

A STUDY OF KAZAKHSTAN'S DEMOGRAPHIC HISTORY BASED ON CENSUS RECORDS: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

Gulnara Turganovna Shamshudinova*

This paper represents an integrated study of the records of censuses of the population of Kazakhstan from the Soviet and post-Soviet periods inside the 20th century. The author's investigation brings to light some of the major characteristics of these materials as a historical source for the study of the population's history by reference to regional characteristics in a climate of the informatization of society. The paper describes the characteristics of the formation and evolution of census materials as a historical source, based on which the author provides, for the first time ever, a classification of census indicators in the context of bringing to light demographic history. Using historical-comparative analysis, the author determines the comparability of indicators from censuses conducted during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods in Kazakhstan, which ensures the possibility of studying changes in the vector of demographic processes over a long period of time. The author proposes a number of key techniques for extracting from these sources – these census materials – potential information using information-communication technology. In addition, the author brings up to date the study of intraregional characteristics of the demographic situation in Kazakhstan during intercensal periods.

Keywords: census, Kazakhstan, materials, population size, demography, demographic history, demographic processes, demographic situation, census indicators, intercensal periods, historical source

INTRODUCTION

At the current stage in the development of Kazakhstan's society, one of the top priorities on the agenda of the nation's state policy makers is ensuring the republic's demographic security. The republic's shift to modern ways of production has brought out a number of demographic ditches in the age-and-gender structure of the population, which are leading to a decline in Kazakhstan's demographic potential. The ever-increasing mobility of the population is having a significant impact on the present-day state of the demographic situation in the republic as well. The regional characteristics of the natural, mechanical, and social movement of the population are also governed by the nation's natural-geographic conditions, the dimensions of its economy, and its historical-cultural heritage spanning many centuries [1].

It is worth noting that researchers are inclined to view Kazakhstan's demographic history through the prism of the formation of the multi-national composition of the population in close interrelationship with social-economic processes. Yet, the issue of the integrated study of historical-demographic processes inclusive of the regional characteristics of the Republic of Kazakhstan has yet to be resolved by present-day science. Furthermore, the issue has not only a scientific

* S. Toraihyrov Pavlodar State University, 64 Lomov St., Pavlodar, 140008, Republic of Kazakhstan

significance but, above all, a practical one when it comes to working out a scientifically substantiated demographic policy. It is finding a way to resolve this issue that the author is devoting this discussion to.

To date, Kazakhstan's 20th century census records have not yet been the object of a special source-studies investigation. An analysis of the findings of a number of foreign research studies [2, 3, 4] indicates that the census is the primary source of information about the population, including data that cannot be obtained in any way other than via the census.

Furthermore, an analysis of certain research studies [5, 6] leads the author to speculate that working on the source-studies aspects of the history of Kazakhstan's 20th century census is becoming one of the central issues in the study of the population's history.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A census is a single process of collecting, summarizing, assessing, analyzing, and publishing, or disseminating in some other way, demographic, environmental, and social data which hold, as of a certain time period, for all members of the population of a country or its clearly demarcated portion. Census data constitute a support base for demographic information obtained from other sources [7].

Comparing and juxtaposing census data spanning a long chronological period can help analyze, on the human scale, both the development level of Kazakhstan's society in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods and the efficiency of a particular political system, specific state governance initiatives, and various reforms.

Researchers are convinced that the full-scale use of census data is possible only if we employ the latest information technology and special history-related algorithms, for summarized aggregate census data contain the widest information on the demographic, social-educational, professional, and settlement-related structure of the population spanning a certain period of time, while conducting census counts after a certain time interval makes it possible to carry out not only the structural-functional but also dynamic analysis of the population [8] as one of the major subsystems within Kazakhstan's society.

To date, census materials have not yet been fully introduced into scientific circulation, which is due, on one hand, to the labor-intensiveness of working with quantitative indicators and insufficient use of computer technology for their secondary processing, and, on the other hand, to the fact that most compiled thematic statistical sources fail to meet, to one degree or another, the information-related needs of researchers. In this regard, the author views as the most relevant approach tapping into the information potential of such sources as census materials, since these are in the widest use in research in the area of historical demography.

On the whole, the author's analysis of specific methodological sources indicates that those subsumed under primary, additional, and auxiliary sources do reflect,

with a varying degree of completeness, information on the regional characteristics of the dynamics of the population's size, its distribution, or crucial changes it may undergo and thus help the author attain the objectives in this study.

RESULTS

The idea of exploring the records of 20th century censuses as a special type of source through the comparative-juxtapositional analysis of their information potential, applying information technology to them, and demonstrating this potential leads the author to establish the aim of this research study – providing a rationale for the use of census materials as a source for the study of Kazakhstan's demographic history.

The closing decades of the 20th century saw the emergence of new theoretical-conceptual approaches in historical science and their application to the history of Kazakhstan [9, 10]. One of the issues which could not be reflected objectively within the framework of concepts of Soviet history is the issue of the migration of Kazakhs outside of their homeland as a result of the establishment of Soviet power [11]. In this regard, the scholarly experience accumulated by national researchers can be quite useful in terms of adopting uniform approaches to interpreting the theory and methodology of demographic knowledge.

Thus, for instance, we are learning from researcher G.M. Mendikulova that the above process has cost Kazakhstan enormous population losses through the death and exodus of nearly 1 million 30 thousand Kazakhs to Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Karakalpakia, China, Iran, and Afghanistan [12, 13]. Similar conclusions have been drawn by K.L. Syroezhkin, who stresses that “given its original ethnic characteristics and traditional way of life, the Kazakh ethnos has been under enormous Russian cultural impact in Kazakhstan, while in China it has been under Chinese one” [14].

There are researchers today who are keen to determine the laws governing the migrations of members of a particular ethnicity and conduct integrated analyses of the composition and character of such migrations to a city or a country [15]. Resolving this objective involves collecting, as part of a census, statistical information on a nation's population, which is performed via a uniform statistical methodology used throughout the nation [16].

The findings of the latest foreign research into demographic history also indicate that modern science has been increasingly keen on the issue of preserving ethnic identity [17].

In light of the aforesaid, let us dwell in more detail on the ethnic characteristics of and issues faced by Kazakhstan as one of Asia's more interesting and specific macro-regions, keeping in mind that subsequent to the Republic of Kazakhstan getting proclaimed independent in 1991 there began the process of the return of Kazakhs to their historical homeland [18], which expands the research vector and

imparts relevance to issues related to the formation of the Kazakh diaspora and the repatriation and adaptation of the Oralman [19].

It is, however, worth noting that the preconditions for many of the trends characteristic of the peoples of Central Asia in the last intercensal period were laid down as early as several decades back.

Thus, beginning in the 1950s, the USSR government pursued a policy aimed at attracting manpower for tilling the country's unreclaimed virgin lands. In those years, Kazakhstan had a positive migration balance, for it was getting substantial flows of manpower back then. This was accompanied by the opening of industrial enterprises requiring qualified personnel and the development of the service sector. These factors led to a substantial increase in the share of Russian-speaking residents in Kazakhstan.

During the 1960s, in light of the surplus of able-bodied unoccupied residents in the republic, it witnessed the creation of a substantial number of light and food industry enterprises, which resulted in an additional increase in the migration flow from the outside, bringing the total number of migrants to nearly 1.5 million.

Having said that, the 1970s are characterized by a turn of the tide in terms of migration processes. The period saw a gradual, if nonetheless ever-increasing, population outflow (most of those leaving being Russian-speaking residents for now), which was associated with one's desire to return to one's former place of residence, as well as a number of social-economic factors: increased workforce competition on the part of the native population, the augmented development of the Eastern regions of the Russian SFSR, introduction of a salary coefficient, and improved living conditions across the Central, North Caucasus, and Volga regions. Thus, in the 1970s much of the migration flow out of Kazakhstan constituted what may be termed "secondary" migration.

The 1980s now saw the commencement of the outflow of the non-Russian-speaking population into the Russian SFSR, which was triggered by the excess of the able-bodied unoccupied population in Central Asian republics.

As far as census results, researchers engaged in the study of Kazakhstan's population may want to consider the following facts.

Firstly, the 19th century census had incomplete records of the population's national composition, this being reflected in the sources only implicitly – through information on the native language. The censuses from the early 20th century help us determine the major trends in Kazakhstan's demographic development among those characteristic of the late pre-Soviet period. These records serve as a sort of base for the analysis of materials in the first Soviet censuses (which were conducted across what is present-day Kazakhstan as well).

The primary source for the study of Kazakhstan's population are census records from the Soviet period, and in working with these records one may need to take into consideration the characteristics of the way the censuses were conducted.

Thus, for instance, in arranging the 1926 census, the authorities had special forms prepared for Kazakhstan (written in Russian with Arabic graphics used) which read, 'for the Kazakh population'. One of such forms is the one for an administrative aul (a type of village), which included questions related to the ancestral and social composition of the Kazakh population.

Bringing to light the information potential and determining the degree of representativeness and credibility of censuses conducted across Kazakhstan between the late 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries leads the author to the conclusion that any census is a significant source in terms of the study of the population of a particular region of Kazakhstan within a particular period of time in its history.

On the strength of these conclusions, the author has developed a model that describes the desired state of the issue of investigating Kazakhstan's demographic history based on census materials (Fig. 1).

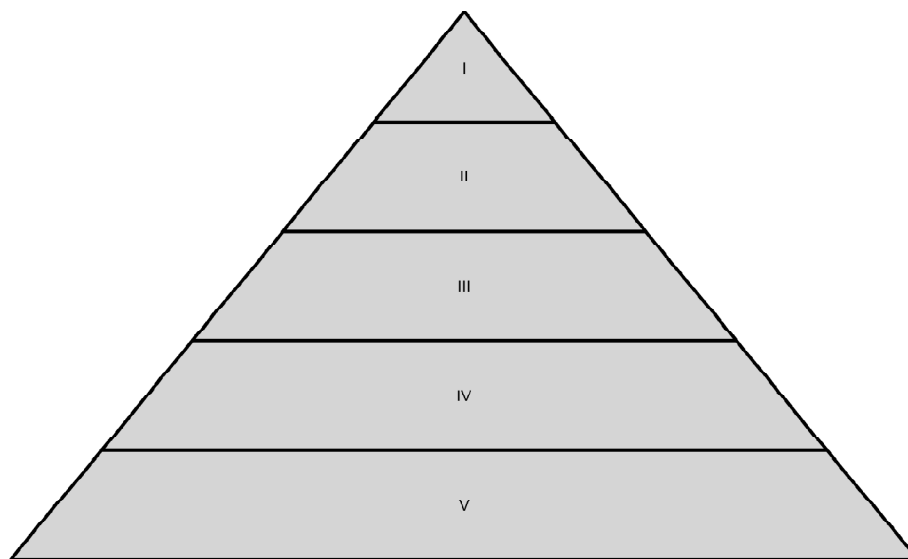


Figure 1: Model describing the census as a source for the study of Kazakhstan's demographic history.

Notes for Figure 1:

I - Census results

II - Key principles of conducting a census

III - Methods for conducting a census

IV - Historical-demographic rationale for a census

V - Census programme

Census results include data on the size of the population and its demographic and social-economic characteristics.

The key principles of conducting a census include the ability to capture the existing demographic situation in a one-shot (snapshot) manner, the use of a uniform census program, the ability to record information about each individual resident, confidentiality, centralized management, and regularity of census conduct.

Censuses are conducted using the following methods:

1. surveys, when the census sheet is filled out by the census taker (count person or records clerk) during a one-on-one conversation with the census participant (a common practice in the USSR and now Russia);
2. self-counts, when the census sheet is filled out by the census participant personally, while the census taker's job is just to check whether or not it has been done correctly, by having the respondent furnish any missing or clear up any obscure information (some European countries);
3. mixed (questionnaire-based) method, when the authorities send questionnaires out to residents, who have to fill them out and send them to the statistics agency. At the end of the process of collecting these questionnaires, the statistics agency does the matching and has census takers go down to addresses from which no questionnaires have been received and conduct the survey there (the US).

Providing a historical-demographic rationale for censuses of the population of Kazakhstan involves conducting integrated, comparative source-studies analysis with a view to determining the information reliability of indicators in censuses of Kazakhstan and the insightfulness of their dynamics.

The Kazakhstan census programme includes the following components:

1. the address component (the respondent's name and address and his/her relation to the head of the family/household);
2. the census programme proper (personal demographic, social-economic, and ethnic characteristics; data related to the analysis of population reproduction; issues related to migration);
3. issues related to other research studies (determined by the objectives of a specific census) [20].

The author finds it expedient to:

- work out and release a statistical collection at the level of districts within all of Kazakhstan's regions based on key census indicators, as well as make it available in electronic form online;
- coordinate the work of specialists in the area and put together within a single programming environment a database that would, first of all, be available to everyone, and, second of all, allow the user to not just obtain

some kind of secondary information, which may consist of graphs, etc., but also customize it the way they like;

- work out, with a view to improving the demographic situation on the whole, an efficient census programme based not just on today's realities and in alignment with the state's regional development plan but also on prospects for a particular generation's entry into reproductive age by reference to intra-province differences;
- work out, with a view to improving the demographic situation in smaller towns and the countryside, an efficient demographic policy inclusive of the ethno-mentality and historical characteristics of each district.

DISCUSSION

The novelty of this study, and consequently its contribution to the development of world science, consists in that this is the first time someone has determined the comparability of indicators from censuses conducted during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, which helps ensure the possibility of studying changes in the vector of demographic processes over a long period of time. The author proposes a number of key techniques for extracting from these sources – these census materials – potential information using information-communication technology.

The analysis of the characteristics of the formation and evolution of census materials as a form of statistical record-keeping indicates that census materials gathered during the Soviet period *are* capable of meeting researcher needs and do, on the whole, reflect demographic processes credibly enough. That said, they have not been fully introduced into scientific circulation as yet. Using these data and through additional efforts in this direction, we could obtain credible information on key trends in the demographic development of the republic's population in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Researchers making use of the censuses of Kazakhstan which are available in abridged form only may want to resort to archival data. By relying on these data, one can determine the dynamics of population size and distribution by reference to regional characteristics.

Conducting thorough analysis of the social-demographic characteristics of the population using census materials may presently involve the use of other data within the nation's current statistical records, since for various objective and subjective reasons, whose indicators we have integrated into the second and third groups, these may require checking for credibility and accuracy. On the whole, the findings of the study of the programme, principles, and methods associated with census conduct and those of the analysis of available and aggregate archival data may lead one to the conclusion that it is possible, on their strength, to trace crucial changes in the population over a long period of time – above all, its social-professional and educational structure. In constructing a specific statistical series to ensure comparability, as well as to determine the reasons

behind the intensiveness of reproduction processes, it makes sense to also draw upon current materials.

By tradition, most of the key trends in Kazakhstan's demographic development have been determined based, primarily, on political factors and, secondarily, on changes in social-economic and cultural conditions for the population. It is worth concurring in this context with the stance of researchers who believe that the 1920s population migration was associated with the policies of collectivization, industrialization, and political repressions [21]. This period witnessed changes in the ratio of rural to urban population, a decline in the demographic weight of the native ethnos, changes in birth rate dynamics, etc. [22].

The last census of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan produced some negative demographic results. Declines in reproduction rates and substantial migratory outflows have led to declines in the republic's population size, higher aging rates, and a shift to contracted reproduction. Ensuring demographic security requires determining the historical roots of today's problems in the demographic process by reference to regional characteristics. In forecasting reproduction processes, one needs to explore a significant portion of demographic history to be able to determine the characteristics of the way particular generations enter a reproductively active age. Our primary source will be census materials, which are being introduced into scientific circulation at a relatively slow pace, with most of these data used in a fragmentary fashion at the moment. Depending on objectives set, particular indicators ought to be subjected to source-studies criticism for credibility, completeness, and comparability. To gain a whole picture, it would make sense to use the achievements of adjacent sciences, like, above all, research by demographers and sociologists.

In a climate of the informatization of society, working with this kind of mass sources unquestionably presupposes the use of computer technology to help make the researcher's work easier. Historical-demographic research is one of the areas requiring the active use of computer methods and technology to obtain novel and original results; on one hand, the use of computer software makes it possible to put together a source-oriented database, and, on the other, spread such data across the Internet. With the increasingly wide use of the Internet, methods of computerized statistical analysis, like creating a database, combining data, binding data, creating expert systems, putting together organizers of acts of civil status and population registers, and developing various demographic analysis modules, are becoming an instrumentarium that is crucial to the introduction of census materials into scientific circulation.

To be able to explain the varying intensity of demographic processes, one may need to draw upon additional materials that could help explain these variances. In explaining these processes, researchers ought to take into account not only the population's ethno-demographic composition and its mobility but also its social-

professional structure, as well as any administrative transformations still going on in society. The informative capacity of census materials appears to meet researcher needs pretty well, although to determine the internal regional differences in the social-demographic state of the population one may rather want to draw upon archival resulting aggregate data.

CONCLUSION

This paper represents an integrated study of the records of censuses of the population of Kazakhstan from the Soviet and post-Soviet periods (the 20th century). The study brings to light some of the major characteristics of these materials as a historical source for investigating the population's history by reference to regional characteristics in a climate of the informatization of society. The paper describes the characteristics of the formation and evolution of census materials as a historical source, based on which the author provides, for the first time ever, a classification of census indicators in the context of bringing to light demographic history. Using historical-comparative analysis, the author determines the comparability of indicators from censuses conducted during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods in Kazakhstan, which helps ensure the possibility of studying changes in the vector of demographic processes over a long period of time. The author proposes a number of key techniques for extracting from these sources – these census materials – potential information using information-communication technology. In addition, the author brings up to date the study of intraregional characteristics of the demographic situation in Kazakhstan during intercensal periods.

The most general comparative-juxtapositional characterization of key indicators of demographic population composition indicates that in Kazakhstan's historiography, particularly historical demography, the time is now ripe for further, deeper, research into regional differences in demographic processes. This study shows that, based on natural-geographic, social, economic, and political factors, demographic processes in Kazakhstan demonstrate uneven intensity. This is clearly evidenced by the analysis of the aftermath of famine and negative outcomes of national reforms.

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