

ARTICLES

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POLISH POPULATION CENSUSES IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES: SCOPE AND SUBJECT MATTER IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Abstract: This paper analyses the population censuses on the Polish area, particularly, the subject of censuses and their thematic scope. The study refers to the censuses in the 19th and 20th centuries (the study closes with the 1988 census). The paper consists of three parts. The first one presents the origins of censuses and the first censuses conducted in Europe in the 18th century. This part also shows the efforts of international statistical institutions to normalise and standardise national censuses. It allowed for building international standards to make national censuses comparable. The second part shows censuses in the 19th century, and the third part discusses censuses in the 20th century. A fundamental feature of the censuses is a set of questions common to demographic and social issues. This makes it possible to carry out comparative analysis in different regional cross-sections on a secular basis. It should also be provided that census categories are not always comparable, hence various conversions and estimates are necessary. The universality of the censuses have made them a huge organizational challenge each time. The greatest effort was borne by the statistical institutions responsible, not only for conducting the censuses, but also during the compilation and publication of the data.

Keywords: a history of Polish censuses, the scope of Polish censuses, Polish censuses in the 19th and 20th centuries, international standards for population censuses

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INTRODUCTION

Population counts have been performed as far back as antiquity, although censuses in the most modern sense of the word started in the 18th century. Previously, censuses of various kinds were fragmentary in nature, usually carried out by church for their own purposes or by state authori-

ties for fiscal and military purposes (Goyer and Draaijer, 1992). In Poland, state tax registers began to list the number of residents in the 16th century. Private censuses have been introduced by bishoprics quite systematically since the 18th century. The same was true in other countries as well. It should be added here, that the censuses were opposed by the privileged groups (nobility, aristocracy), because they assumed that the censuses would serve fiscal purposes¹. A huge role in the process of the development of population count was played by church institutions (censuses of believers, keeping books of weddings, baptisms and funerals) (Gieysztorowa, 1976: 117).

The practice of conducting population counts by public authorities became increasingly common in the 19th century, but nevertheless these counts did not always have the attributes of censuses. From the second half of the 19th century, the principle began to take shape, that censuses should be characterised not only by universality, i.e., covering the entire population, but also by simultaneity, individuality, immediacy and periodicity in the form of a 10-year interval. These principles have become attributes of censuses in many countries, including the Polish lands. It should be added here that international statistical congresses played an important role in defining the standards of census; the congresses proposed conducting population count in a recurring and direct manner, using a specific range of questions.

Population censuses in Poland in the 19th and 20th centuries have been the subject of numerous studies, which usually deal with individual censuses, with incidental references to the international aspects. This study is a synthesis of these censuses from the point of view of their substantive content and the scope of demographic and social issues studied. The purpose of this article is to compare the subject matter of the censuses and the rules for their organization and implementation. This study analyses the censuses carried out in the 19th and 20th centuries (the study closes with the 1988 census). Censuses were performed under different political and economic systems, such that their thematic scope was subject to change. Nevertheless, they have always included a basic series of questions on the demographic and social characteristics of the population as well as showed the living conditions and the basic problems associated with it. Benchmarks and standards of the censuses were identified by the

¹ Such objections did not relate to colonies, where the European countries have systematically conducted censuses for tax purposes. See: *Milestones and Moments...* (2022).

international statistical congresses of the 19th century, in the 20th century by the international statistical agencies at the League of Nations (in the inter war period) and the United Nations (in the second half of the 20th century), as well as the International Statistical Institute. The Polish censuses were based on these patterns. Of course, questions specific to the countries and regimes in question were added to the census forms, thus broadening the thematic scope of the census. These additional questions showed the socio-demographic peculiarities of the country; the scope of the research and scientific purposes, as well as the needs of the state authorities.

The first universal population censuses in the Polish lands were conducted in the Duchy of Warsaw, in the first half of the 19th century. Thereafter, similar censuses were conducted in Prussia (covering the Polish lands belonging to that state) in the middle of the century - in Austria (and Galicia belonging to it), and at the end of that century, in 1897, another census was conducted in Russia and Polish provinces belonging to it (in the Kingdom of Poland and the so-called western governorates of Russia). In the 20th century, Poland conducted censuses generally every 10 years, albeit with some exceptions. The first census of that century was conducted in 1921, the next one in 1931, while the census planned for 1941 was not carried out due to the outbreak of war. It should be mentioned that during the occupation, the censuses were conducted by the Germans (for example, the 1943 census of the General Government). After World War II, the first census was conducted in 1946, under extremely difficult conditions (damage due to war, shortage of census staff, emigration and repatriation). Subsequent censuses, called National Censuses, were conducted in 1950, 1960, 1970, 1978 and 1988. In the period of post-1989 systemic transformation, significant changes were implemented to adapt Polish statistics to international standards, especially those of the European Union. New solutions were applied in the 2002 census (*Historia spisów*, 2022).

The paper consists of three parts. The first one presents the origins of censuses and the earliest censuses, not yet universal, conducted in Europe in the 18th century. This part also shows the efforts of international statistical institutions to normalise and standardise national censuses. It allowed for creating international standards to make national censuses comparable. The second part shows censuses in the 19th century, and the third part discusses censuses in the 20th century. The discuss is then brought to a closed with a conclusion.

1. Europe's first census and formation of international census standards

It is considered that the first modern census was conducted in Iceland in 1702–1703. Iceland was then part of the Kingdom of Denmark; the census was commissioned by Danish authorities to review human and economic resources (Karlsson, 2000: 161–162). Danish authorities conducted censuses in Iceland in successive years and by the second half of the 19th century at 10-year intervals. In Denmark itself, the first census was conducted in 1787, then in 1801 and 1834 respectively. Later, from 1840 to 1860 censuses were carried out every five years, then every ten years, and then again from 1901 every five years and, subsequently, from 1930 every 10 years (Guðmundsson, 2015: 3–5). In addition to regularity, the censuses were characterised by a repetitive range of demographic and social information.

Other sources say that the first census was conducted in Sweden in 1749 (it also included Finland, which was then still a part of Sweden) with the census data published in 1756 (Myrskylä, 2010). Uniform tabular forms were filled out by clergymen and contained the following information: the population of the parish by gender, age and social class; parishes also recorded the number of births, deaths and marriages. Subsequent censuses were conducted annually until 1751, then every three years (until 1772), and from 1775 every five years until 1860 from which time it was conducted every 10 years. This principle continued throughout the 20th century (Dodge, 2008: 65).

It can be considered that state universal population counts started in 1777, when, by the decision of the Police Department of the Permanent Council of 15 February, a census of Christians and Jews in the royal cities was conducted throughout the First Polish Republic (Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth), distinguishing between settled and travelling people.

The first “almost universal” census was conducted in 1789, and it served for tax and military purposes (it did not cover all the residents). On 9 March, the parliament passed the law called “Lustracya dymów i podanie ludności”, which was announced on 22 June 1789. The initiator of the parliamentary resolution and author of the *Population Tables* (separate for villages and cities) was Fryderyk Józef Moszyński. Census forms were filled out by property owners, indicating a total number of residents by gender, occupation and social status, sons under 15 and over 15 years of age, and daughters in total. The following population groups were speci-

fied in the cities: landlords, merchants, factory owners, craft workers, innkeepers, journeymen and servants, people without professions (travelling people) and beggars. The *Table* for villages distinguished: farmer landlords, tenant farmers and poor homeless farmers. The census lasted from the summer of 1789 to the spring of 1790, with the results announced in April 1790. The census was not universal, neither did it meet the condition of simultaneity, nor was it personal or direct, as the census forms were filled out by the owners of the properties. The census data is considered understated (Kuklo, 2009: 52-53).

In the 19th century, conducting censuses in Europe started to become a regular phenomenon. Fiscal and military considerations were the main rationale, however, from the middle of the century, state, economy, research and development factors began to be equally important. Interest in statistics as a field of national awareness was developing. France conducted its census in 1800, followed by England in 1801, Prussia and Austria and other countries a few years later. Censuses began to be universal from the middle of the century, based on the 1846 Belgian census, which became widely known and was favourably commented on by statisticians. In many European countries, real censuses have become a reality. Statistics began to be seen as a method of broadening knowledge about the country, thus contributing to its development (Gehrmann, 2009: 13-16). The last census of that century was conducted in Russia - it was carried out in 1897. It should be noted, however, that many of the censuses from the first half of the century did not meet the one-day attribute, and some of them lacked the universality or directness and individuality characteristics.

Of great importance in the development of census standards was the activity of international statisticians. By mid-19th century, those involved in government statistics began to meet during world exhibitions. In 1851, during such an exhibition in London, Adolphe Quetelet (the president of the Belgian Central Statistical Commission) proposed the organisation of an international statistical congresses. The first congress of such was held in 1853 in Brussels. Its main idea was to standardise the scope of information published in state statistical publications. The congress also addressed the problem of population censuses; where it was pointed out that censuses should be conducted according to certain rules including: they should be personal (each household should be enumerated on a separate list), the population living in the area should be enumerated, the censuses should be repeated every 10 years. Census data should be truthful and its scope should include: first and last name, age, place of birth, language

spoken, economic status. The census results are to be compiled according to standardised templates so that they can be compared internationally. The Congress proposed the creation of population books based on censuses and special annual statistics on population movement, marital status and emigration. The issues of registering various spheres of social life and eventually processing and publishing them have been the subject of successive statistical congresses.

Census improvement, their scope, methods and comparability became the subject of extensive deliberations at the 1872 statistical congress in St. Petersburg (Brown, 1872). The congress recommended the following census rules:

1. In order to avoid mistakes and prevent repetitions, distinction must be made between: a. *Population de fait* (actual population), b. *Population de sejour habituel* (of usual residence); c. *Population de droit ou legale* (legal population)²;
2. The general population censuses should list individuals by name and extend to the *population de fait* (actual population);
3. When it comes to international rules for determining the population – usually resident and legal population – no decision is made, due to the impossibility of establishing uniform rules and the great diversity of legislation in force in different countries at different times;
4. The censuses should be taken at least once in ten years, in the years ending with 0. The intermediate calculations are determined by specific governments;
5. The censuses should be taken on a single day, or at least relate to a fixed day and hour;
6. The organisation and control of the censuses are left to each government, but it is preferred that they are done by specialised agents;
7. The *population de fait* shall be obtained using individual bulletins, if the situation and conditions warrant it; if not, using family or household bulletins. In the former case, lists must be added, showing – for each person – the degree of kinship or connection with

² The first term relates to people present at the place and time when the census was taken; the second term describes all people, usually, residing in the place where the census was taken, adding to the actual population those, who were temporarily absent, and deducting those, who were temporarily present; while the third term represents those, who have a legal residence in the place where the census was taken, in case such information was officially registered.

the head of a family and a particular household. It is best, if the individual bulletins make use of questions directed specifically towards an individual;

8. The information required by the census papers can be mandatory or voluntary. The former type comprises: a. First and last name. b. Gender. c. Age. d. Relation to the head of the family and the household. e. Marital or conjugal status. f. Profession or occupation. g. Religious belief. h. Language spoken. i. Literacy. j. Origin, place of birth and nationality. k. Usual residence and nature of residence in the place where the census is taken;
9. Wherever practicable, the age should be indicated by the year and month of birth. When age is expressed in years, it should be in full years. For infants under 1 year of age, it should be expressed in full months;
10. The connection with the head of the family and household shall be expressed by the degree of kinship or the position in the household (e.g., preceptor, servant, workman, apprentice, lodger, master of house, etc.);
11. The question of conjugal status relates only to legitimate unions, as well as legally binding divorces and separations;
12. Profession is understood as the occupation which is the primary source of income of an individual, or that to which one devotes the most of their worktime (the nomenclature of professions was indicated in the census tables). Individuals with more than one occupation should list them all, indicating which they consider the main one. They should also indicate if they are a master, assistant or workman. In individual bulletins, any individual not having an occupation should indicate the occupation of the family's head;
13. Religious belief means the religion, in which a person is born, or which they may have adopted afterwards and currently follow – i.e., any church to which they belong;
14. In case of literacy, it is sufficient to say if the person possesses the ability to read and write, whether perfectly or imperfectly;
15. "Place of birth" only applies to the individuals born out of the place where the census is made. If possible, the commune should be indicated, or a general form of territorial division of the place of birth (e.g., county, canton, Government, province, department, etc.). In case of foreigners, the country of origin should be stated;

16. The rules for indicating the usual residence, temporary residence, legal domicile, etc. are – for now – left to be decided by different States (Brown, 1872: 444-445).

The issue of censuses was also addressed by various organisations interested in producing population statistics, and they promulgated resolutions calling on governments to conduct censuses according to standardised procedures and methods. Development of statistical work on international scale was also supported by the International Statistical Institute (founded in 1885).

Between the wars, the recommendations made in the 19th century became mandatory in many countries. In 1919, the League of Nations held a special conference on international cooperation in statistics. The issue of censuses was handled by the Permanent Bureau of the International Statistical Institute. In accordance with the recommendations of the International Statistical Institute, two censuses were conducted worldwide in the interwar period: around 1920 and around 1930 (Romaniuk, 1968: 1-3).

Subsequent efforts to universalise and standardise census rules were made after World War II by the United Nations, in particular, the Statistical Commission and the Population Commission (established in 1946). In 1949, recommendations were published on the principles and methods of conducting a census based on the experience of 53 countries. Implementation of these guidelines began in 1950 (*Population Census...*, 1949: 1-2).

According to the 1949 recommendations of the Statistical Commission, the Population Commission identified twelve groups of issues that should be included in population censuses. These were: total population, gender, age, marital status, place of birth, citizenship (birth right), native language, educational characteristics, fertility, labour force participation (economically active and inactive), occupation by economic sector; agricultural and non-agricultural population, urban and rural population, number and characteristics of household members. It was required that the information should provide a framework for developing internationally comparable data and to enable a review of world population. National governments were allowed to add additional issues to the lists. The Commission stressed the importance of the completeness and reliability of the results and their comparability. The Commission indicated detailed recommendations on data collection methods, formulated definitions of the categories to be enumerated (UN, 1949: 1-2). Most of these recommendations were used in the 1950 census.

UN's efforts to standardise the censuses undertaken were developed in subsequent years. In 1958, the UN Statistical Commission issued a new set of principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses. They set the standards for conducting censuses for the subsequent years and provided the basis for the world's first population and housing census program. A definition of a census was agreed upon. As defined by the UN, it meant "the total process of collecting, compiling, evaluating, analysing and publishing or otherwise disseminating demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specified time, to all persons in a country or a well-defined part of the country". The term "total process" meant that it was not only about collecting and compiling data, but also the analysis, publication and dissemination of such data. The censuses were given a name "population and housing census" and their scope was intended to cover demographic, economic and social data (census questions were expanded to include population income, education and housing). Expanding the scope of information to include social data was justified by the relatively low cost of obtaining it (the census was being conducted anyway, so it could cover a larger body of information).

The universality of the census was not easy to implement, a number of problems related to, for example, recording immigrants. The aim of census simultaneity was to create a picture of the population as at the time, however, the realisation of this demand required obtaining a large human labour in order to implement the census. In large populations, this was not always possible; censuses could take several weeks, but the population status was given as at a certain date. Households were asked to report the status of people who were at home on the day of the census or who were regular members of the household. Births and deaths that occurred between the actual census date and the date indicated as the census date (when the household was actually counted) had to be disregarded. Eventually, the work of international statistical organisations and institutions led to the formation of permanent census standards, such as universality, simultaneity, individuality, directness and periodicity of the censuses; the principle of a 10-year interval was generally followed (Holzer, 1999: 39–44).

CENSUSES IN THE POLISH LANDS IN THE 19TH CENTURY

During the partition period, population counts and censuses were, of course, subject to the authorities of the partitioning states, and the implementation of the censuses looked different in the Prussian, Austrian or Russian partition. Here, we need to distinguish the Duchy of Warsaw (1807–1815), which conducted two censuses in 1808 and 1810.

The first census was ordered in July 1807 by the Minister of the Interior; it was conducted by local administrative authorities. Special forms were prepared for cities and villages, and they covered population (number, structure by gender, age, religion, occupation), number of dwelling houses and economy in the six departments, cities and counties of the Duchy. The above-mentioned forms include:

1. Statistical table of cities – it included questions about population and buildings in cities;
2. Rural statistical table – it included questions about population and buildings in villages;
3. Product table of cities and villages – it included questions about crops, animals, forests, prices of rural products, alcohol production;
4. Topographical table of villages and towns – it concerned division of land into land use categories;
5. The “status” table – it included questions about income and taxation (Berger, 2017a: 76).

The census was carried out by census commissioners on the basis of data provided by local secular and ecclesiastical authorities, and was supplemented by county and departmental prefectures. The census lasted throughout 1808, with the results compiled in late 1808 and early 1809.

The census results were incomplete for the needs of the Duchy’s administration. Therefore, the Minister of the Interior, in October 1809, ordered another census (also including the area of the so-called Western Galicia annexed to the Duchy in 1809). The organisation of the census was supervised by local administrative authorities and in the villages by the clergy. The regulation included diagrams of statistical tables along with instructions for collecting data. The census was personal with questions about gender, religion and social position (sources of income). The census was completed in 1810, in some departments it lasted until 1811 or even 1812.

The 1808 and 1810 censuses covered all residents of the Duchy, one of the goals being to determine the number of people that could be recruited into the army. According to Grossman's calculations, the 1808 census omitted 28.4%, and the 1810 census 8.4% of the total population (Grossman, 1925: 79–80). It should be noted that both censuses brought advances in statistical research, and hence the Statistical Office under the Ministry of Internal Affairs was established in Warsaw in 1810 to implement them. This could be considered the first Polish central statistical office and one of the first of its kind in Europe. Another census was taken in 1812, based on a program developed by Wawrzyniec Surowiecki. Due to the war, the census was completed in only a few departments.

In the Polish lands belonging to the partitioners, the earliest censuses were conducted by Prussia in the 19th century. These censuses had a registration nature, with the data collected by the government administration, coordinated by the 1805 Royal Prussian Statistical Office in Berlin (established in 1805). The censuses were based on police or tax records. In 1820, annual population statistics were combined with registrations, and from 1822, population count took place every three years, a principle later adopted by the German Customs Union. The censuses recorded population, gender, population movement, nationality, religion, gender, occupation, number of farms (so-called occupational censuses) by city and village. Information was recorded for each village, including the number of buildings, the number of residents by age (under 14, 14 to 60 and over 60), religion, the number of those eligible for military service and the number of cattle. In 1837, age groups were broken down into seven subgroups, and in 1858, the feature of nationality was added (Gehrmann, 2009: 13–16). The first Prussian census that was not based on registers took place in 1846.

A systematic census of the population and its characteristics (religion, language) was conducted beginning from 1843, with subsequent censuses taken in 1846, 1849, 1852, 1855, 1858, 1861, 1864, 1867, 1871, 1875, 1885, 1895, 1905 and 1910. The 1864 census was the first proper national census, using the modern system of household forms tested by Ernst Engel in 1861 (Ernst Engel became most famous for Engel's law). It was mandatory for all German countries. Germany applied the demands of the International Statistical Congress in London (1860) to conduct a census at least once every 10 years. Household lists filled out by heads of households and checked by government officials were used to effectively count the population, by households rather than the family as the basic statistical unit. At that time,

lists were introduced with individual designations for each household member determined by periodic real calculations (Gehrmann, 2009: 13–16). The censuses were conducted directly, using a set of household or individual sheets, the data collected included: first and last name, household position, gender, year and place of birth, marital status, religion, occupation, citizenship and place of residence (type of residence). In some censuses, there was also a question about the language used. The population of cities (including those with a population of more than 20,000) and villages (including municipalities with a population of more than 2,000), as well as manor areas, were isolated. Census results were published for municipalities and provinces. It should be added here that separate occupational censuses were conducted in Prussia for each household combined with business censuses (in 1882, 1895 and 1907). The occupation, occupational position, age and family status were recorded, and the 1907 census also recorded the place of birth of individuals. The results of the censuses were announced for each province (Chojecki, 2022: 52–83; Łazowska, 2018: 82–90).

In the Austrian Empire, population surveys were carried out until the 1860s by statistical offices at central government offices (from 1829 the Statistical Office in Vienna, from 1840 the Directorate of Administrative Statistics, and in 1863 the Central Statistical Commission of the Austrian Empire). Within the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, national and municipal statistical offices began after 1867: the Municipal Statistical Office in Lviv (1872), the National Statistical Office in Lviv (1873), the Municipal Statistical Office in Krakow (1884), which, among other things, were responsible for publishing the results of population censuses and conducting their own statistical surveys (Łazowska, 2017a: 117).

Austro-Hungarian censuses were organised in 1857, 1869, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910 – always on 31 December. The censuses were personal, they registered the so-called ‘permanently residing population’ and ‘the current population’ (not permanently residing) (Rzepakowski, 2005: 110). They asked about name, gender, marital status, age and place of birth, physical and mental defects. Only the first two censuses (1857 and 1869) asked about nationality. The censuses also covered livestock (horses, cattle, pigs, chickens, ducks, geese and even bee hives). The results of the 1890, 1900, and 1910 censuses (along with data for Galicia) were published between 1912 and 1918 in the publications of the Office of the Central Statistical Commission in Vienna (Łazowska, 2017a: 119; Łukasiewicz, 2009: 3).

In the Polish lands of the Russian partition, the first fully comprehensive census was not conducted until 1897. Previously, over many decades, population counts were conducted by local and central administrative authorities on the basis of population registers in civil registry offices (Berger, 2017b: 85–86; 2002; Szulc, 1920: 21). Until World War I, estimates of the population of the Kingdom of Poland were based on the population registers. Basic information on the population figures and occupational structure was contained in the so-called *Obzors*, or governorate reports issued from the early 1970s. The information posted in the *Obzors* was treated as a state secret and was not for general sale (Berger, 2017b: 95; Nietyksza, 1986: 118–119). Population censuses conducted by the authorities of some governorates and cities also provided information on the status of the population. These were not universal censuses, and varied in scope and methods of compiling the results. Such a census was conducted in 1868 across 7 cities in the Radom Governorate, in 1872 in Piotrków Trybunalski, in 1889 and 1890 in the Suwałki and Łomża Governorates, and in 1881 in the Płock Governorate (Janczak, 1994: 47–116). In 1882, a one-day census of Warsaw's population was conducted. All residents were censused, no distinction was made between permanent and non-permanent population, but place of birth, age, marital status, nationality, religion, education, number of dwellings and buildings were recorded. The results of the census were used by the city authorities to develop a plan for city investment, primarily concerning water and sewage (Berger, 1995: 41–44).

Russian authorities planned to conduct a census in the late 1870s, as indicated by the draft regulations of the census prepared in 1877 (Rachwał, 2021: 62). In 1887 the Warsaw Statistical Committee was established as the central statistical institution of the Kingdom of Poland (Berger, 2017b: 100–101). The first census of the population was conducted in 1897.

The obligation to collect data rested with census enumerators. Each of them had about 400 households (about 2 thousand inhabitants) to register in the countryside and about 150 apartments (750 people) in the cities. In the Kingdom of Poland, nearly 15 thousand census enumerators were appointed. According to the guidelines, anyone who wanted to become a census enumerator had to read and write well, be intelligent and familiar with the local relations, have high moral qualifications and the trust of the district manager and the local population (Rachwał, 2022: 30).

The basic questionnaire consisted of 14 questions concerning household members. The census taker asked about family name and first name, relation with regard to the head of the household and the head of the fam-

ily, sex, age, religion, marital status (married, single, widowed, divorced), place of birth ('here' or other place – governorate, county, city), place of registration and place of residence; nationality, language, education (are they literate, which school), social class and rank or title, socio-professional composition (profession – source of livelihood: industry, trade, agriculture etc., the main source of income: primary and secondary sources of income) (Rachwał, 2022: 41–42). The results of this census – although subject to some errors – are the primary source of data on the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Poland at the level of municipalities (urban and rural), counties and governorates. The census results were published for each of the 10 governorates and separately for the city of Warsaw³. The 1897 census would be the only one completed until World War I. Another one was prevented by the war.

POLISH CENSUSES IN THE 20TH CENTURY

The interwar period

The first census was conducted in the Second Polish Republic in 1921 (from 30 September to 1 October). It was carried out by GUS in accordance with the recommendations of the International Statistical Institute. It was combined with an agricultural census.

According to the Law on the Organisation of Administrative Statistics of 21 October 1919, the first census was to be conducted in 1920 (Dz.U. 1919, No. 85, item 464). The war with Russia made its execution impossible. At the request of GUS, the government agreed to postpone the census until 30 September 1921. The parliament adopted a relevant act in May 1921 (see picture below) (Dz.U. 1921, No. 43, item 262). The rules for organising the census and the range of the issues covered were regulated by a June 1921 government decree (Dz.U. 1921, No. 58, item 368).

The scope of the census was very broad. Questions included: name, sex, date of birth, marital status, nationality, native language, religion, literacy, education, place of birth, occupation, disability. The survey covered residential and non-residential buildings, the number of people in dwell-

³ *Pervaya vseobshchaya perepis naseleniya Rossiyskoj Imperii 1897* (1905). The data was published for 10 governorate (volumes 51–60) by counties, municipalities and cities. Volume 51 is double – separate for the Warsaw governorate and the city of Warsaw, St. Petersburg, 1904.

ings, agricultural, horticultural and forestry farms, as well as domestic animals. A survey of orphans was also conducted during the census (GUS, 1931: 15–79). It was the only census in Polish history, in which language, nationality and religion were examined simultaneously (a critical analysis of the census was carried out by Tomaszewski, 1985). The census presented nationality and occupational ratios, the scale of unemployment, as well as showing the characteristics of farms. The amount of census information is estimated at 6 million records (GUS, 2021: 3).

A July 1921 government decree designated local administrative authorities responsible for organising the census. The census enumerators were government officials, teachers and undergraduate students. Special tasks were performed by GUS: it prepared instructions and forms for the counters (for Poznań and Pomerania additionally in German, for Eastern Lesser Poland in Ukrainian), trained census enumerators (about 70,000 persons), issued a special brochure calling for truthful answers (GUS, 1931: 43–77; Łazowska, 2017b: 177; Rzepkowski, 2005: 111–112).

The census was carried out shortly after the end of the national border wars, during the period of repatriation, emigration and re-emigration, as well as resettlement. The census did not include parts of the Vilnius Region (the city of Vilnius and the Wilno-Troki County, Oshmyany County and Švenčionys County), as well as Upper Silesia. GUS published the first census results in December 1921, the final results in 1926–1932 (GUS, 1926–1932). Since the census did not include Upper Silesia and parts of Vilnius, the figures for these areas were based on the results of the 1919 German census and the 1919 census of Vilnius by the Eastern Territories Civil Administration. GUS published the *Directory of Municipalities of the Republic of Poland* in 15 volumes between 1923 and 1926 based on the census materials. A correct list of towns was, insanely, important, such that the lists for the census were prepared by GUS in 1919–1921, but they were neither complete nor fully correct (Berger, 2008: 1–10).

The second census was conducted in 1931, on 9 December 1931 (Dz.U. 1931, No. 80, item, 629). It was based on the Council of Ministers' decree of 2 September 1921. Its principles and substantive scope were similar to the 1921 census. The methodology for both censuses was developed by Rajmund Buławski (1930). The census 1931 covered the entire territory of the country, residents, regardless of whether they were present or temporarily absent from their place of residence on the day of the census as well as people from abroad who were temporarily residing in Poland. The census questions covered: name, sex, age, religion, language, literacy, places

of residence broken down to urban and rural, size of locality, occupation and sources of income, residential and non-residential buildings, number of dwellings and rooms and their density in cities (Rzepakowski, 2005: 120–123). For economic reasons (the Great Depression), a full agricultural census was not conducted, the census forms included just one question about the area and structure of agricultural land. The first census information was published on 26 January 1932, the full results in 1932–1938 in 31 volumes containing about 5.5 million pieces of information (GUS, 1932–1938). For economic reasons, the *Directory of Municipalities* was replaced by the *Directory of Localities*. The published census data was characterised by expanded analysis, correlation of many characteristics and deeper social characterization (Landau, 1934).

Population censuses have been a major organisational challenge, both in terms of the census itself and the correct processing and publication of the results. For the first census of 1921, special counting and analytical machines, punching machines, sorters and tabulators were purchased from the United States to read the data from the cards and produce summaries. 41.4 million cards were developed and checked. For the 1931 census, GUS purchased a newer generation of counting and analytical machines from the US. Similarly, accounting machines that perform addition and subtraction as well as multiplication and division operations were also used (Łazowska, 2017b: 178–179).

The outbreak of war interrupted preparations for the third census. During the war, the activities of the Polish statistical authorities were banned, while the census was conducted by the German authorities of the General Government on 1 March 1943 (*Amtliches...1943*).

The period of the Polish People's Republic

The first post-war population and housing census bearing the name *General Summary Census of Population of 1946* was conducted on 14 February 1946. Its main task was to examine the state of the Polish population after the war, within the new borders of the country, under conditions of ongoing emigration and repatriation of the populace. The knowledge of the status of the population was necessary for reconstruction policy, school planning, as well as settlement in the western and northern lands. The government announced a census decree on 10 January 1946. The census did not include active Polish servicemen, armies of allied countries and prisoners of war residing on Polish territory. Those born between 1927 and

1946 and residing in the western and northern lands were listed personally for the school administration. The census was carried out under difficult organisational and technical conditions, by de facto manual method, without mechanization of data processing. People were censused by gender and age. The number of houses, apartments, rooms and the number of people living in them were noted. Questions were asked about nationality, broken down into Poles, Germans and others, with the goal of obtaining information on the number of Germans to be resettled in German occupation zones (GUS, 1947). The use of the aggregate method allowed for quick preparation of the prints, conducting the census as well as compiling and publishing the results. Based on the census, GUS Census Bureau published a list of counties and information on changes in county and provincial boundaries.

Several years after the census, preparations for the next census began. The National Census was conducted as of 2 to 3 December. Preparations began in the second half of 1949 – the scope, timing and organisation were indicated by a decree of the Council of Ministers in July 1950 (Dz.U. 1950, No. 32, item 293). A trial census was also carried out. Trial censuses were performed in all later censuses. These played an important role such as allowing for organisation of the records of buildings, apartments, population and farms (GUS, 1981: 37–44). It should be added here that all Polish censuses were based on the recommendations of the UN commission and the COMECON statistical commission.

The scope of the census was broad. It took into account gender, age, place of residence, profession, sources of income, number of people in school, literacy, housing resources (type of buildings, form of ownership, year of construction, facilities). The questions also focused on farms: their area, ownership, land use, major crops, inventory and equipment including agricultural machinery. An important novelty was the question of where people lived before World War II; they wanted to examine population movements after 1945.

The census was conducted by 120,000 commissioners between 3 and 9 December 1950. For the purpose of compiling the census results, GUS purchased sets of counting and analytical machines as well as accounting and bookkeeping machines. The first census data was published in January 1951 based on telegraph reports. The full results were published in 29 volumes, containing approximately 1 million pieces of statistical information. Basic data for the country and provinces was published in May 1952, detailed results in mid-1953. The last publication appeared in 1956

(GUS, 1950–1956). Publications were classified (categorized “for official use”) and made available after 1956. However, some elements of the data were not published (GUS, 1981: 46–47).

Another census was conducted in 1960 as of 5–6 December. Similar to the 1950 census, its rules, date, scope and manner of execution were determined by government resolutions in 1958 and 1960. It was necessary to update maps with the boundaries of administrative units. Participation of citizens in the census was mandatory, this was determined by a special decree of the Council of Ministers of October 1960. The topics and organisation of the census were similar to those of 1950: gender, age groups, literacy, sources of income, housing, density of flats and rooms, basic flat facilities, area of farms, area of farmland, number of livestock, agricultural machinery and tools. New questions were introduced about the level of education and the social structure of the rural population (GUS, 1981: 55).

The census was conducted by 189,000 enumerators in 126,000 census districts and about 30,000 census areas. Like in 1950, there was a trial census and an extensive information campaign. The census lasted from 6 to 12 December 1960. Preliminary results were published in late January 1961, based on telegraph reports. Publication of the final tables continued throughout 1961, with some of the results compiled using a representative method. The full results of the census were published in 143 volumes of unclassified publications and in 470 notebooks for official use. They contained more than 21 million pieces of information (GUS, 1981: 65). The last publication was printed in 1966.

The next National Census was conducted in 1970. Its principles, date, scope and framework were established by a resolution of the Council of Ministers of December 1966; another resolution of the Council of Ministers of July 1968 specified division of the country into permanent statistical regions and census districts. In October 1969, the government indicated the detailed scope of the census, the rules for conducting, compiling and announcing the results. A July 1970 the Council of Ministers regulation indicated the scope of the census and its duration from December 8 to 15, 1970 (Dz.U. 1970, No. 17, item 147). In October 1970, census bureaux were established at the provincial, city, county, and township levels. 240,000 enumerators were also trained. The President of GUS was the General Census Commissioner; the work was carried out by GUS Census Bureaux. The census was extensively popularised on the radio, television as well as the printed press.

The 1970 census was broader in terms of issues than the previous ones. It was conducted on two dates: the census of agricultural farm buildings was conducted in conjunction with the annual agricultural census in June 1970, while the census of population, flats and residential buildings and individual farms was conducted in December 1970 as of midnight on December 7–8. The scope of topics was broader than the one conducted in 1960 and included such issues as place of birth, field of education, female fertility rate, area of the flats, installations in the dwelling, buildings and farm premises (type, area, age, wall and covering material), areas of unoccupied housing resources (GUS, 1981: 70).

The census lasted from 8 to 15 December and the Census Bureau announced the first synthetic information in January 1971 based on telegraph reports. Subsequent publications appeared by 1974, with a total of 124 volumes of summary publications and 1316 provincial and county volumes “for official use” (Łazowska, 1998–2000). The publications contained much more information than previous censuses in terms of territorial cross-sections, number of groupings and feature linkages. For the first time the census was compiled using electronic computing technology.

Another census was conducted on 7–13 December 1978. Departure from the 10-year interval rule resulted from the 1975 territorial division reform, which abolished counties and introduced 49 provinces. Preparations began in 1976 based on a Council of Ministers resolution that defined the scope and timing of the census. It was detailed in an April 1978 Council of Ministers decree. The census was headed by the President of GUS as the General Census Commissioner, direct work was managed by GUS Census Bureaux. Directors of provincial statistical offices and staff of field administration bodies were responsible for preparing and conducting the census; 193,000 enumerators were trained, and nearly 156,000 census districts were organised. The census was popularised in specialized publications, in the press, on radio and television and even in cinemas (Łazowska, 2017c: 310).

In 1978, the parallel agricultural census was withdrawn and only the question on total farm area and farm labour inputs was retained. However, the housing survey expanded to include building features and housing title. New topics included disability, incapacity, reasons for inactivity of working-age individuals, main sources of income for the head of the household, structure of households by the source of income, level of wages, pensions by socio-professional groups, cost of living. New ques-

tions on environmental protection and fires were also introduced (GUS, 1981: 88–91).

A year before the actual census, a trial census was conducted (7–13 December 1977). The actual National Census lasted from 7 to 13 December 1978. It was hampered by a harsh winter. The government wanted to use the results of the census to develop a socio-economic plan for 1981–1985. Preliminary results were prepared in January 1979. In order to speed up processing of the results, electronic machines were used as the data was recorded only on magnetic tapes. It took 2.5 years to compile the results, and many studies were confidential (GUS, 1978). The results of the 1978 Census were published in 38,000 publications.

The next Census was conducted on 7–12 December 1988, as of 12:00 AM on 6 December. Unlike previous censuses, its basic rules were regulated by a parliamentary Act of July 1987 (Strzelecki, Toczyński and Latuch, 2002: 562–567). Based on this, the Council of Ministers determined the terms of the census. The Act identified the institutions responsible for implementing the census, i.e., the President of the Central Statistical Office, provincial statistical offices and local authorities. A parliamentary Act and a government resolution also determined the scope of the census. In constructing the questions more broadly, international recommendations were taken into account. It is worth noting that the range of topics in Poland was broader than in the censuses of Western countries (32 questions, whereas in most countries 15–17 questions) (Zalewski, 1988: 117–129). In constructing the catalogue of questions, the needs of the government and planning authorities were taken into account, as well as the demands of research institutions. This resulted in expansion of census topics, increased organisational difficulties and higher costs of developing publications. Poland's economy was in an increasingly deep crisis at the time, and attention was also paid to the cost of the census under these conditions.

In addition to standard demographic and social data, the questions included a broad set of information on housing: the condition of the flat, room, building, permanent and temporary residents, qualitative characteristics of housing, housing conditions by socio-professional groups. Questions on commuting and migration, as well as on biological and formal disability were retained, with expanded detail. A voluntary sample survey of female fertility was conducted during the census. Some solutions of the 1988 Census were tested during the 1984 Population and Housing Census (as of December 6) (Szwalek, 1984). A sample census of 80,000 people was conducted in December 1987. In preparation for the

census, 170,000 census enumerators and 30,000 census bureaux members were trained (GUS, 1992: 10–22). A number of publications resulting from the census amounted to several hundred items with aggregation to provinces and municipalities, and dozens of studies synthesising selected issues.

The most important publications of the 1960, 1970, 1978 and 1988 censuses were presented by Łazowska. These are presented in tables 1–4.

Table 1. List of publications of the 1960 census presented by Łazowska

1960 census	Number of volumes	Year of issue
Population, flats, buildings and farms. Preliminary results	1	1961
Individual farms. Results compiled by representative method	23	1961
Population, flats, buildings and farms. Preliminary results	18	1961–1962
Population, flats, buildings and farms. Preliminary results. 2nd edition according to the administrative division of 1.10.1962.	18	1962–1963
Population. Households. Flats. Results compiled by representative method	23	1962
Individual farms. Final results	18	1963–1965
Population. Households. Final results	23	1964–1965
Population. Additional information for districts – cities – counties	453	1965
Flats. Residential buildings. Final results	23	1965–1966

Source: Łazowska (2017c: 281).

Table 2. List of publications of the 1970 census presented by Łazowska

1970 census	Number of volumes	Year of issue
Population by gender and age. Preliminary results	17	1970
Livestock and livestock housing on individual farms. Preliminary results	18	1970
Population. Housing resources. Individual farms. Preliminary results	-	1971
Agriculture. Farm buildings on individual farms	18	1971
Population. Female fertility	2	1971
Population. Demographic and occupational structure of the population. Households. Part I: Provincial boards, Part II: County boards	40	1971-1972
Towns. Statistical characteristics of the town	428	1971-1972
Population. Population migrations	23	1972-1973
Flats and buildings. Housing resources and conditions	19	1972-1973
Occupation	23	1973
Employees by socio-professional groups	22	1973
Housing situation of the Polish population in the light of the final results of the 1970 census	-	1973
Building facilities	23	1973
Agriculture. Individual farms	18	1972-1974

Source: Łazowska (2017c: 297).

Table 3. List of publications of the 1978 census presented by Łazowska

1978 census	Number of volumes	Year of issue
Demographic and socio-professional structure of the population	100	1979-1980

1978 census	Number of volumes	Year of issue
Population. Households and housing conditions	1	1980
Population in individual farms	100	1979–1980
Households and families	100	1979–1980
Family	1	1981
Population and housing conditions	2983	1979–1980
Housing conditions	100	1979–1980
Unoccupied housing resources	50	1979–1980
Disability	50	1980
Disabled persons	1	1981
Circular migration of the working population	50	1981
Population migrations. Results of a sample survey	64	1981

Source: Łazowska (2017c: 313).

Table 4. List of publications of the 1988 census presented by Łazowska

1988 census	Year of issue
National Census: population and housing: an overview of the 1979–1988 transition: Poland	1990
National Census: demographic and socio-professional structure of the population: Poland	1990
National Census: inhabited buildings	1990
National Census: housing conditions: Poland	1990
National Census: households and families	1990
National Census: housing conditions: changes from 1971 to 1988: Poland	1991
National Census: housing situation of families in 1988: Poland	1991
National Census: educational level of Polish population 1970–1988	1991

1988 census	Year of issue
National Census: the family in light of the 1988 census results	1991
National Census: disabled persons in Poland in 1978–1988	1991
National Census: population associated with individual farms in 1970–1988	1992
National Census: demographic and occupational structure, as well as housing conditions of the urban population in 1978–1988	1992
National Census: housing conditions of the population associated with individual farms	1992
National Census: demographic and housing diversity in cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants	1992
National Census: population migration in Poland in 1979–1988	1992
National Census: female fertility	1992
National Census: methodology and organisation of the 1988 census	1994

Source: Łazowska (2017c: 328).

The 1988 census was the last in the 20th century. It presented the Polish society at the end of the People's Republic of Poland providing valuable information for policy and economic decision makers as the country entered the transition process (Strzelecki, 2009: 10). During this period, the basic principles of national statistics were changed. In 1989, the Law on Statistics was amended, granting autonomy to GUS and restrictions on the availability of census publications from previous years were lifted (Łazowska, 1998–2000). In 1995, GUS conducted a Population and Housing Census, using the representative method, and it obviously did not have the characteristics of a universal census. Similarly in 1995, the first activities related to the process of adapting Polish statistics to European requirements began. It also made references to earlier censuses. Since Poland was in transition, many census categories had to be redefined from scratch, because Eurostat definitions, such as labour force participation, productive population or sources of income of the population did not always fit the Polish reality. Preparations for a full population and agricultural census began in 1998 and implemented in 2002. It was the Population and Housing Census combined with the Agricultural Census. Quite interest-

ingly, even the President of the Republic of Poland was engaged in promoting the census. The last censuses were carried out in 2011 and 2021.

CONCLUSION

In certain European countries, population censuses began in the second half of the 18th century and became a cyclical event in the life of societies and countries in the 19th century. In the second half of that century, censuses had become a universal, direct, personal, one-day event. International statistical institutions have played an important role in developing census procedures and standards.

Censuses are one of the most valuable sources of information on society, demographic and educational issues, level of education, living conditions of the population, housing conditions, occupational structure and sources of income. Of course, the earliest censuses of the 19th century did not include as wide a range of topics as the censuses conducted in the 20th century. Since the censuses were carried out at the level of the smallest administrative units, they show societies at various regional and national cross-sections.

The features of the censuses presented in the study also show that their topics reflected, to some extent, the features of the socio-political system; in a word, the formulated census questions, in addition to the purely cognitive aspects, provided the state authorities with specific knowledge about society. Thus, in addition to the traditional questions, whose catalogue was indicated by international statistical agencies, there were questions specific to each era and its socio-political system. This can be perfectly seen in the censuses carried out during the period of the People's Republic of Poland.

A fundamental feature of the censuses is a set of questions common to demographic and social issues. This makes it possible to carry out comparative analysis in different regional cross-sections on a secular basis (of course, changes in the borders of administrative units, so frequent in the case of Poland, were a significant hindrance). It should also be provided that census categories are not always comparable, hence various conversions and estimates are necessary. Important to the credibility of the censuses was trust in the authorities conducting them, the reliability of the census as well as the subsequent compilation of the results. The universality of censuses made them a huge organizational challenge each time, since

they involve thousands or hundreds of thousands of people. With successive censuses, the scope of census work became increasingly broader, and thus, required more and more involvement of the institutions carrying it out. The greatest effort was borne by the statistical institutions responsible, not only for conducting the censuses, but also during the compilation and publication of the data.

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