dairy products included in the list of SSFPs in Kazakhstan.

The next important factor determining the competitiveness of domestic meat and dairy products is their quality. In this regard, Kazakhstani producers face a shortage of high-quality raw materials. According to the Atameken Business media holding, only 27-30% of the milk produced in Kazakhstan is suitable for deep processing, which is significantly below the global standard (62%) [29]. The problem is also aggravated by the fact that more than 70% of raw milk is produced by small private farms and households, which makes the process of collecting raw materials inefficient and fragmented [30]. Also, the lack of balanced production planning leads to critical deficits in some regions and surpluses in others. The predominance of small-scale farms, a low proportion of beef cattle, and insufficient feed supply are also problems that negatively affect the quality of the country's meat industry.

The production factors determining the competitiveness of domestic dairy and meat products, first of all, face the problems of high production and feed costs. For example, in Kazakhstan, the cost of milk is about \$19, which is significantly higher than in Europe and America. And the share of feed costs is about 70-90% of the overall costs at a time when in European countries this indicator varies from 40 to 60% [29].

Kazakh producers of dairy and meat products also feel inadequate in terms of state support. For example, subsidies provided to domestic producers for breeding cattle, insemination and cheaper production amounted to 35.38 billion tenge in 2023. However, according to industry experts, such state support is significantly lower than that of agricultural producers in Russia and Belarus, which puts domestic producers of milk and meat in an unequal position [30; 31].

Infrastructure problems and the introduction of innovations also significantly reduce the competitiveness of meat and dairy products produced in Kazakhstan. The critical need for the development of large dairy and mini-farms, modernization and increase in production capacity require the formation of large farms and agricultural enterprises of industrial and family types with a total capacity of 10 thousand heads of livestock. Also, the integration and unification of agricultural industries through the creation of agricultural cooperatives and holdings can help improve the activity efficiency in the dairy and meat industries.

In addition to the above-mentioned problems, Kazakhstan has a number of common issues that relate to other types of socially significant products and goods, such as:

- monopolization of markets, that is, a limited number of suppliers and retail chains;
- high import dependence, especially on vegetables, fruits, sugar and medicines;
- insufficient development of the processing sector to fully meet the domestic demand for socially significant products;
- high cost of loans and low margins, which do not motivate agricultural producers to expand their activities;
- insufficiently developed logistics, which leads to increased costs and the final cost of goods.

CONCLUSION

Our analysis of the competitiveness factors of socially significant products and the identified problems allow us to assert that the Government of Kazakhstan should improve its policy in this area and improve measures to support the competitiveness of social products. Government regulatory mechanisms are used to improve government policy in the field of social product support, such as:

- the price stabilization fund, which aims to create state reserves by forming food funds and stocks, and making interventional purchases to curb prices for socially important products, ensure food security and protect socially vulnerable segments of the population. To do this, the Fund purchases socially significant products at fixed or wholesale prices from manufacturers in advance. With a sharp increase in market prices, the fund supplies products to the market at lower prices through special outlets or partner stores. Sometimes the

fund compensates part of the costs to retail chains or manufacturers so that they keep prices below market levels. There are regional price stabilization funds in Kazakhstan, which are coordinated by the Ministry of Trade and Integration;

- regulating prices for socially important products and goods by setting maximum trade margins (no more than 15%), temporarily freezing prices for individual items, and ensuring control through Akimats and monitoring groups. At the same time, marginal prices for certain socially significant goods are being introduced, control of trade surcharges in retail trade is being strengthened and monitoring of prices, quality and safety of goods throughout the country with the participation of antimonopoly and other government regulatory authorities, and a register of socially significant goods is being formed;

- import substitution and food security mechanisms aimed at increasing the share of domestic products in retail outlets, the development of greenhouse complexes, meat and dairy farms, etc. At the same time, import substitution mechanisms include government programs and projects aimed at supporting domestic agriculture and the processing industry, the introduction of import restrictions in the presence of domestic analogues, as well as the development of local production in remote regions. The national project on ensuring food security until 2025 was implemented to ensure import substitution and food security mechanisms;

- state support for producers, which includes subsidies for production, purchase of raw materials, transportation; tax incentives and reduction of administrative barriers, as well as preferential lending programs for enterprises producing socially significant goods, support for social shops and markets, cooperatives and SMEs in retail trade;

- mechanisms to support competition through strengthening the work of the Agency for the Protection and Development of Competition, combating price collusion in retail trade, the introduction of mandatory labeling of goods to track the supply chain, etc.

Summarizing the above, it should be noted that Kazakhstan has an active state policy of supporting the competitiveness of domestic socially significant products and goods. It is based on mechanisms to stabilize and regulate prices for socially important goods, as well as mechanisms to support competition, import substitution, and food security.

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**ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК МАҢЫЗДЫ ӨНІМДЕРДІ МЕМЛЕКЕТТІК РЕТТЕУ МЕХАНИЗМДЕРІ
ЖӘНЕ БӘСЕКЕГЕ ҚАБІЛЕТТІЛІГІН АРТТЫРУ: ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫҢ
ЕТ ЖӘНЕ СҮТ ӨНІМДЕРІНІҢ КЕЙСІ**

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АНДАТПА

Зерттеудің мақсаты Қазақстандағы әлеуметтік маңызы бар өнімдердің бәсекеге қабілеттілігін арттыруға бағытталған мемлекеттік саясатты бағалау, ет және сүт өнімдері сияқты әлеуметтік маңызы бар өнімдердің бәсекеге қабілеттілігіне әсер ететін негізгі факторларды талдау, олардың даму динамикасын анықтау, сондай-ақ әлеуметтік маңызы бар өнімдер саласындағы проблемаларды анықтау және оларды шешу жолдарын ұсыну болып табылады.

Әдістеме. Ғылыми мақаланы жазу кезінде салыстырмалы және статистикалық талдау әдістері қолданылды. *Зерттеудің бірегейлігі* ет және сүт өнімдері сияқты әлеуметтік маңызы бар азық-түлік тауарларының бәсекеге қабілеттілігін анықтайтын негізгі факторларды талдау, проблемаларды анықтау және әлеуметтік маңызы бар өнімдердің бәсекеге қабілеттілігін қолдауға бағытталған мемлекеттік реттеудің негізгі тетіктерін анықтау деп атауға болады.

Зерттеу нәтижесінде әлеуметтік маңызы бар өнімдер саласындағы проблемалар анықталды және осындай өнімдердің бәсекеге қабілеттілігін қамтамасыз ететін оларды шешу жолдары қарастырылды.

Түйін сөздер: мемлекеттік реттеу, бәсекеге қабілеттілік, әлеуметтік маңызды өнімдер, мемлекеттік қолдау механизмдері.

Алғыс: Бұл зерттеу Қазақстан Республикасының Ғылым және жоғары білім министрлігінің Ғылым комитеті тарапынан қаржыландырылды (Грант № AP23489368).

**МЕХАНИЗМЫ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОГО РЕГУЛИРОВАНИЯ И ПОВЫШЕНИЯ
КОНКУРЕНТОСПОСОБНОСТИ СОЦИАЛЬНО ЗНАЧИМЫХ ПИЩЕВЫХ ПРОДУКТОВ:
КЕЙС МЯСНОЙ И МОЛОЧНОЙ ПРОДУКЦИИ РЕСПУБЛИКИ КАЗАХСТАН**

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Цель исследования заключается в оценке государственной политики, направленной на повышение конкурентоспособности социально значимых продуктов в Казахстане, анализе основных факторов, влияющих на конкурентоспособность таких социально значимых продуктов как мясные и молочные продукты, определении динамики их развития, а также выявлении проблем в области социально значимых продуктов и предложении путей их решения.

Методология: при написании статьи использовались сравнительный и статистический методы анализа. *Уникальностью исследования* можно назвать анализ основных факторов, определяющих

конкурентоспособность таких социально значимых продовольственных товаров, как мясные и молочные продукты, выявление проблем и определение основных механизмов государственного регулирования, направленных на поддержку конкурентоспособности социально значимых продуктов.

В результате исследования были выявлены проблемы в области социально значимых продуктов и рассмотрены пути их решения, обеспечивающие конкурентоспособность таких продуктов

Ключевые слова: государственное регулирование, конкурентоспособность, социально значимые продукты, механизмы государственной поддержки

Благодарность: Это исследование финансируется Комитетом науки Министерства науки и высшего образования Республики Казахстан (Грант № AP23489368).

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МРНТИ: 04.21.51

JEL Classification: 015

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52821/2789-4401-2025-4-39-53>

ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ВНЕШНЕЙ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОЙ МИГРАЦИЕЙ МОЛОДЕЖИ КАЗАХСТАНА

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Цель исследования - выявление масштабов и особенностей внешней и региональной образовательной миграции молодежи Казахстана, а также обоснование мер государственной политики, позволяющих использовать потенциал образовательной мобильности как фактор устойчивого развития.

Методология. В исследовании применены методы сравнительного и структурного анализа статистических данных по миграции в разрезе регионов и специальностей, а также контент-анализ государственных программ и нормативных документов, регулирующих миграционную, образовательную и миграционную политику в Казахстане.

Оригинальность исследования. Проведено сопоставление внешней и региональной миграции молодежи Казахстана в единой аналитической рамке. Подход позволяет выявить взаимосвязь между территориальными диспропорциями внутри страны и масштабами «утечки мозгов» за рубеж. Ценность работы заключается в интеграции количественного анализа миграционной статистики и анализа государственной политики, что обеспечивает комплексное понимание миграционных процессов.