

# Human capital in a Russian industrial city in the late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: the case of Ekaterinburg/Sverdlovsk\*

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## Introduction

- The paper is part of the recently launched project «The family forming human capital in an industrial city during the demographic transition» run by the research group at the Ural Federal University.
- Ekaterinburg (since 1924 – Sverdlovsk) is a city in the Urals – a territory receiving immigration since the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- Ural metal producing plants attracted engineers and technicians from Russia’s western provinces and abroad.
- Economic reforms of the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century and WWI also increased immigration from western and central Russia, so Ekaterinburg was one of the Russia’s main industrial center.
- While there are some publications on city’s demographic characteristics, the process of human capital formation has not been analyzed yet.
- This study was based on the 1897 and 1926 censuses’ aggregates, which allowed analyzing literacy, numeracy, level of education and professional structure in the late Imperial and early Soviet period with special attention to gender and ethnicity.

## Changes in population size and sex ratio

year	population	males per 100 females
1897	43239	87,6
1920	88400	88,0
1926	136420*	91,2

\*with foreigners

## Adult literacy and numeracy

Year	Adult literacy rate		ABCC index	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1897	68,0	44,8	94,8	91,9
1926	90,4	71,2	97,8	96,2

The 1926 census contain data about the two large ethnic groups

Ethnic group	Adult literacy rate		ABCC index	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Russians	90,8	70,8	97,8	96,4
Tatars	67,4	44,9	95,1	85,9

## Level of education

- According to the 1897 data, only 9,4% of the population had education «higher than primary»; 52% of them were women. And if we compare the Russians and Tatars mentioned above, the difference will be huge.



Woman! Get literate!

*Oh, Mother! Had you been literate, you could have helped me!*

Soviet poster advocating female literacy. 1923

## Professional structure

- For the late Imperial period data analysis we used HISCO system adjusted by Russian historians [Bryukhanova, Vladimirov, 2016].
- We paid most attention to group «0-1: professional, technical, and related workers» which included only 8% of the self-employed men and woman (almost equal share).
- For the analysis of the early Soviet period all self-employed we taken «qualified workers» and «independent professionals» from the source, which included ~6,9%, among them only 12,4% were woman.

## Results

- Industrial development, reforms of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, WWI, the revolution, the civil war and Bolshevik politics had a big impact on human capital: Both literacy and numeracy increased.
- Although the difference between male and female literacy decreased, it remained evident in the early Soviet period, though the state policy and propaganda explicitly directed towards elimination of female illiteracy.
- On the other hand, literate women in Ekaterinburg seemed very keen to get an education.
- The professional structure has undergone noted changes as well. However, it is difficult to compare data from different categories to describe occupations.
- And finally it should be noted grave differences between the ethnic majority and some minorities registered in the late Imperial period remained in early Soviet period as well.

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