

SOME GUIDES TO INTERPRETATION OF THE FIGURES ON SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
AMONG AMERICANS OVERSEAS IN THE 1960 CENSUS OF POPULATION*

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It is generally known that, since the end of World War II, increasingly large numbers of Americans have been sojourning in other lands. Until very recently, however, even such basic information about this "overseas American population" as its size and geographical distribution has been hard to come by. Reasonably complete and reliable data on its other characteristics have been even more difficult to assemble if--in fact--they could be had at all. Then, in 1964, the Bureau of the Census published a special report entitled Americans Overseas. To quote this source:

Selected groups of Americans living overseas have been counted in the decennial censuses since 1900. Because of the increased number of Americans now overseas, the 1960 enumeration was extended to cover all types of Americans residing abroad, particularly those designated here as "other citizens," i.e. civilians other than Federal employees, their dependents, or crews of merchant vessels...

Furthermore, the content of the questionnaire was expanded in order to obtain additional information on the demographic and economic characteristics of Americans abroad.¹

It seems likely that as the existence of these data becomes more commonly known they will be put to a wide variety of uses. If they are collected on a continuing basis they may well come to represent a major breakthrough in U.S. Census taking.

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¹U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population: 1960. Selected Area Reports. Americans Overseas. Final Report PC(3)-1C. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1964, p. VII.

On the other hand, any complete enumeration of Americans abroad must necessarily be "conducted under operational conditions very different from those used...in the United States,"² and this one was a pioneering effort. Undoubtedly, then, there is much to be learned (both from the experience of collecting, processing, and presenting the data as well as from attempts to interpret it) which will be of value the next time such a census is taken. This paper represents one user's endeavor to contribute something on that score. Hopefully, it will also serve to alert other researchers to some of the problems they may encounter in working with the data. If, in passing, it also stimulates some interest in the enrollment status of American school children overseas, so much the better.

Over the past year I have had several occasions to make use of the "overseas Americans" data and in particular those which are relevant to the educational status of kindergarten, elementary, and high school aged children. Specifically, I have been attempting to compare the extent to which children of Members of the Armed Forces, Federal Civilian Employees, and Other Citizens overseas are enrolled in school relative to one another and to children in the U.S. population as a whole. Because (at this writing) all of the evidence is not in, I shall not say anything about the conclusions which seem to be taking form. Instead, I will discuss some of the considerations which have had to be taken into account in the analysis to date. Mixed in with these comments are some thoughts about why the educational characteristics of children overseas might be given special emphasis in future enumerations as well as some suggestions concerning changes which might be made in the presentation of future tabulations.

To a large extent, the analysis which motivated these comments was, for its part, inspired by the somewhat startling picture which emerges when one inspects the figures on school enrollment appearing in the Americans Overseas report and compares them with the enrollment status of children in the U.S. (Table 1).

²Ibid., p. VIII.

Table 1

NUMBER OF AMERICANS, AT HOME AND ABROAD, AGED 5-13 AND 14-17, AND
PERCENT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL BY POPULATION TYPE AND SEX AS REPORTED
BY THE U.S. CENSUS OF 1960

Age and Sex	At Home		Abroad		Other Citizens ^C
	Total	Military ^A	Government ^B		
<u>5-13</u>					
Both Sexes	32,727,246	177,093	129,096	13,671	34,326
Percent enrolled	89.5	47.4	43.4	57.1	58.6
Males	16,648,338	90,843	66,189	6,911	17,743
Percent enrolled	89.4	47.7	43.6	57.6	58.9
Females	16,078,908	86,250	62,907	6,760	16,583
Percent enrolled	89.6	47.1	43.2	56.5	58.2
<u>14-17</u>					
Both Sexes	11,260,157	27,967	18,191	2,715	7,061
Percent enrolled	87.4	62.9	57.7	73.0	72.5
Males	5,744,349	13,382	8,448	1,401	3,533
Percent enrolled	87.8	66.9	62.8	75.1	73.6
Females	5,515,808	14,585	9,743	1,314	3,528
Percent enrolled	87.1	59.2	53.2	70.9	71.5

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population: 1960. Selected Area Reports. Americans Overseas. Final Report PC(3)-1C Table 2 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964); and U.S. Census of Population: 1960. United States Summary. Detailed Characteristics. Final Report PC(1)-1D, Table 166 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963)

A. Dependents of Members of the Armed Forces.

B. Dependents of Federal Civilian Employees.

C. Other U.S. citizens living abroad.

It can be seen that in 1960, roughly 90 percent of the age group 5-13 "at home" were reported as enrolled while the same was true for only about 47 percent of those overseas. Furthermore, children of Members of the Armed Forces seemed to have been considerably less likely to be enrolled (by about 14 percent) than their fellows in the other two overseas population types. As regards persons aged 14-17, about 87 percent were counted as enrolled at home while the corresponding figure for the overseas popu-

lation as a whole was approximately 63 percent. Once again, dependents in the Military population appear to have been markedly "under-enrolled" (by about 15 percent) relative to those in the Government and Other Citizens types. However, perhaps the most remarkable feature of Table 1 is the extent to which female dependents of Members of the Armed Forces appear to be missing from the ranks of the enrolled at the high school level. Only about 53 percent of them were reported as attending school.

It has often been pointed out that one of the major concerns of American parents abroad is to see that their children continue in school and, more especially, to see that they receive the kind of education which will serve them in good stead once they return to the U.S.³ This circumstance has been accompanied by the establishment of a large number of "American type" schools in other lands. Many of them (about 325 in 1965) belong to an overseas school system which is operated by the Department of Defense (DOD). Other evidence of our government's concern for the education of American children in foreign lands is the fact that, in 1966, some 166 privately operated American schools overseas received financial assistance from the Department of State and the Agency for International Development.

Considerations such as these cause the picture which emerges from Table 1 to seem all the more remarkable. This, in turn, suggests that a closer scrutiny of the context in which they originally appeared (i.e. the overall report) may reveal some factors which should be held in mind for purposes of interpretation. A number of these are discussed below.

Under-enumeration

In evaluating its data, the census points out that the decentralized and far flung nature of the procedures employed prevented the utilization of review and quality control operations which are standard in the U.S. One of the results may have been a certain amount of under-enumeration. This is especially true for the Other Citizens because they were asked to cooperate on an entirely voluntary basis. Whether or not an incomplete count could have systematically biased the reporting on school enrollment is a moot point but nevertheless it should be held in mind.

The Definition of Enrollment

The question which was used to elicit information on school enrollment overseas differed somewhat from the one used in the U.S. This last reads as follows:

P16. Has he attended regular school or college at any time since February 1, 1960?

If he has attended only nursery school, business or trade school, or adult education classes, check "No"

Yes... No...

P17. Is it a public school or a private school?

Public school.....
Private or
parochial school.....

Enumerators were instructed to regard public or private kindergartens and accredited correspondence courses as "regular" schooling which, in essence, was defined as:

that which may advance a person toward an elementary school certificate or high school diploma, or a college, university, or professional degree.⁴

The corresponding question employed overseas read as follows:

Is [this person] now enrolled in a school, college or university?⁵

(If this person is taking correspondence courses (given by USAFI, a university, etc.) for high school, college, or university credit, check "Yes".)

It should also be remembered that the overseas questionnaires were wholly "self-completed" i.e. without the intervention of trained enumerators.

A comparison of the criteria involved suggests slightly differing definitions of "school enrollment" which, to some extent, could be accounting for the observed under-enrollment of American children abroad relative to their compatriots at home. In framing the item used overseas care was taken to make explicit mention of accredited correspondence courses at the high school level or above. Perhaps it would have been better to specify elementary school correspondence courses as well. The Calvert School, headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland, provides a program of home instruction which covers grades 1 through 8. Its courses are approved by the Department of Education of the State of Maryland and the school is a member

³This point is emphasized in many of the writings on Americans overseas. To mention only a few: Ruth Hill Useem, "The American Family in India," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. 368, (November, 1966), pp. 132-145. Harlan Cleveland, "The Pretty Americans," Harper's Magazine, (March, 1959), pp. 31-36. Frederick L. Redefer, "The Care and Feeding of Provincials," Saturday Review, vol. 43 (October 22, 1960), pp. 13-14, 39-40. George W. McCown, "U.S. Foreign Service Dependents Schools," School Life, vol. 45, (November 1962), pp. 22-24.

⁴U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population: 1960. Detailed Characteristics. United States Summary. Final Report PC(1)-1D. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1963, p. XVI.

⁵Americans Overseas, op. cit., p. XIX.

of the Educational Records Bureau. The Armed Forces encourage parents who have elementary school aged children with them, at locations where no schools are available, to make use of this program and provide financial assistance for doing so. In 1964 approximately 3,000 overseas American children (including dependents of both civilian and military persons) were enrolled in the Calvert School program.

Secondly, the question used in the U.S. indicates that a child should be reported as enrolled if he has attended school at any time since February 1, 1960. No such provision is made in the question asked of the overseas population. From information collected by the census concerning the date at which respondents arrived abroad it can be conservatively estimated that more than 11,000 persons aged 5-17 had arrived between January 1 and April 1 (the date to which the census figures apply). Conceivably a significant number of them had arrived in mid-semester and had not enrolled in school as yet; either because they had not had time, were waiting for a new semester to begin, or for some other reason. Furthermore, many of these "temporarily unenrolled" persons may have attended school in the U.S. after the February 1 cut off date and hence would have been counted as enrolled by the definition used "at home."

In the United States the census collects and publishes information on the kind of school attended (i.e. public or private). Recognizing that it can not possibly cater to the whims of all of its users, I would like, nevertheless, to suggest that (in the future) consideration be given to gathering and tabulating data on the kinds of schools in which overseas Americans

are enrolled also. It might be interesting to know, for example, what proportion of them are following curricula similar to those offered in the United States as opposed to purely "host country" ones.

Broadly speaking, American type schools overseas can be divided into four large categories 1) church affiliated schools, 2) international schools, 3) company operated schools, and 4) those operated by the DOD.⁶ Again it might be interesting to know the proportion of American children overseas which each of these types enroll.

The student body of DOD schools is primarily composed of children from Military families. However, children from the Government and (much less frequently) Other Citizens types are also represented. The extent to which children of the three population types were enrolled in DOD schools is a question which I would have liked to have been able to answer with the census data.

Finally, a number of DOD schools have facilities for boarding children for 5, 6, or 7 days a week and I would also have liked to learn what proportion of the enrolled were attending school away from their family.

Non-reporting

Apart from the apparent under-enrollment which the "raw data" reveal, one of their most striking features is the exceptionally high rate of non-reporting which they show. In the United States persons for whom the question was left unanswered were considered to be enrolled if they were 5 through 17 years of age. If they were 18 or older

Table 2

PERCENT OF NON-REPORTING ABROAD ON ENROLLMENT AND YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY POPULATION TYPE AND AGE GROUP: 1960

	Population Type and Age Group							
	Total		Military		Government		Other Citizens	
	5-13	14-17	5-13	14-17	5-13	14-17	5-13	14-17
Non-reporting on:								
Enrollment	19.2	9.6 ^A	18.7	10.0	15.6	6.9	22.5	^B
Years of School Completed	2.9	1.9	2.5	1.5	2.1	1.1	4.8	3.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1960. Selected Area Reports. Americans Overseas. Final Report PC(3)-1C, Tables 2, 9, 11, and 13. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964).

A. Excludes Other Citizens.

B. The number of Other Citizens in the 14-17 age group who did not respond to the question on enrollment is not given by the Census.

⁶For a brief discussion of the four categories see Ruth Dunbar, "American Schools Overseas," NEA Journal, vol. 50, May, 1961, pp. 18-21.

they were treated as "not-enrolled." However, prior to "allocation for non-response" about 4 percent of the age group 5-13 at home were unreported on enrollment.⁷ The comparable figure overseas is approximately 19 percent (see Table 2). Although non-reporting abroad falls off considerably in the 14-17 age group it remains fairly high (about 9 percent).

The amount of non-reporting on enrollment stands out even more sharply when it is contrasted with the percentages of missing responses to the question on grade of school completed. Finally, there appear to be pronounced differences in the completeness of the reporting from population type to population type.

It seems probable that there is no single cause for the overall pattern, but I would like to hazard a guess about one of the factors involved. It has to do with the way in which the relevant questions were structured and the order in which they were asked (see Figure 1). Perhaps the

parents of many of the 5 and 6 year olds who had never attended school (and were not currently enrolled) checked the space labeled "none" on question 11 and skipped question 12 altogether because they thought it was not applicable. If such were the case it could partially account for the observed differences in non-reporting, both between the two questions and between the two age groups. If one had access to the raw data, this hunch could be checked simply by cross-tabulating responses to the two questions. If an exceptionally high frequency appeared in the cell corresponding to the answer "none" on grade of school completed and "no answer" on enrollment, the explanation tentatively offered here would be strongly supported.

In any case, non-reporting is something a researcher must keep well in mind when dealing with the data as they are given in the census report.

Figure 1

QUESTIONS EMPLOYED IN THE OVERSEAS QUESTIONNAIRE
(FORM 60PH-15) TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON SCHOOL
ENROLLMENT AND HIGHEST GRADE OF SCHOOL COMPLETED

11. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST GRADE (OR YEAR) OF SCHOOL THIS PERSON HAS EVER ATTENDED	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>None</div> <div>Kindergarten</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Elementary</div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> <div>5</div> <div>6</div> <div>7</div> <div>8</div> </div> <div>school(grade)</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>High or secondary school (year)</div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> </div> <div>College or university(year)</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> <div>5</div> <div>6</div> <div>or more</div> </div>
<p>Check one box.</p> <p>If the grade (or year) was in a school outside the U.S., check the box that stands for that grade(or year).</p>	

DID HE FINISH THE HIGHEST GRADE (OR YEAR) HE ATTENDED?	<p>Finish this grade (or year)?</p> <p>Yes - No - </p>
12. IS HE NOW ENROLLED IN A SCHOOL, COLLEGE, OR UNIVERSITY?	<p>Yes, enrolled in school, college, or university - </p> <p>No, not enrolled - - - - </p>
<p>If this person is taking correspondence courses (given by USAFI, a university, etc.) for high school, college, or university credit, check "YES"</p>	

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population: 1960. Selected Area Reports. Americans Overseas. Final Report PC(3)-1C. pp. XVIII, XIX. (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1964).

⁷U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population: 1960 Detailed Characteristics. United States Summary. Final Report PC(1)-1D. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1963. Appendix, p. 1-810.

Age Categories Employed

The foregoing remarks lead to the question of whether or not more appropriate breakdowns by age could have been used in tabulating the data. Perhaps the most important consideration on that score is the usefulness of grouping 5 year olds with persons 6 through 13. Enrollment figures by single years of age and individual grades are available for the "at home" population.⁸ They show that about 45 percent of the 5 year olds were reported as enrolled with roughly 38 percent in kindergarten and some 7 percent in the first grade. There is some evidence that 5 year olds in general, and dependents of Members of the Armed Forces in particular, have less opportunity to attend school overseas than at home. DOD schools do not incorporate kindergartens and according to the report of a study conducted in 1962 although:

The services are to be commended for the efforts they have made to organize kindergartens on a tuition basis....this is a limited and unsatisfactory response to a need that exists for all (sic) young children.⁹

By mentally interpolating the figures given in Table 3 one can see that the Military population probably contains a much larger proportion of 5 year olds than do either of the other two population types overseas or the population as a whole at home. In addition roughly 74.1 percent of all Americans aged 5-9 overseas are military dependents. These circumstances could 1) account for the fact that underenrollment among 5-13 year olds appears to be greatest in the Military population type, and 2) explain a large portion of the observed difference on enrollment between the total "overseas" and "at home" populations. Since an unknown (but perhaps large) proportion of the overseas dependents of Federal Civilian Employees rely upon DOD schooling for their children the lack of kindergartens could be depressing enrollment in that population type as well. Finally, conversations held with civilians who have lived abroad give me the impression that privately operated American schools overseas sometimes have kindergartens but, even so, they are less common than in the U.S.

The foregoing suggests that in the future, if figures on school enrollment could not be given by single years of age it might be more meaningful

Table 3

NUMBER OF CHILDREN 14 YEARS OF AGE OR LESS, AT HOME AND ABROAD, BY
POPULATION TYPE AND AGE GROUP: 1960^A

Age Group	At Home	Total	Abroad		
			Military	Government	Other Citizens
Total	55,796,970	365,710	282,437	23,457	59,816
Less than 5 years of age	20,321,864	180,664	148,346	8,986	23,332
5 through 9 years of age	18,659,141	114,788	85,079	8,396	21,313
10 through 14 years of age	16,815,965	70,258	49,012	6,075	15,171

^A See Table 1 for source and definition of Population Type.

⁸E.g. U.S. Summary, op. cit., Table 167.

⁹Department of Defense, "Overseas Dependent Schools: Recommendations for Improvement," (processed). A report of the Survey Committee appointed by Dr. Edward T. Katzenbach, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Education), December, 1962, p. 25.

at least to show 5 year olds separately.

In general, the age groups used in tabulations dealing with dependents of Members of the Armed Forces were similar to those dealing with dependents of Federal Civilian Employees. Other Citizens, however, were frequently categorized somewhat differently by age. For example, persons 14-17 in the first two population types were treated as an individual group in most tables dealing with enrollment. By contrast 14 through 17 year olds were often included in a 14-24 year age group where Other Citizens were concerned. This inconsistency made it impossible to use a uniform procedure in adjusting the figures to allow for such things as marital status.

The proportion of married females (14.7 percent) in the age group 14-17 for military dependents is very large in comparison with the proportion among dependents of Federal Civilian Employees (.3 percent). On the grounds that wives are less likely to enroll in school¹⁰ and this might be distorting our analysis somewhat it was decided to exclude married females of "high school age" (i.e. 14-17) from our calculations. Because of the age break-down employed, this was not possible for Other Citizens.

In practice the handicap was not very great when marital status was being looked at because

¹⁰Only single persons are permitted to enroll in DOD schools.

it seems certain that the number of wives among Other Citizens who were from 14 to 17 years of age is very small. However, I have chosen the example because of its bearing on the exceptionally low enrollment observed among females aged 14-17 in the Military population overseas. If wives are excluded from the calculations, the percentage of enrolled females is raised from 53.2 to 62.3 and becomes about on a par with the corresponding figures for males (62.8 percent).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Because of the increasing number of Americans residing abroad the 1960 census was extended to include the enumeration of all Americans Overseas. The resultant figures are a unique and valuable source of information on this little studied segment of our population. However, both because this was a pioneering effort and because special procedures were necessitated there is probably much to be learned which will be of value in the future. This paper is one users attempt to contribute something on that score. In it are discussed some of the difficulties which he encountered in attempting to make use of the data on school enrollment for persons 5-17 years of age overseas. In the main, these difficulties revolve around the questions employed, an unusual amount of non-reporting, and the age groups which were used in presenting the figures.