

# The 1897 Census in the Kingdom of Poland<sup>1</sup>

Piotr Rachwał<sup>a</sup>

**Abstract.** The aim of the article is to present the issues relating to the organisation, conduct and processing of the results of the first population census in the Kingdom of Poland in 1897 in a concise way. Although the text focuses on the lands of the Kingdom of Poland which were under the Russian rule the aforementioned issues have been discussed in a broader context of the activity of the central institutions in St. Petersburg. Polish historiography addresses these matters only to a limited extent and very few authors have dealt primarily with the notion of the completeness of census data.

The provincial authorities and the Warsaw Statistical Committee played a major role in the preparation and conduct of the census in the Kingdom of Poland. It should be emphasised, however, that the greatest effort related to data collection rested with the lowest-level local government. At the stage of the central preparation of the census results, modern technologies, i.e. Hollerith's calculating machines, were used. The data that was collected on forms containing 14 questions were coded on special perforated cards, which significantly improved the performance of the relevant calculations. The level at which the census was carried out and its final outcome are assessed relatively high. On the other hand, there are certain reservations as to the credibility of the census results relating to the Kingdom of Poland, the most serious of which concern the reporting of the age, the professional structure, as well as the religion and mother tongue of the respondents.

**Keywords:** 1897 Census, Kingdom of Poland, Warsaw Statistical Committee, perforated cards

**JEL:** B00

## Powszechny spis ludności w Królestwie Polskim w 1897 roku

**Streszczenie.** Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie zagadnień związanych z organizacją, przebiegiem i opracowaniem wyników pierwszego powszechnego spisu ludności w Królestwie Polskim, który przeprowadzono w 1897 r. Uwagę skupiono na ziemiach Królestwa Polskiego, znajdującego się pod panowaniem rosyjskim, niemniej jednak starano się przedstawić problematykę spisu w szerszym kontekście działalności władz centralnych w Petersburgu. W polskiej historiografii zagadnienia te podejmowali nieliczni autorzy i jedynie w ograniczonym zakresie, przede wszystkim dotyczącym oceny kompletności danych spisowych.

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<sup>a</sup> Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II, Wydział Nauk Humanistycznych, Instytut Historii, Polska / The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Faculty of Humanities, History Institute, Poland.  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1903-4115>. E-mail: [piotrach@kul.pl](mailto:piotrach@kul.pl).

Główną rolę w przygotowaniu i przeprowadzeniu spisu w Królestwie Polskim odegrały władze gubernialne oraz Warszawski Komitet Statystyczny. Należy jednak podkreślić, że największy wysiłek związany z gromadzeniem danych spoczywał na władzach samorządowych najniższego szczebla. Na etapie centralnego opracowywania wyników spisu wykorzystano nowoczesne technologie, tj. maszyny liczące Holleritha. Dane zebrane na formularzach (które zawierały 14 pytań) kodowano na specjalnych kartach perforowanych, co znacząco usprawniło obliczenia. Wyniki spisu i sposób jego przeprowadzenia należy ocenić stosunkowo dobrze. W przypadku Królestwa Polskiego największe zastrzeżenia do wiarygodności spisu dotyczą raportowania wieku ludności, struktury zawodowej, a także wyznania i języka ojczystego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** powszechny spis ludności 1897 r., Królestwo Polskie, Warszawski Komitet Statystyczny, karty perforowane

## 1. Introduction

The collection of data on the condition and structure of the population stands a long tradition reaching back to as early as the ancient times, and the Roman Empire had a particularly well-developed state apparatus facilitating the process of gathering information (Suder, 2003). Reporting of this type weakened in the Middle Ages, and it was not until the Modern Era that the knowledge of the demographics of individual administrative units became important to both church and state authorities. What all historical censuses had in common was the purpose for which they were conducted, i.e. to allow the efficient management of the state, which involved acquiring funds effectively for its functioning and determining the country's mobilisation possibilities, i.e. its military potential (Domschke & Goyer, 1986; Goyer & Domschke, 1983; Goyer & Draaijer, 1992; Łukasiewicz, 2009).

However, the modern concept of a population census<sup>2</sup> – in terms of covering all the inhabitants of a given area, regardless of age, sex, professional or state affiliation, etc. – was not developed until the 18th century (Holzer, 1999). The first country to have conducted a census according to the modern criteria was Iceland. The census took place in 1703 in the form of a personal census. Another census was conducted in Sweden in 1749 and since then censuses have been conducted there every five years. Censuses were also organised in the United States of America in 1790, in France in 1800, and in England in 1801, and take place every 10 years (Thorvaldsen, 2018).

In the Polish territory, the first general censuses were conducted in the 19th century. The Polish state was then partitioned, therefore the statistical apparatuses of the individual partitioning states were responsible for organising the censuses. Two of them were held in the Duchy of Warsaw, which was granted considerable autonomy. Both were nominal; the first lasted from July 1807 to the end of 1808 and the second

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<sup>2</sup> A population census is a systematic recording of information on all members of a population usually residing in a country (*de jure*) or present at the time of the enumeration (*de facto*). The most important features of censuses are: financing by the national government, agreement on areas to be included, universality, individual enumeration, simultaneity of enumeration, periodicity, and publication and dissemination of the results (Bailar, 2001; Kreyenfeld & Willekens, 2015).

from October 1809 to March 1810 (Grossman, 1925). In Prussia, the first nominal census was held in 1840, and in the Austrian Empire in 1857 (Łukasiewicz, 2009).<sup>3</sup>

The aim of the article is to present the issues relating to the organisation, conduct and processing of the results of the first population census in the Kingdom of Poland in 1897 in a concise way. The Kingdom of Poland, established at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, connected by a personal union with Russia, was strictly dependent on and controlled by it until Poland regained independence in 1918. The census of 1897 was the only one that took place in the Russian Empire before World War I.<sup>4</sup> It covered the entire Empire (excluding the Grand Duchy of Finland) and was supervised by the central institutions in St. Petersburg, thus the issues raised in this paper are considered in a broader context – not only in relation to the Kingdom of Poland, but also to the activity of the central administration. The article discusses the preparations for the census, its organisation and conduct, as well as the work related to the processing of the results. The purpose of the article does not include the analysis of the statistical data collected during the census (which can be found in Janczak, 1982; Nietyksza, 1971; Pruss, 1977; Szulc, 1920).

## 2. The origin and technical organisation of the census

In tsarist Russia, in the second half of the 19th century, a new socio-economic reality was forming as a result of intensified industrialisation, urbanisation and, above all, the Emancipation Reform, which came into force in 1861. The reform granted peasants various rights, including personal freedom, the possibility of social advancement or greater mobility, albeit to a limited extent (Krnilov, 1905; Litvak, 1991). The Emancipation Reform was introduced in the Kingdom of Poland in 1864 (Bardach et al., 1994). What significantly prompted the decision of the authorities in St. Petersburg to conduct a census which would provide detailed data on the country's demography was, in addition to the aforementioned social transformations, the accumulation of problems hindering the efficient management of the

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<sup>3</sup> Successive censuses of the population of the Polish territories under Austrian and Prussian rule took place in Galicia in 1869, 1880, 1890, 1900 and 1910, and in the Prussian partition in 1843 and 1846. The latter was the year that the principle of a one-day census organised every 3 years was adopted, and since 1875 censuses were carried out every 5 years. In the Russian Empire, the second census was scheduled for 1910, but it was postponed until 1915, yet even then it did not take place. Thus, the 1897 Census was the first and only statistical survey of this type conducted in tsarist Russia. A separate issue here is the comparability of the collected and processed census data in terms of e.g. grouping the collected statistical data, the statistical categories used, etc. Comparative studies in this area are yet to be conducted. However, some older studies in this area, including those of Krzyżanowski and Kumaniecki (1915), are worth mentioning here. According to Łukasiewicz's general opinion, the results of the censuses carried out in Poland by the authorities of the partitioning states were virtually incomparable due to the chronological differences and the use of varying statistical methods and terminology. It was only the censuses carried out in the Second Polish Republic that allowed a full comparability of the results.

<sup>4</sup> It does not mean, however, that no official population statistics were kept at that time. Activities in this area rested with the governorate authorities, and the local press also played a major role in this respect since its representatives were often members of special committees formed for this purpose (Młodak, 2011).

state, including the effective coordination and response to all kinds of crises. Serious negligence in this regard was exposed by the famine that hit Russia in the years 1891–1892. The crop failure covered an area of over 1.4 million square kilometres, mainly in the central part of the Empire and lands in the Volga basin, including the provinces: Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, Ryazan, Penza, Tula, Simbirsk, Saratov, Samara and Tambov. An estimated 14 to 20 million people were starving at that time, of whom nearly 400 thousand died, mostly from various diseases that attacked their exhausted by hunger bodies (Bazyłow, 1970; Robbins, 1975).<sup>5</sup>

A draft census that would cover the entire territory of the Empire<sup>6</sup> (Clem, 2016) had already been discussed at the 1st All-Russian Congress of Statisticians (1870), and then again in 1876 at the 8th Session of the International Statistical Congress. In February 1877, the draft regulations of the census developed by a commission at the Ministry of Finance were submitted to the State Council, yet due to some dignitaries' opposition and a tense political situation (caused by the war with Turkey in the years 1877–1878), the plans were not implemented at that time (Nietyksza, 1971; Schwartz, 1986).<sup>7</sup>

The main initiators of the census and its long-standing promoters were Pëtr Petrovič Semënov-Tân-Šanskij, geographer and statistician, Chief of the Central Statistical Bureau in the years 1864–1875, and his close associate, Nikolaj Aleksandrovič Trojnickij, Chairman of the Council for Statistics at the Russian Ministry of the Interior (Edlund, 1999). Eventually, the intentions and plans were accepted on 17th June 1895; they were then approved by the authorities and preparatory work began. In July 1896 the date of the census was set for 28th January 1897 in the Old Style, i.e. 9th February 1897 according to the Gregorian calendar.

The body supervising the preparation and conduct of the census was the Central Census Committee in St. Petersburg, established especially for this purpose. Formally, it was subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior. Committees in governorates and counties were lower level bodies subordinate to this committee. In some larger cities, separate committees were established regardless of the county ones. It was the county committees that were responsible for dividing the county or city into districts. Each of these districts included approximately 25 thousand inhabitants in the cities, and usually one municipality in villages. The districts were

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<sup>5</sup> According to observers and commentators of public life, such serious consequences of the famine could have been avoided if the central authorities had effectively collaborated with the local administration. The crisis highlighted the widespread corruption, ineffectiveness of the rulers and, most importantly, the central government's lack of awareness of the real situation in the provinces.

<sup>6</sup> By the end of the 19th century, Russia had an area of over 22 million square kilometres and in this respect, next to the British Empire, it was the vastest state in the world. Russia covered about one-sixth of the world's land.

<sup>7</sup> In the years 1860–1889, 79 censuses were conducted regionally and in large urban centres in the territory of the Russian Empire: St. Petersburg (1864, 1869, 1881, 1890), Moscow (1871, 1882), Tver (1869), Vladimir, Kazan and Kyiv (1874). In the Kingdom of Poland, the census took place in the Radom Governorate in 1868, in the Suwałki Governorate in 1889 and in the Łomża Governorate in 1890. In Warsaw such a census was conducted in 1882.

headed by managers who selected census enumerators, supervised their training and controlled their activity.

It is worth noting that in the second half of the 19th century in the Kingdom of Poland, institutions dealing with population statistics were decentralised. In January 1867, the Kingdom of Poland was divided into 10 governorates with seats in Kalisz, Kielce, Lublin, Łomża, Piotrków, Płock, Radom, Siedlce, Suwałki and Warsaw. In mid-1868, the Government Commission for Internal Affairs, Clergy and Public Education – the institution responsible for statistical reporting related to various aspects of the state's functioning – was dissolved. From then on, these responsibilities were shifted onto the editors of the *Obzor* (*Review*) journals, published annually in each governorate, providing current data on the condition, structure and natural movement of the population (Berger, 2002, 2017; Bornstein, 1920).

The Warsaw Statistical Committee played a significant role in statistical reporting in the Kingdom of Poland at that time. Chaired by Professor G. F. Simonenko, the institution took an active part in the 1897 Census. The Committee's leadership intended to assume as many competences related to the organisation and conduct of the census as possible, but the authorities in St. Petersburg did not agree to it. What is important here is that the initiatives undertaken by the Warsaw Statistical Committee were pro-Russian and aimed to spread relevant propaganda, often at the expense of the deviation from the methodological rules of statistical surveys.<sup>8</sup>

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. Before starting their work and after completing the training, census enumerators were to complete a number of census questionnaires as a test. In Warsaw, census enumerators were mainly students, whereas in provinces usually local officials and teachers (Szulc, 1920). All information was to be obtained by census enumerators through a personal interview; obtaining information from any other sources was forbidden. The headings of all the census sections and the instructions for the questionnaire were translated into local languages – 19 of them in total. The instructions were printed and translated in magazines for informational and educational purposes (Census in Rural Russia, 1897). The census enumerators started the first round 20–30 days before the main census in rural areas and 5–10 days prior in the cities. While rural residents were registered by the census

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<sup>8</sup> This is especially visible with regard to the census registration of the population of the Greek Catholic denomination, where the undertaken actions affected the results of the census, e.g. in the case of some counties in the Siedlce Governorate.

enumerators in person, the residents of manor houses and towns completed the census questionnaires themselves. The census enumerators had to check each and every filled in form. The obtained information was verified on the day of the census, which began at dawn and ended the following day in the cities, and after a maximum of four days in rural areas (Szulc, 1920).

### 3. Census questionnaires

The census was conducted by household (a separate questionnaire for each household). However, the term 'household' was not precisely defined. The instructions for the city census enumerators stated that this was a separate apartment; for the ones in rural areas it was not specified at all. The census questions in the Kingdom of Poland were translated into Polish and German, and additionally into Lithuanian in the Suwałki Governorate. However, no consistency was shown in this regard, as, for example, the questionnaires in Warsaw were not translated, so they were available only in Russian. This discrepancy might have perhaps resulted from the organisers' ill will.<sup>9</sup> The instructions stated that the census questionnaire should include all people present in a given household, including not only permanent residents, but also those who stayed there temporarily, as well as permanent residents who were absent due to their official duties.<sup>10</sup> The census questionnaires had been prepared for five groups. The first questionnaire was intended for peasants who were subsistence farmers. The second one was for the population inhabiting estates. The third type was for city dwellers. A separate questionnaire had also been prepared for the military population (consisting of 12 questions), as well as for foreign students, the clergy and the charges of charitable organisations (Edlund, 1999). The basic questionnaire generally consisted of 14 questions concerning household members (Figure):

1. Family name and given name;
2. Sex (male, female);
3. Relation with regard to the head of the household and the head of the family;
4. Age (how many years or months have passed since birth);
5. Marital status (single, married, widowed, divorced);
6. Social class, rank or title;
7. Place of birth (if other than 'here', then which governorate, county, city);

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<sup>9</sup> This situation may have resulted from the lack of an appropriate number of prepared census cards in languages other than Russian, although the census itself showed that among the people who lived in Warsaw at that time over 59 thousand declared Russian as their mother tongue and over 421 thousand Polish. (Tsentral'nyy Statisticheskiiy Komitet, 1904, vol. 51, p. 2 – the published census results are available in digital repertory of the Stefan Szulc Central Statistical Library: [http://statlibr.stat.gov.pl/exlibris/aleph/a22\\_1/apache\\_media/887JXBFNTR12V6DX8HS8ASVNX9HMUV.pdf](http://statlibr.stat.gov.pl/exlibris/aleph/a22_1/apache_media/887JXBFNTR12V6DX8HS8ASVNX9HMUV.pdf)).

<sup>10</sup> Hence, the census combines two approaches to determining the state of the population, i.e. *de jure* population and *de facto* population. A detailed list in this respect was based on the already published census results – see: Craumer (1986). For the census instruction see: Główny Urząd Statystyczny (2002).

8. Place of registration. Are they registered 'here' in the population registry; if not, then where?;
9. Usual place of residence. Is it 'here'? If not, then where? (governorate, county, city);
10. Notice of absence, departure and temporary stay at the census location;
11. Religious denomination;
12. Native language;
13. Education (a. Are they literate?; b. Where did they go to school?);
14. Occupation, trade, industry, position of office or service (a. primary source of income; b1. secondary, b2. military service).

**Figure.** The 1897 Population Census Form from the Łomża Governorate, Łomża District  
**A. Sign. 10, p. 55**

Бесплатно. № Листа 21

**ПЕРВАЯ ВСЕОБЩАЯ ПЕРЕПИСЬ**  
 населения Российской Имперіи,  
 на основаніи ВЫСОЧАЙШЕ УТВЕРЖДЕННАГО ПОЛОЖЕНІЯ 5 Іюня 1895 года.

**ПЕРЕПИСНОЙ ЛИСТЪ**  
**ФОРМА В.** Удѣль или округъ: Ломжинскій

*Съ переводомъ на польскій и вѣмецкій языки.*

Губернія или область: Ломжинская г-д Удѣль или округъ: Ломжинскій

Городъ (дворянъ, мѣщанъ): Ломжа Улица, площадь, переулокъ: Старый рынокъ

Городская часть: \_\_\_\_\_ Домъ (дворянъ или мѣщ.) № 2

Участокъ (дворянъ) — 1 (Если данъ номеръ дворянскаго мѣста, каково № пишется фамилія дворянина.)

Притворъ (крестьянскій, притворная слобода) — \_\_\_\_\_ Квартира № 1

(Если данъ номеръ мѣст. армянъ, каково № пишется фамилія армянина, каково № квартиры итд.)

Переводной участокъ № 1 Счетный участокъ № 1

Сколько жилищъ строятся на дворянскія жилища?

№	Число жилищъ	Число жилищъ	Число жилищъ
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Примечаніе. Въ сѣдѣніи относятся къ одному дворянскому мѣсту или дому 2 притвора или дворянскія жилища, но не мѣщанскія, только на тѣхъ случаяхъ, въ которыхъ, какъ въ общину, принадлежатъ переписнымъ лицамъ особаго хозяйства или квартиры всего этого дома, кромѣ какъ участкѣ; въ случаяхъ же принадлежатъ квартиру или жилища только одному изъ нихъ. Если дано два жилища одной квартиры, то особаго объясненія на таковой домъ не требуется, а требованія о жилищѣ относятся сѣдѣнію какъ на одномъ переписномъ листѣ этой квартиры.

Подсчитать населенія въ дни, къ которому приурочена перепись.

Новое жилищно населеніе.		Постоянно жилищно населеніе.		Въ числѣ жилищно населенія было лицъ недворянскихъ сословій.		Принимавшаго въ себя отъ свободныхъ или притворныхъ жилищъ населенія крестьянскія жилища.	
Здесь предполагается въ числѣ тѣхъ лицъ (дворянъ и мѣщанъ) жилища, которые принадлежатъ въ 3-й графѣ притворной слободы, а также тѣхъ, которые жили въ слободѣ среди дворянъ и мѣщанъ.		Сюда относятся общаго числа (мужч. и женщ. особамъ) всѣхъ лицъ, которые жили въ 3-й графѣ притворной слободы.		Здесь предполагается въ графѣ 3-й общее число (мужч. и женщ. особамъ) всѣхъ лицъ, принадлежащихъ сословію, которое относится въ графѣ 3-й общій числѣ, а также тѣхъ, которые жили въ общинѣ среди дворянъ и мѣщанъ.		Сюда относятся общаго числа (мужч. и женщ. особамъ) всѣхъ крестьянъ, которые жили въ графѣ 3-й общій числѣ, а также въ (каждомъ).	
М	Ж	М	Ж	М	Ж	М	Ж
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	—	—

Подпись счетовода, собиравшаго сѣдѣніе Степановъ





Although the census questions were clearly specified, certain problems with providing an unambiguous answer could arise in questions 9, 10 and 14, i.e. about the place of residence (stay) and occupation. Stefan Szulc,<sup>11</sup> when assessing the 1897 Census, noticed the ambiguity of the proposed responses, although in general his opinion of the questionnaire was positive. At the same time he emphasised the usefulness and significance of the data collected through these questionnaires: ‘Despite all the reservations, it should be acknowledged that the questionnaire in the form given could be the basis for a work quite well done’ (Szulc, 1920, pp. 5–6).

#### 4. The processing and publication of the results

Having completed the collection of data, each census enumerator organised the material, calculated the population of his or her area on separate forms and submitted them to the district manager. After verifying them, the manager made copies of the forms. The originals were sent to St. Petersburg, while the copies were kept in the archives of the governorates. ‘Representatives to arrange the census activities’ were also appointed as an additional control body. Lieutenant-General S. I. Tolstoy was the representative in the Kingdom of Poland and his assistant was P. A. Baracz, who was one of the editors at the Warsaw Statistical Committee (Brúhanova & Ivanova, 2019; Szulc, 1920).

Next, the employees of the St. Petersburg Census Bureau transferred the information from the census questionnaires onto special perforated cards, individually for each interviewed person, and the data coded in such a way were then automatically analysed, providing the required statistical tabulations. The people who performed this task were called ‘dietarjusze’ and worked under the supervision and guidance of controllers and editors. The editors explained any arising doubts. The counting process itself was performed using Herman Hollerith’s counting machines. The same technology had been used to process the data from the census conducted in the United States of America in 1890. It should be emphasised that it was an innovative technology and, as the organisers of the census stated, without it analysing such a vast amount of data in a reasonable amount of time would have been impossible. It is estimated that the entire project cost 7 million roubles (Bashe et al., 1985).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Stefan Aleksander Szulc (1881–1956) – Polish statistician, economist, the President of the Polish Statistical Association and the head of the Central Statistical Office.

<sup>12</sup> A meeting between Nikolai Alexandrovich Troynitsky, the Director of the Central Statistical Committee and Hollerith, the inventor of the punch card tabulating machine and founder of the Tabulating Machine Company (which in 1924 evolved into the IBM corporation) took place in St. Petersburg on 15th December 1896. Under their agreement, Hollerith’s company leased Russia 35 counting machines, which had already been used in other censuses. The manufacturing of these devices was complicated and expensive, hence the decision to lease them. The necessary additional equipment, i.e. 70 tabulators with sorting machines and 500 punchers, was sold to Russia at a competitive price. The equipment was assembled in St. Petersburg under Hollerith’s supervision. For further information, see: Anan’eva (n.d.).

The publication of the preliminary results of the census began in the same year, although the concept of the main publication was developed several years later. The published results provided data on the size of the actually present population as well as on the total population permanently residing in the area covered by the census, on those temporarily present and absent. The presentation in the tables was territory-based, with a varying degree of detail of the gathered information. The processed data was published in a monumental publication which consisted of 89 volumes (Tsentral'nyy Statisticheskiiy Komitet, 1904). Data from each governorate was published in a separate volume, each consisting of an introduction and 28 tables. The data was printed at the county and city level. The data relating to the Kingdom of Poland was printed in volumes LI–LX and published in 1904 (volume LI was published separately for the Warsaw Governorate and Warsaw itself). The published tables contained the following information:

- I. Actual and permanent population;
- II. Distribution of the population by household and the composition of these households;
- III. a. Population by ten-year age group;  
b. Distribution by sex, age (in years) and literacy;
- IV. Children below the age of one by number of months lived;
- V. Distribution of the population by marital status and age group;
- VI. Distribution of the population by social class group and place of birth;
- VII. Distribution of the population born outside the census area by place of birth;
- VIII. Distribution of the population by social class;
- IX. Distribution of the population by literacy and education, as well as by social class and age group;
- X. Distribution of the population by social class group and marital status;
- XI. Distribution of foreign subjects by country;
- XII. Distribution of the population by religious denomination;
- XIII. Distribution of the population by native language;
- XIV. Distribution of the population by religious denomination and native language;
- XV. Distribution of the population by native language, literacy and age group;
- XVI. Distribution of the population by marital status and native language;
- XVII. Distribution of the population with physical disabilities by age group;
- XVIII. Distribution of the population with physical disabilities by native language;
- XIX. Distribution of the population with physical disabilities by social class group;
- XX. Distribution of the population by occupation and age group;
- XXI. Distribution by occupation group;
- XXII. Distribution of occupation groups and nationality by native language;

- XXIII. Distribution of the population active in sedentary farming, nomadic farming and herding, fishing and hunting by side activity;
- XXIV. Distribution of the population by native language and social class;
- XXV. Distribution of the population by religious denomination and ten-year age group.

Making compilations of data covering larger areas was a cumbersome and difficult process. Compilations relating to the Kingdom of Poland were presented in some tables of the *General Tabulation (Zestawienie ogólne...*, 1905). The composition of the Russian Empire's population in terms of occupation was additionally compiled in a separate publication. In total, about 400 different occupations were distinguished and the information about the Polish Kingdom was included in volume III (*Podział ludności...*, 1904). A dozen or so smaller supplementary compilations were also published, including statistics on the settlements of workers and servants, divided into groups according to occupation and place of birth.<sup>13</sup>

## 5. Assessment of the credibility of the collected data

When assessing the value of the census material in the 1920s, Szulc (1920, p. 19) wrote

The usual reservations regarding the Russian census are legitimate: the census was conducted with the use of bureaucratic methods, the project was developed completely without the involvement of the representatives of the society, and the engagement of the public to ensure the success of the census was almost fiction. The work was often done carelessly and without due diligence. The very assumption was erroneous, there was no deeper plan in the final preparation. [...] The same considerations also showed that it was an undertaking on a European scale, which nevertheless met the basic requirements of the science of demography. It was the subjective factors that were more likely to have been failing, while objective factors, so those which should minimise the impact of subjective errors, were generally standardised, though correctly, but not perfectly.

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<sup>13</sup> The available census cards (Tsentral'nyy Statisticheskiy Komitet, 1904) containing data related to the surveyed individuals prove invaluable for demographic and, above all, genealogy research. Unfortunately, according to the findings of the central authorities, all the census cards collected in St. Petersburg were destroyed, as was the archival material collected in the governorate cities. Ultimately, however, the source material relating to some parts of the Empire was preserved. Unfortunately, there is no study that would provide comprehensive information about the existing resources. What is known is that census cards are preserved in e.g. the National Archives in Vilnius, Riga and Grodno. With regard to the lands of the 19th century Kingdom of Poland, the author of this text confirmed the presence of census cards for the Łomża District (see Figure). Digital copies of the cards from various governorates of the former Russian Empire can also be found on the website of a genealogy organisation managed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (users must first log in to access the resources collected there): <https://www.familysearch.org/pl/>.

According to experts, among the three objective factors which determine the value of a population census, i.e. (1) the efficiency and good will of the governing and executive bodies, (2) the population's mental level and attitude to the census, and (3) the method of processing the material, the first factor proved to be particularly neglected. As regards the Kingdom of Poland, a negative role in this respect was undoubtedly played by the Warsaw Statistical Committee, headed by Professor Simonenko. His actions lacked objectivism and were dominated by a pro-Russian attitude 'for the good of the fatherland' in terms of propaganda, which also attracted greater interest and involvement of the central administration authorities (e.g. General-Governor Aleksander Imeretyński). During the very census of 1897, certain errors were reported (documented in the report of the aforementioned census observer, Baracz): the exclusion of children, counting some people twice, reporting men who did not live with their wives as widowers, reporting age incorrectly, and others. Among the general mistakes made during the census inaccuracies in age reporting were particularly noticeable. These included age heaping, i.e. the respondents' age was rounded, especially to full decades<sup>14</sup> or the age provided by the elderly was higher than it actually was. The verification of the data was conducted on the basis of additional documentation which demonstrated that there were five times fewer people over the age of 100 than the census showed (Szulc, 1920).

Women more often than men tended to be excluded from the census. The wives' personal details were not always carefully noted and often the husbands declared what follows: 'Budu â veličat' ee! Baba tak i est', i net ej bol'še nazvaniâ' (I will not even name her! A woman is just a woman and there is no better name for her; Anan'eva, n.d.). Religious denomination, on the other hand, was generally reported correctly. An exception in this respect noted in the Kingdom of Poland was the census of the Uniate population in the Siedlce Governorate. As a rule, the native language was reported correctly, apart from the Jewish faith, whose followers were almost always classified as Yiddish. Occupation statistics were reported inaccurately, which was caused by the imprecision of the questionnaire (e.g. category – job position, secondary occupation; Szulc, 1920).

The actions of the authorities in the capital of the Kingdom of Poland seemed to have been consistent with the aforementioned pro-Russian policy. Their aim was to demonstrate the substantial share of Russians in the population residing in the area, which was confirmed by the denominational composition and the distribution by native language. For this purpose, barracked army was counted as part of the city's population and the area of Warsaw was expanded to include suburban towns with a large number of barracked troops. The composition of the population by native language was also distorted, as declaring Polish as their mother tongue by Evangelicals and Jews was undermined (the scale of these errors is difficult to estimate). As mentioned above, the age statistics can be considered faulty to some

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<sup>14</sup> For more details on inaccuracies of the source data related to age heaping in historical populations, please see: Szoltysek et al. (2018).

extent, which resulted from the construction of the question requiring information on the number of years lived, and not the date or year of one's birth. These distortions most often consisted in age heaping to years ending with five or full tens. Mistakes were also found in questions relating to job positions. Attention is also drawn to the insufficient share of workers and servants in the total population, which resulted from a number of factors, including mistaking occupation for a job position and the reluctance to admit to holding positions considered the lowest in the social hierarchy (Nietyksza, 1971).

## 6. Conclusions

The aim of the article was to discuss the 1897 Census in the Kingdom of Poland. Its origins, the course of data collection and the processing of the results were presented, also with reference to decisions made at the central level.

The idea to prepare a population census which would cover the area of the entire Empire, i.e. approximately 22 million square kilometres, was discussed as early as in the 1860s and 1870s. The final plans were implemented in 1897. In the case of the Kingdom of Poland, formally one of the provinces of Russia, the authorities of individual governorates and the Warsaw Statistical Committee played an active role in the preparation of the census. The burden of obtaining the data rested with the lowest-level administrative authorities, which bore a number of responsibilities, including the recruitment of census enumerators. The basic census questionnaire consisted of 14 questions. The main reservations as to the credibility of the data obtained in the census concern the held position, age reporting and in the case of the data for the Kingdom of Poland the faulty results relating to religious denomination and native language.

When using the demographic data of the 1897 Census, one should bear in mind the aforementioned flaws, or even errors, which occurred both at the stage of data collecting and processing, and in the course of their publication. However, assuming a critical approach in the research of these source materials allows for an effective use of the wealth of information collected at that time.

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