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RUSSIAN AND SOVIET CENSUSES

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Research Guide to Russian
and Soviet Censuses

Executive Summary

This Research Report describes a 400 page Research Guide to Russian and Soviet Censuses which is the product of a Council contract with Professor Ralph Clem at Florida International University. A full text of the Guide will be made available to individuals and offices of the Council's funding agencies upon request. It consists of two parts: (1) Eight papers containing an overview of Russian and Soviet censuses, descriptions of the state-of-the-art on topics for which census data are particularly useful, the associated problems, and the potential for further research; and (2) a detailed list and description of the contents of all major Russian and Soviet censuses since 1897 with an index to the census volumes locating data by subject. The Table of Contents of the Guide is at page iv of this Executive Summary.

As is the case for most countries, the published censuses of Russia (1897) and the USSR (1926, 1959, 1970, and 1979) constitute by far the largest and potentially the most useful collection of data on that society. Modern Russian and Soviet enumerations since 1897 cover about one-sixth of the world's land area, and provide considerable information on the age and sex composition, ethnic and language identification, marriage and family structure, migration patterns, urban and rural residence, educational attainment and literacy levels, occupations, and other aspects of the country's population. There are, of course, other important sources for quantitative data in Russian and Soviet studies, much of which relates to and is used in conjunction with, census data.

Given the wealth of information in these volumes, it may be somewhat surprising that the Russian and Soviet censuses have been substantially underutilized by researchers, either in Russian and Soviet studies specifically or in comparative studies with other societies. One reason for the first case is that the field of Russian and Soviet studies in the West is overwhelmingly non-empirical in terms of its topical foci and research methodology; the field is dominated by non-quantitative history, literature, politics and language studies.

A review of American and Canadian doctoral dissertations for the decade of the 1970s revealed that only about ten percent dealt with subjects that were even remotely quantitative in nature; there were, in fact, almost five times as many dissertations written in literature than in economics, geography, and sociology combined. Thus, a relatively small number of researchers are trained in the empirical social sciences in Russian and Soviet area studies. The merits of this situation notwithstanding, this pronounced non-quantitative bias reduces the demand for utilization of census data (or other types of socioeconomic data). Further, this topical tendency is inertial, as succeeding generations of scholars find coursework and mentors concentrated in the dominant, non-quantitative disciplines.

One can surmise that language barriers, the added work involved, and a general unfamiliarity with sources have contributed to the dearth of comparative or conceptual studies--the most likely type to require the use of census data--incorporating Russia and/or the USSR. Beyond these practical concerns, however, is the important, yet subtle influence of ideological and political factors on the objective analysis of Soviet society.

Despite the fact that the Russian and Soviet censuses hold great promise for research into historical and contemporary socioeconomic issues, there are major problems connected with the use of these data. It may very well be, of course, that these problems have discouraged potential users and contributed to the chronic underutilization of the censuses. Nevertheless, difficulties are involved in the use of census data in any context, and those confronting the researcher in Russian and Soviet studies are generally not insurmountable.

By far the most serious problems in the case of the Russian and Soviet enumerations are those of comparability; problems of temporal, definitional, and geographic comparability must be dealt with before utilizing the Russian and Soviet data meaningfully. Taking these points in order, temporal comparability is vexatious owing to the irregular intercensal periods in Russia and the USSR, which is an impediment especially to cohort analysis. Definitional comparability problems arise from the manner in which questions and/or categories of responses are designed to translate reality into operational terms, and the tabulation and publishing of the results. This is a hindrance to research because the investigator must find some way to reorder the data into comparable (or at least similar) definitions, or

commit the sin of comparing "apples and oranges." Finally, changes in the national territory and the internal political-administrative unit structure of Russia and the USSR have created significant problems of geographic comparability in the use of census data.

In this context, the idea of synthesizing available knowledge in the field of census-based research on Russia and the USSR suggested itself as a valuable contribution to the study of that country. Further, a need was recognized for an inventory and index of the various published censuses as an additional aid to research. Accordingly, this project was proposed with two purposes in mind: (1) to provide the user with an overview of the Russian and Soviet censuses, to include discussions of specific topics for which census data are particularly relevant; and (2) to provide the user with a complete description of the contents of the census volumes.

In the first case, it was decided that scholars with recognized expertise on a given subject would contribute essays detailing the state-of-the-art in their respective area; the problems associated with the use of census data for that subject; and the potential for further research. Secondly, a comprehensive index, incorporating a description of census tables, a key-word index, and a listing of political-administrative units for the different enumerations was compiled.

RESEARCH GUIDE TO RUSSIAN
AND SOVIET CENSUSES

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RESEARCH GUIDE TO RUSSIAN
AND SOVIET CENSUSES

ON THE USE OF RUSSIAN AND SOVIET CENSUSES
FOR RESEARCH

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The quest for more data and better data is a perennial one in demography, as in all science. The improvement in demographic and related data will undoubtedly, however, continue to be limited by the changing conceptual framework and research interests of the demographer; the techniques available for obtaining the information with desired reliability, validity, and precision; and the values of differing cultures which dictate what information may be politic or impolitic to obtain. (Hauser and Duncan, 1959b: 55)

Seeking better to understand human societies, social scientists are constantly confronted with the question of how socioeconomic and/or political issues are to be investigated. Assuming that these issues suggest themselves and are properly framed, the main problem then centers on the manner in which evidence relevant to the point can be marshalled, evaluated, and used analytically.

Although there are several generic types of social science data (e.g., surveys, opinion polls, registration systems), in practice the primary source of empirical information on a society is almost always the national census of population. The United Nations defines a census of population "... as the total process of collecting, compiling and publishing demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specified time or times, to all persons in a country or delimited territory" (United Nations, 1958: 3). In fact, the attributes of universality, simultaneity, enumeration and compilation of individual characteristics, and specified territory which define a census are collectively the reason why census data are so useful.

As Kingsley Davis (1967) put it, the census typically "... reveals not only the basic demographic trends, such as population growth, internal population redistribution, urbanization and alterations in the age and sex structure, but also contributes indispensably to a knowledge of changes in the nation's occupational and industrial composition, in its level of living,

education and employment." To this list of census topics one might add ethnic and racial composition, marriage and family structure, religion, and language use, all of the foregoing illustrating the richness--at least potentially--of census data for social scientific research. It should be evident from the range of subjects covered in censuses that the information in them is of use not only in the study of demography (narrowly or broadly defined), but also has considerable utility for anthropology, economics, education, ethnic studies, geography, history, political science, sociology, indeed any discipline the subject matter of which touches on the numbers and characteristics of a society or socioeconomic group (Hauser and Duncan, 1959a: 37-43).

As the social sciences have matured in the era following the Second World War, the demand for more and better data referred to by Hauser and Duncan has grown commensurately. Additionally, it has become increasingly clear to bureaucrats and politicians that knowledge, if not a complete understanding, of socioeconomic conditions and trends as manifested in census-type data is a useful tool for policy makers. Accordingly, in the postwar period there has been a rapid expansion and technical upgrading of census-taking worldwide, an activity promoted and aided by the United Nations through its various agencies (United Nations, 1958; 1967; 1977). Consequently, the volume of census information available to the researcher has grown tremendously over the last twenty years (University of Texas, 1965; Goyer and Domschke, 1983). Likewise, greater interest has focused on censuses taken prior to the Second World War, as the value of such enumerations for period or longitudinal studies has been appreciated more widely. In both the historical and contemporary contexts, the acquisition, cataloging, and preservation of national censuses, such as

the program at the University of Texas Population Research Center and the Census Library Project of the Library of Congress and Bureau of the Census, have been invaluable (Goyer, 1980; Dubester, 1969).

All of the above is not to suggest that the use of census data is without problems; in many respects, just the opposite is true. Despite the potential implied by the growing quantity of empirical information in the censuses of various countries, a wide array of troublesome difficulties exist which the researcher must take into account when using census figures. These difficulties can be characterized as three-fold: coverage, comparability, and quality (Hauser and Duncan, 1959b). In the first instance, they refer "... to the completeness with which the target population or class of events is enumerated or registered and the range of information about the unit [ordinarily, the individual] of observation" (Hauser and Duncan, 1959b: 65). Thus, one might be concerned about the accuracy of the count in terms of individual enumeration, and also about the "coverage" across the range of subject matter.

Problems of comparability among censuses and between censuses and other sources of data are often so extensive as to render impossible meaningful direct comparisons over time and space. Unfortunately, such pitfalls as different definitions for categories and units are not always recognized, and unwarranted conclusions based on an imperfect understanding of the data are not unknown. At the very least, considerable work is often involved in establishing some useful standard of data comparability.

Finally, the issue of data quality--the extent to which the data contain errors of coverage, response, recording, and/or processing--forces on the user the burden of evaluating the figures given and assessing their accuracy (if

only generally) before judgments are drawn therefrom. Recognizing the enormity of effort involved in conducting a national enumeration, the difficulties in operationalizing such concepts as "migration" in census questionnaires, and the possibilities for misunderstanding questions or misstating answers, one should approach even the most technically sophisticated census with skepticism.

Demographers and other social scientists have developed over the years a number of procedures and methods whereby census data problems might be recognized and, in some cases, overcome. The variety and complexity of these methods are far too vast to be recounted here; instead, the reader is referred to several of the standard works on the subject (Jaffe, 1951; Barclay, 1958; Shryock and Siegel, 1973; Coale and Demeny, 1966).

CENSUS DATA IN RUSSIAN

AND SOVIET STUDIES

As is the case for most countries, the published censuses of Russia (1897) and the USSR (1926, 1959, 1970, and 1979) constitute by far the largest and potentially the most useful collection of data on that society.¹ Modern Russian and Soviet enumerations since 1897 cover about one-sixth of the world's land area, and provide considerable information on the age and sex composition, ethnic and language identification, marriage and family structure, migration patterns, urban and rural residence, educational attainment and literacy levels, occupations, and other aspects of the country's population. There are, of course, other important sources of quantitative data in Russian and Soviet studies, much of which relates to and is used in conjunction with, census data; these sources will be described below.

Given the wealth of information in these volumes, it may be somewhat surprising at first glance that the Russian and Soviet censuses have been substantially underutilized by researchers, either in Russian and Soviet studies specifically or in comparative studies with other societies. One reason for the first case is that the field of Russian and Soviet studies in the West is overwhelmingly non-empirical in terms of its topical foci and research methodology; the field is dominated by non-quantitative history, literature, politics, and language studies. A review of American and Canadian doctoral dissertations for the decade of the 1970s revealed that only about ten percent dealt with subjects that were even remotely quantitative in nature; there were, in fact, almost five times as many dissertations written in literature than in economics, geography, and sociology combined (Dossick, 1971-80).² Thus, a relatively small number of researchers are trained in the empirical social sciences in Russian and Soviet area studies. The merits of this situation notwithstanding, this pronounced non-quantitative bias reduces the demand for and utilization of census data (or other types of socioeconomic data). Further, this topical tendency is inertial, as succeeding generations of scholars find coursework and mentors concentrated in the dominant, non-quantitative disciplines.

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When one specializes in a region or country in any of the social sciences, there seems to be a natural inclination to treat that region as if it were a special or unique case in terms of societal processes, and this inclination is particularly strong if that region has a totalitarian government (Lewis, Rowland, and Clem, 1976: v).

With the non-quantitative orientation of Russian and Soviet studies and the unwillingness of most scholars to engage in comparative studies across cultural, national, and ideological boundaries, it is perhaps not surprising after all that few have chosen to delve into the Russian and Soviet census volumes.

Using Russian and Soviet Census Data: General Problems

Despite the fact that the Russian and Soviet censuses hold great promise for research into historical and contemporary socioeconomic issues, there are major problems connected with the use of these data. It may very well be, of course, that these problems have discouraged potential users and contributed to the chronic underutilization of the censuses. Nevertheless, difficulties are involved in the use of census data in any context, and those confronting the researcher in Russian and Soviet studies are generally not insurmountable.

With reference to Hauser and Duncan's typology of census problems, by far the most serious in the case of the Russian and Soviet enumerations are those of comparability. As Robert Lewis discusses at length in his essay in this volume, problems of temporal, definitional, and geographic comparability must be dealt with before utilizing the Russian and Soviet data meaningfully. Taking these points in order, temporal comparability is vexatious owing to the irregular intercensal periods in Russia and the USSR, which is an impediment especially to cohort analysis. In order to evaluate preliminary age and sex data from the 1970 Soviet census, for instance, Lewis and Clem (1971) had to disaggregate the reported 1970 figures given in five- and ten-year groups,

using a statistical technique (Sprague's constant multipliers) to compare the data with cohorts from the 1959 census; an eleven year intercensal period and five- and ten-year age group data obviously do not match.

Definitional comparability problems arise from the manner in which questions and/or categories of responses are designed to translate reality into operational terms, and the tabulation and publishing of the results. This is a hindrance to research because the investigator must find some way to reorder the data into comparable (or at least similar) definitions, or commit the sin of comparing "apples and oranges." For example, in their study of historical and geographical trends in urbanization in Russia and the USSR, Lewis and Rowland (1969) found it necessary to reorder all data on urban places into a standard operational definition of "urban" to take into account major differences in usage among censuses. To be sure, in some cases such a reordering is simply not possible, and the data must be used with appropriate caveats as regards changing definitions and an assessment of the extent to which these differences influence the analysis.

Finally, changes in the national territory and the internal political-administrative unit structure of Russia and the USSR have created significant problems of geographic comparability in the use of census data. As detailed by Lewis, such difficulties require massive efforts to overcome. There have been several studies undertaken which involved the compilation of data based on a consistent unit structure to facilitate historical and longitudinal analysis of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and trends. Lorimer (1946: 241-49) reordered data from the 1897 and 1926 censuses into a set of "study areas" based on 1939 political-administrative units. Using these figures, he analyzed regional population changes (including both the urban and

rural components) for the periods 1897-1926 and 1926-1939 (Lorimer, 1946: 150-172). However, because the territory of the USSR in 1939 was appreciably smaller than for the censuses of 1897, 1959, 1970, and 1979, Lorimer's units and figures cannot be used for comparisons among all censuses; nevertheless, they are of great value as a check on the validity of other methods.

In the most extensive undertaking of its kind, Leasure and Lewis (1966) derived population estimates for 19 geographically comparable regions (the major economic regions of 1961) for the censuses of 1897, 1926, and 1959; with a few modifications, data from the 1970 and 1979 censuses can be retrofitted into these units. In addition to the total population, the Leasure and Lewis project also generated estimates for the urban population (based on a standard definition), the rural population and for a variety of socioeconomic characteristics. These data were utilized in the study of migration (Leasure and Lewis, 1967; 1968), urbanization (Lewis and Rowland, 1969), ethnicity (Lewis, Rowland, and Clem, 1976), and population redistribution (Lewis and Rowland, 1979). Using essentially the same method, Clem (1977) developed a set of population estimates for 1926, 1959, and 1970 using the 142 oblast and equivalent level units of 1959 as the standard geographical framework. These units can be aggregated into the larger economic regions employed in the Leasure and Lewis study.

In another major study, conducted at the Office of Population Research at Princeton University, Coale, Anderson, and Harm (1979) reconstructed the population in 1926 within both 1897 and 1959/70 unit boundaries. Their work, which centered on fertility and its correlates, included variables for nationality composition, literacy, marital status, and age and sex composition for urban and rural components. Because the pivotal 1926 data were fitted

backward and forward, a direct comparison in consistent units among all censuses is not presented. A detailed list of data from this study available to researchers has also been published ("Available Data...", 1979).

The principal Soviet work on this subject consists of estimates for the total, urban, and rural populations for 1926, 1939, 1959, and 1970 (and also an estimate for 1974) at the oblast level for units as of the 1970 census (USSR, 1975: 14-25). No figures are given for areas outside the USSR in 1926 (e.g., western Ukraine, the Baltic republics, Kaliningrad oblast, western Belorussia, and Moldavia), although Sakhalin is included. Unfortunately, no information is provided regarding the methodology employed to derive these estimates; presumably, the team of researchers from the Central Statistical Administration who worked on the project had access to data unavailable in the West, which would make some insight into their procedures most welcome. Another Soviet source provides some population figures for 1926 and 1939 in comparable units; these data will be of limited interest because of the brief period covered and units used, but may be of some value for comparison with other estimates (Konstantinov, 1943).

As regards coverage and quality of data, we can assume that the later Soviet censuses are more complete and less error prone than those of Russia in 1897 or the USSR in 1926. This assumption, however, is based largely on common sense and not on a rigorous comparative study. It would seem reasonable to suppose that the introduction of more sophisticated techniques in the most recent enumerations would have reduced errors of tabulation and presentation of data. As Lee Schwartz explains in detail in his essay in this volume, quality control procedures (such as test censuses, post-enumeration checks, tighter administrative supervision, training for enumerators, and the

introduction of sampling techniques) and the accumulation of census-taking experience would be expected to improve the accuracy of the count. In this regard, Soviet census procedures are in accord with United Nations recommendations (United Nations, 1967).

Details of census procedures and facsimilies of the census schedules (questionnaires) for the 1926, 1939, 1959, 1970, and 1979 enumerations are to be found in publications of the Central Statistical Administration; these are very important sources and should be consulted by the researcher as appropriate (USSR, 1926; 1958a; 1969a; 1978; Pod'yachikh, 1957a; 1957b). Likewise, reports of census planning conferences, meetings of statisticians, and other works which include discussions of key points involving census questionnaire design are valuable for the insights they provide into methodological issues (Isupov and Borisov, 1978; Maksimov, 1976; Matyukha, 1979; USSR, 1958b; 1969b).

The United Nations regularly evaluates the accuracy of national population censuses by means of a measure (Whipple's Index) which gives an indication of errors in age reporting (United Nations, 1974; 1980). Age data provide a good overall indication of the accuracy of the census in general; if there are serious problems in age reporting, chances are other types of data in the census also contain errors. However, because the censuses of the USSR in the post-World War II era do not provide data by single year of age (a requirement to calculate Whipple's Index), the Soviet counts are not included in the UN evaluations.

There is some evidence to suggest that age data in the Soviet censuses are in fact inaccurate. In an analysis of age data from the 1959 Soviet census, Myers (1964) concluded that there was reason to suspect age reporting,

particularly among older persons. Similarly, the Soviet demographer Bednyy (1972) criticized age data in the censuses as likely to be in error. Lewis and Clem (1971) found serious inconsistencies in a comparison of reported age groups for the 1959 and 1970 censuses. For example, in one case a cohort increased in numbers from the earlier to the later enumeration (an impossibility in a society closed to large scale immigration), indicating a likely underenumeration or significant age misreporting (or both) in the 1959 count. Bennett and Garson (1982) conducted an extensive study of age and mortality patterns in the USSR using 1959 and 1970 Soviet census data, Soviet life tables, and a method for deriving estimates of life expectancy. They determined that official data were characterized by pronounced age overstatement, calling into question the much-publicized overrepresentation of centenarians in the Soviet population.

Availability of Data

Regardless of the accuracy of the count and tabulations, census data are of little value to the researcher if they are not published or otherwise made available in a form suitable for scientific analysis. Serious discussion in the West about the reliability and availability of Soviet statistics in general dates back at least to the extended debate on the subject in The Review of Economics and Statistics in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Dobb, 1948; Gerschenkron, 1950; Jasny, 1950; Marx, 1950; Rice, 1952; Schwartz, 1948; Turgeon, 1952). Although most of these--and later--treatments dealt mainly with economic statistics, demographic data (either from the censuses or registration system) are certainly subject to the same vagaries.

The essence of these examinations of Soviet data problems is that whereas outright falsification of the figures is unknown, Soviet statistics of all

types have always been published selectively, and often in a format that is not entirely straightforward. Moreover, it appears that through the 1970s a curtailment of data publication is evidenced in a variety of statistical sources. For example, one study disclosed that the amount of economic and other data published in the annual Narodnoye Khozyaystvo volumes declined between 15 and 20 percent over the time period 1974-1979 (Crosnier and Tiraspol'sky, 1980).

This severe retrenchment in the publication of data by the Soviet government is especially ironic in light of the rapidly expanding economic and demographic data base for most of the world, including many developing countries. Thus, it is striking to note that the published volumes for the 1970 Soviet census (242 million people, 8.6 million square miles) contain less data than the 1973 census of Colombia (23 million people, 400,000 square miles). Interestingly, this paucity of published data has been criticized by Soviet scholars as well:

... the published results of the censuses and the delays in their release by no means encourage the utilization of the data. The materials of the population census for 1926 came to 56 ponderous volumes; for 1959, to only 16 volumes, most of which were slender little notebooks in size. But size is not the chief thing. The scientific value of the published 1959 census data is incomparably less than that of the 1926 census. Little scientific meaning can be squeezed out of the data (Perevedentsev, 1967).

This is not to say, of course, that extensive data from the 1959 and later censuses do not exist. Indeed, probably the most frustrating aspect of research on Soviet society is when one encounters unpublished census data in work by Soviet scholars. For instance, the Soviet sociologist, Yu. V. Arutyunyan, in an important article on the social structure of ethnic groups of the USSR, referred to the 1959 census as the source of data on labor force participation by nationality; in fact, the data do not appear in the printed

volumes (Arutyunyan, 1972: 3-20). In another case, a study of the socioeconomic development of the Yakut ASSR includes figures on ethnic composition of that unit from the 1939 census; no ethnic data for sub-national units from the 1939 census have ever been released as census publications (Gogolev, 1972: 247). Examples of this phenomenon are common in the Soviet literature.

It is difficult to understand why the supply of Soviet census data is so limited to begin with, and even more difficult to figure why the published results are being further curtailed. One reason for this hesitancy to publish figures might be that the Soviet government views some social and economic trends as "unfavorable" or as reflecting badly on conditions in the USSR. This desire to avoid "embarrassment" by concealing socioeconomic or demographic trends not in strict accord with official portrayals of life in the USSR has in a number of cases served to make research on Soviet society difficult.

The principal methods employed in this often subtle form of censorship are the withholding of entire categories of information and--a tactic which has a major impact on published census materials--the changing of format in which data are given to disguise unbecoming details. Sacks (1979) found that in cases where female workers were underrepresented in certain occupations or in the higher ranks within an occupation, categories were often combined or full particulars withheld altogether to obscure the actual situation. As he noted, "... it is enlightening not only to study this material for what it reveals directly about Soviet society, but also for what it systematically concealed or distorted and how this changes over time" (Sacks, 1979: 1).

If, as seems apparent, the Soviet government seeks to manipulate data for the purpose of obfuscation, their attempts are frequently clumsy and often produce the opposite result. The much-publicized cutoff in the publication of infant mortality data for the USSR after 1974 illustrates this point (Davis and Feshbach, 1980). First, figures were released showing a rise in infant mortality for three consecutive years, and only then did publication of the data cease. It hardly appears clever to provide evidence of an unfavorable trend and then to compound negative publicity by withholding amplifying or mitigating information; instead, of course, much adverse notice of the situation was taken, bolstered by the belief that the Soviet government is "hiding" something. Likewise, in the case of the missing female occupational data, the fact that more detailed information had been given earlier made it possible to uncover later omissions and to infer from the pattern of format changes which trends were contrary to the official view.

In any event, social scientists in the West have long had to use various statistical methods and ingenuity to overcome problems of missing data or deficiencies in the published figures. It may be that the tenacity and inventiveness of these efforts have proven nettlesome to those in the USSR seeking to veil socioeconomic conditions in that country. It may also be that researchers requiring Soviet data will need to be even more resourceful in their attempts to obtain maximum benefit therefrom.

CENSUS AND NON-CENSUS DATA

Beyond the analytical uses to which census data may be put directly, there are any number of research topics which involve the utilization of figures from the censuses together with quantitative information from other

sources. A thorough review of non-census socioeconomic data is beyond the scope of this work; what follows is meant to be illustrative and not exhaustive. Anderson (1977) is an excellent reference to a number of non-census data sources (as well as census subjects). Essays in this volume on particular topics include discussions of non-census sources and the relationship of these data to census figures.

Ordinarily, non-census socioeconomic data on the USSR originate from various branches of the registration system in that country, and therefore pose certain problems both in terms of their completeness and definitional consistency with census information. These two problems emerge mainly because the registration system is incomplete and inconsistent in its coverage and often employs different definitions of socioeconomic characteristics than those used in census enumeration.

One usually finds census data used as a base population to calculate rates in conjunction with non-census figures. Thus, the publication of books in certain languages of peoples of the USSR (non-census data) might be compared with the population of different ethnic groups (census data). In another case, data on marriages according to ethnic identification (non-census data) can be combined with ethnic group population size (census-data) to develop an index of endogamy (Chuiko, 1975).

Another way in which census and non-census information can be merged is to use them jointly to estimate population change. Grandstaff's study of interregional migration in the USSR (1980) employed a residual method using census populations and reported vital statistics, a census survival method based on census age distributions, and migration data from the 1970 Soviet census.

Non-Census Sources of Socioeconomic Data

Again, the range of non-census sources of information on the USSR is wide; here we will only refer to those which are commonly used for the study of Soviet society.

--The Narodnoye Khozyaystvo series.

In 1956, the Soviet government began publication of this yearly compendium of social and economic statistics. Typically, an annual volume will contain information on territory, population, and the economy for the country and for sub-national units. Demographic characteristics might include population estimates (in some cases, actual census figures) for various units and cities; nationality groups; educational attainment; and rates of marriage, divorce, birth, death, and natural increase. Additionally, data on the labor force, the education and health care systems, and different indicators of the quality of life are to be found. Importantly, most sub-national units of the USSR have published similar statistical handbooks, albeit irregularly; in many cases, these regional editions contain data not found in the national volume. The Foreign Demographic Analysis Division of the U.S. Bureau of the Census has published a bibliography of regional statistical handbooks as a research aid (Gillula, 1980).

--Narodnoye Obrazovaniye, Nauka i Kultura v SSSR.

At least two volumes with this title have been published (USSR, 1971; 1977). They contain considerable information on education, science, culture, literature and the arts for different years for the country as a whole and for sub-national units.

--Vestnik Statistiki is the monthly journal of the Central Statistical Administration. In addition to articles, reviews, and notices, the journal

contains statistics on a variety of socioeconomic subjects (many such are series given annually).

Other Sources of Population Data

The Foreign Demographic Analysis Division (FDAD) has long been deeply involved in the study of the demography of the USSR, and as part of that effort has produced several sets of population estimates and projections which may be of value to other researchers. Specifically, Brackett (1964) authored a report giving detailed age and sex estimates and projections for the period 1959 to 1985 based on the 1959 census and other sources. Baldwin (1979) presented population projections by age and sex for the USSR, the 15 union republics, and 19 major economic regions for 1970 to 2000 (see also: Baldwin, 1973; 1975). In addition to the estimates and projections, these reports contain information on methodology and population trends in the USSR. Further, FDAD has conducted studies of the labor force and employment in the USSR which incorporate census and non-census data for estimates and projections (Depauw, 1968; Rapawy, 1976; Reed, 1967).

Finally, the researcher may find it useful to consult compendia of Soviet statistics published in the West; not only are various socioeconomic and other data series presented, but some useful discussions of sources and methodology are included as well. Ordinarily, such volumes give figures only at the national level and, unfortunately, some are now out of date. In particular, the Handbook of Soviet Social Science Data (Mickiewicz, 1973) and The East European and Soviet Data Handbook (Shoup, 1981) are good examples of this genre.

Project Results

Those engaged in social science research on the USSR have evinced a steadily increasing interest in the use of Russian and Soviet census data. Along with this interest, however, has come the realization that utilizing this vast reservoir of information on Russian and Soviet society entails a number of practical problems. Attempts to deal with these difficulties, although often innovative and far-reaching, usually took place in isolation as individual specialists pursued their own research agendas.

In this context, the idea of synthesizing available knowledge in the field of census-based research on Russia and the USSR suggested itself as a valuable contribution to the study of that country. Further, a need was recognized for an inventory and index of the various published censuses as an additional aid to research. Accordingly, a project was proposed with two purposes in mind: (1) to provide the user with an overview of the Russian and Soviet censuses, to include discussions of specific topics for which census data are particularly relevant; and (2) to provide the user with a complete description of the contents of the census volumes.

In the first case, it was decided that scholars with recognized expertise on a given subject would contribute essays detailing the state-of-the-art in their respective area; the problems associated with the use of census data for that subject; and the potential for further research. Secondly, a comprehensive index, incorporating a description of census tables, a key-word index, and a listing of political-administrative units for the different enumerations was compiled.

This volume represents the culmination of a long process over which several people designed, proposed, and carried out a project the goal of which was to develop a general reference work on the Russian and Soviet censuses meeting the above criteria. The remainder of this paper is devoted to an overview or synopsis of the work of the individual scholars who provided essays on specific topics for the project.

Data Comparability Problems

in the Study of the USSR

Robert A. Lewis

If relevance or significance in the social sciences is defined in terms of increasing our understanding of ourselves and the society and world around us, then a knowledge of basic demographic processes is essential because these processes involve fundamental aspects of human experience and comprise a major force shaping any society. Censuses are our chief sources of data for the study of these demographic processes and their determinants, and the manner in which the size and structure of a population interrelates with the socioeconomic and natural environments.

Data, theory, and method comprise the essential elements of research. Whereas theory and method are the subjects of considerable academic attention and admiration, data considerations are generally neglected and considered mundane. Most failures in research, however, can be attributed to lack of data; if theories are lacking, then new hypotheses can usually be formulated; if new methods are required, they can ordinarily be devised; but, as a rule, appropriate data cannot be generated. In the social sciences, data skepticism is of the utmost importance and is the mark of scholarly maturity. The

mindless acceptance of published data as being accurate or representative of the phenomena under investigation often results in erroneous interpretation and bad scholarship. If the essence of good scholarship is asking the right questions, the questions that are asked should be appropriate to the accuracy of the data at hand, and thus investigating operational definitions and evaluating data are crucial steps in research.

Data comparability--definitional, territorial, and temporal--is the central statistical problem in using the censuses in the study of the population and society of the USSR. Owing to severe comparability problems, trends over time which are crucial to demographic analysis cannot be established among censuses unless data are in some way rendered comparable. The development of procedures to solve the many problems of comparability is particularly important in the Soviet context, because the available population censuses constitute a major source of socioeconomic data for the study of Soviet society.

One such procedure, described in detail in the complete text, is based on population allocations into a standard set of regions according to consistent socioeconomic and demographic definitions. The procedures derived make it possible for the first time to establish demographic and socioeconomic trends longitudinally for the present-day territory of the USSR for a wide variety of census variables such as ethnicity, urbanization, labor force, sex, age, fertility, and literacy for the total, urban, and rural populations. Through such efforts, our knowledge of the population of the USSR should be increased, facilitating our making some guarded and objective forecasts as to the course of events in that country in the near future.

A History of Russian
and Soviet Censuses

Lee Schwartz

Many of the problems associated with the use of census materials can be better understood if censuses are considered in relevant historical contexts. In fact, counts of the population of Russia date back as far as the eighth century, with the original motivations being taxation and an assessment of military resources. Major developments in the counting of the Russian population included the household census of 1710 and the beginning of the reviziya series in 1720-21 (which changed the basis of enumeration from household to individual).

The first and only universal census of Tsarist Russia was conducted in 1897, and for its time was a massive and relatively sophisticated undertaking. It is interesting to note that information for the 1897 census was compiled and calculated with the aid of tabulating machines developed in the United States for automating the work of the 1890 U.S. census. The census forms incorporated fourteen questions determining relationship to head of household, age, family composition, social class, place of birth, place of permanent dwelling, status of transients, religion and native language, literacy, and occupations. Despite its ambitious goals, there were some deficiencies in the 1897 census program, especially a shortage of trained personnel and some limitations in the design of questions and tabulation of responses. Furthermore, the actual conduct of the census was by no means complete in its coverage across groups and regions of the country.

Other than the incomplete census of 1920 and an urban census in 1923, the

enumeration of 1926 marked the beginning of census-taking by the Soviet government. The 1926 census was viewed by the Soviet government as vital to the preparation of economic plans, and its 56 volumes remain the most comprehensive data set compiled for Russia and the USSR. The procedures for conducting the census and the questionnaire itself were more extensive than those of previous enumerations. Nevertheless, some problems were still evident in the completeness of the count.

The next full-scale census conducted in the Soviet Union took place in 1937, following the postponement of censuses scheduled for 1930 and 1935. Because the results were seen as unsatisfactory, figures from the 1937 census were never released. Another all-Union census was conducted in 1939, a count which included a number of procedural innovations such as better post-enumeration checks. However, only partial data from the 1939 census have been published, and its usefulness is therefore limited.

In 1959, the USSR conducted its first post-World War II census. The organization and administration of the 1959 count remained essentially unchanged for the succeeding 1970 and 1979 censuses. Considerable discussion went into the design of the census questionnaire and the procedures for taking the census, and the administrative structure of the census was centralized and given permanent bureaucratic status. Special attention was given to keeping track of temporary residents or those in transit by the use of control sheets and certificates of enumeration. Additionally, post-enumeration checks were extensive in an effort to avoid double counting. With the 1970 and 1979 censuses, sampling was used to improve the coverage of the count, and certain questions were added to gather information on migration, second language capability, and the work force. The 1979 enumeration was the first to be

completely computerized.

In general, it can be said that over the years major improvements in census design, administration, and conduct have resulted in greater accuracy of the data and better coverage. The Soviet census remains limited, however, to a count of population, and does not collect information on housing, income, and other socioeconomic variables included in census programs of other countries.

The Ethnic and Language Dimensions
in Russian and Soviet Censuses

Brian D. Silver

The Soviet government emphasizes its leading role in the social and economic transformation of society; therefore, information gathered from censuses is important for the periodic assessment of state policies. Thus, census data on nationality and native language of the population serve as a way both to determine the ethnic composition of Soviet society and, in conjunction with other data, to assess and compare the progress of policies designed to promote the economic and social development of the nationalities of the USSR. Moreover, censuses are the only source of systematic information on change in the ethnic composition and language preferences of the population as a whole.

Russian and Soviet census planners have always included questions about nationality and language in the census forms. The census of 1897 comprised questions about the native language and religion of the imperial population. The five complete censuses reported since the 1917 Revolution (1926, 1939,

1959, 1970, and 1979) asked questions about native language and nationality of the Soviet population. In addition to information about native language, the 1970 and 1979 censuses contained a question about second language capability.

Problems arise in the use of data on nationality and language because the definitions employed and operational rules followed in the taking of the different censuses and in the tabulation and presentation of the results have changed over the years. The significance of these rules and definitions has not been widely recognized, even by users of census data, which has often resulted in a confounding of the language and nationality measures.

The history of the confounding of the different ethnic dimensions can be dated from the interpretation of "native language" in the 1897 census. Because the 1897 census is also the only one that did not include a question about nationality, one might suppose that the census designers intended to treat religion as a surrogate for nationality. In fact, however, they intended to treat native language as a surrogate for nationality but, because of a series of problems that this created, a realistic assessment of the ethnic composition of the Russian Empire in 1897 cannot readily be determined from the census. This is the case mainly because persons of one nationality often declare the language of another nationality as native language. Furthermore, certain editorial procedures in tabulating responses to the native language question introduced additional problems.

Beginning with the census of 1926, Soviet authorities included a question on nationality in each enumeration. However, differences in the manner in which the term was operationalized and the categorization of responses created ambiguities in the data which must be considered by researchers. The form in which questions are put to the respondent, the interpretation given by the

respondent to the question and by the enumerator to the answer, and the determination of nationality for children are examples of the types of problems arising from the inherent difficulty of attempting to quantify abstract or subjective qualities such as ethnicity.

One very important issue--which has received little attention--is the determination of what ethnic groups actually exist for purposes of labelling or categorizing responses. The number of persons counted in various nationalities or languages can be influenced significantly if groups are recombined in different fashion from census to census. Here it is very important to take note of the official glossaries of nationality and language employed for each census. In some cases, interesting insights can be gained from these sources into the classification of peoples and languages and the impact thereof on ethnodemographic trends.

In general, it can be said that native language responses likely overestimate use of the traditional language of the respondent's nationality, while second language data probably exaggerate the extent of knowledge of Russian among the non-Russian nationalities. Data on nationality appear to be the most reliable (in comparison with the language questions); problems in enumeration and categorization must still be considered by the user.

Occupations and Work Force Data

in Russian and Soviet Censuses

Michael Paul Sacks

Throughout the world an individual's occupation is a critical determinant of his or her social status; income and education are combined with

occupational prestige to create an index of individual socioeconomic achievement in modern societies. Further, the occupational composition of the economy reveals a great deal about the characteristics of the total society.

For Russia and the USSR detailed data regarding the occupations of the entire work force can only be found in the censuses. The census data provide enormous potential for studying the association between employment and other social characteristics such as nationality, education, residence, marital status, and family size. General problems affecting the use of these data include inadequacies of coverage of unpaid family labor, of temporary or seasonal employment, and dual employment; these problems are most acute in the enumeration of women, and are most likely to be evident in the earlier (1897 and 1926) censuses.

Social and occupational categories in the 1897 census differ substantially from those of the Soviet period both as a consequence of dramatic change in the economic structure of society and because of the distinct influence of political ideology on the conduct of social inquiry. The main operational problem is that the 1897 census employs an industrial classification, whereas the later Soviet censuses use an occupational breakdown. The 1926 Soviet census is an especially rich source of occupational data, with numerous cross-tabulations presented between occupations and other variables for small geographical units.

In sharp contrast with the 1926 census, detailed occupational data in the 1959 and 1970 censuses are available only for republics, are cross-tabulated only by gender, and are categorized more generally. Longitudinal comparisons of the 1959 and 1970 figures with earlier data are also complicated by changes in occupational characteristics. Finally, a number of occupations were

deleted from or obscured in the 1970 census, apparently to disguise declining female representation.

Urbanization and Migration Data
in Russian and Soviet Censuses

Richard H. Rowland

The topics of urbanization and migration--which collectively comprise the broader subject of population redistribution, have been especially important in the Russian and Soviet context. Russia and the USSR have experienced perhaps the most rapid movement to cities of any major region in the history of the world, and also some of the most significant, long-distance, internal migrations of any country. Urbanization and migration have added importance because of their profound influence on Soviet society. Urbanization has been closely associated with the rapid industrialization, modernization, and social change of the USSR, especially in the last half century. Migration is a necessary component of economic development--its chief function is the spatial redistribution of labor--and has resulted in large-scale shifts in the regional distribution of the country's population.

Russian and Soviet census data for the study of urbanization are much more plentiful than those for migration. Every census contains data on the number of urban and rural residents for all major political units, while some (especially those of 1897 and 1926) also include abundant data on specific characteristics of these populations. The data are of generally high quality, particularly in that urbanization trends portrayed by census figures generally conform to actual observed trends as evidenced in other sources.

The chief problem in investigating urban and rural population change in Russia and the USSR is the differing and incomparable definitions of "urban" employed in the censuses. In this regard, the 1897 census employed an administrative criterion, whereas the Soviet censuses used a more logical size-function criterion. Further, although the Soviet censuses agree in the conceptual definition of urban center, specific operational definitions (i.e., minimum size and function levels) have varied from census to census and even among republics in the same census.

One approach to solving the research problem posed by these differing definitions is to adopt a size-only criterion and to reconstruct urban populations based thereon for each census. The most common method, one used by a number of scholars in the West, has been to adopt a minimum size of 15,000 persons as the operational definition of urban.

Other significant problems associated with the use of census data for the study of urbanization are: (1) the adoption of appropriate measures of change; (2) changes in city boundaries; (3) the lack of a census "metropolitan" concept; and (4) the general lack of data by internal units within cities. In some cases, methods exist to modify available data to solve some of these problems.

Data on migration are available in the Russian and Soviet censuses of 1897, 1926, 1970, and 1979 but not in the censuses of 1939 and 1959. Migration studies from the 1897, 1926, and 1979 censuses are based on place-of-birth data, while those for the 1970 census are based on change in residence during years immediately prior to the census. In addition to migration data, migration can also be studied by using census population figures and vital statistics (the residual technique) and by employing data

collected in conjunction with the internal passport registration system.

Given the curtailment of data availability for the present day USSR, it may well be that further studies of urbanization and migration in that country will be retrospective (i.e., based on already existing data). The censuses of 1897 and 1926 especially contain a considerable amount of data that have not been fully exploited.

Marriage, Family, and Fertility
in Russian and Soviet Censuses

Barbara A. Anderson

Soviet planners are interested in information on the fertility, marriage patterns, and family structure of the Soviet population because of the relevance of these data for the monitoring and projection of population growth, for the planning of demand for social services such as schools, for the assessment of social stability, and for the study of the household economy. Both Soviet and Western researchers seek information on family and fertility in the Soviet population because of their bearing on questions of social change. Family structure is central to the study of censuses because the way a census treats the individual, the family, and the household determines much of how the census is conducted. Whether family relationships are recorded, whether people need to be co-resident to be considered members of the same family, and the situations in which people can answer questions about others all hinge on this issue.

The only items available in this subject area in all censuses are marital status by currently married/currently not married, families (or households) by

size, and the population by dependency status.

The most basic family structure distinction is between those who live in families and those who do not live in families. Although the definition of what constitutes a family differs from census to census, a family must always have at least two members. The family members must be related by blood, adoption, or marriage, and there is some co-residence, sharing of facilities, or sharing of budget requirements. Soviet censuses classify people according to whether they are the head of a family, are not the family head but live together with other members of their family, are a member of a family not living together with the rest of their family, or are not a member of a family.

Overall, the 1926 census is the most complete of the six published censuses, but there has been some improvement in post-World War II censuses in the information gathered on family composition and on fertility. The 1970 and 1979 censuses collected and published more detailed information on the family for the Soviet Union than did earlier censuses.

Some information on family and fertility in Soviet censuses is unusual. Information on the number of children ever born to women often is not collected; only the 1979 census collected and published such data. Similarly, crude birth rates rarely appear in censuses. When they do appear, as in the 1959 Soviet census report, the census computation operation had to combine census data with vital statistics data, a practice that is usually not followed.

Information on the dependency status of the population has always appeared in Russian and Soviet censuses. Some discussion of dependency is relevant to family and fertility, because dependents are usually supported by

other members of the family. Also, the relation between a woman's dependency status and the presence of young children is a topic with great policy relevance.

Education and Literacy Data
in Russian and Soviet Censuses

Ronald Liebowitz

Social scientists the world over require a knowledge of the quality and extent of the education made available to and attained by individuals in the societies they are investigating. This is because education plays a pivotal role in shaping and integrating many of the changes which fall beneath the umbrella of "modernization," including increased literacy, urbanization, migration, change in the occupational and workforce structure, and changes in fertility.

Scholars conducting research on the Soviet Union likewise should incorporate education data into their studies, but relatively little empirical work on education in Russia and the USSR based on census materials has been done. Except for the 1926 census, which contains no education-related data, the Russian census of 1897 and the Soviet censuses of 1959, 1970, and 1979 offer a wealth of educational attainment information (although the contents of each vary greatly).

Educational attainment is one of the many valuable measures which reflects a society's level of development. However, unless this measure is cross-tabulated with other variables (e.g., age, sex, occupation, and nationality) its utility is limited. Age data are provided in the 1897, 1959,

and 1970 censuses, cross-tabulated in all three cases with educational attainment at the republic level (1959 and 1970) or the uezd level (1897). These age data are further cross-tabulated with gender and urban/rural residence in three of the censuses (1897, 1959, and 1970), and in 1897 data by age and educational attainment are also given by social class. In addition, other variables (gender, workforce, social groups, urban/rural, and nationality) are also cross-tabulated with educational attainment but not by age.

Literacy data are more complete than education data; all five published censuses offer some information on this subject. By 1959, virtually the entire Soviet population was literate, lessening the need for extensive data on literacy. Thus, the range of cross-tabulations available for literacy data is much greater in the earlier than in the later censuses.

Any analysis of the education data in the Russian and Soviet censuses should take into account the quality of reporting, changes in the definition of key terms and in the school curriculum, the quality of education across regions and types of schools, and the questionable practice of grouping education data in a manner which tends to mislead the user. In the first regard, the earlier enumerations (1897 and 1926) probably contain more reporting errors than the later counts, with age data being particularly suspect. Likewise, errors of calculation and printing are more common in the 1897 and 1926 censuses. Secondly, education policy in Russia and the USSR has undergone numerous changes since the 1897 census was conducted, and as a consequence the curriculum has been reformed and altered. The researcher must, therefore, take into account the specific definitions of given levels of educational attainment. It is evident from Soviet and other sources that the

quality of education varies markedly from region to region in the USSR. It has also been suggested that the quality of instruction in evening and correspondence courses is significantly less than in regular day schools. Both of these factors are important considerations in assessing education in the USSR because a large part of the newly-educated portion of the Soviet population is in regions where schools are reputed to be of lesser quality or from non-standard schools. Finally, the categories in which education data are presented, including the base population used in calculating rates of educational attainment, differ from census to census and can bias comparisons over time.

Index and Guide to the
Russian and Soviet Censuses

Peter R. Craumer

This index and guide was developed to provide researchers with a detailed list and description of the contents of all major Russian and Soviet censuses since 1897, with an index to enable one to locate these census materials by subject. The work consists of three interrelated sections, all of which should be employed by the user to obtain maximum benefit from the index.

Section I is a comprehensive, serialized list of all main census tables for each of the major Russian and Soviet enumerations. Section II is a key-word index based on the table titles and descriptor words in Section I. By selecting one of 70 key words, the user can determine the census years, cross-tabulations, and geographical coverage available for each subject. Section III is a listing of the main geographical units for which data are given in

each of the major Russian and Soviet censuses. This list is useful not only for the purposes of this index, but also as an aid to understanding the complex and changing political-administrative structure of the USSR.

Notes

1. There are many valuable sources of quantitative data on Russia prior to the census of 1897, including many population counts which do not qualify as complete censuses.
2. This review, of necessity, involved making some determinations as to subject matter and methodology from dissertation titles, and therefore should be considered approximate.

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