

I hope it will address the broader theme of "how innovative approaches to the study of Russian politics can contribute to advances in political science, and vice versa," and I thought it might address the more specific topic from the conference description on "challenges for political science research and training in a period of political obstacles and heightened tension between the U.S. and Russia".

Name: Yoshiko M. Herrera

**Title: Harassing Deficiencies in Data: What the Soviet and Russian experience can teach us about extracting information from authoritarian regimes**

Abstract: This paper considers the challenges to getting political and economic information out of authoritarian regimes, with a focus on 1) lessons from the experience of extensive data extraction during the Soviet period, and 2) the possibilities opened up by technological advances of the current era. The USSR was closed society of enormous importance to the West and Western governments and scholars put a lot of resources into figuring out what was happening with the Soviet economy, military, and society. Not all those lessons in data extraction, however, should be relegated to the dustbin of history. In the contemporary period, with Russia, China, as well as other even more closed environments like ISIS or North Korea, there is a need to get political and economic data in places where fieldwork is not possible and transparent data sources are not available. Moreover, the technological and methodological advances in content analysis related to Big Data, and the proclivity of many regimes to document in digitized text opens up avenues to information extraction in ways that either were not possible or required enormous time commitments in the past. The goal of this paper is to outline some of the ways that past experience with Soviet data extraction can be useful to researchers interested in using modern content analysis and data extraction techniques in authoritarian or closed settings.