

Identification, Relations, Trajectories: How to Interpret Silences in Historical Materials?

The Case of a Polish Population Register, Lubartów 1930s and 1940s

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Social historians and social scientists are frequently confronted with silence, especially when it comes to telling the stories and reconstructing the lives of people that left few traces in public or private records: gender and sexual minorities, oppressed religious groups, and dominated social classes. Bringing together traces of the past within a historical argument – whether based on quantitative or narrative-qualitative evidence – entails making do with unobservable phenomena and missing information, in order to fill the gaps left by these silences.

These problems assume particular importance when it comes to quantifying observed phenomena. Missing values in a dataset are reputed to be a hindrance – sometimes insurmountable – to the administration of statistical evidence, thereby reducing the size of populations and the power of statistical tests, as well as casting serious doubt on results that ignore observations not accompanied by sufficient positive information. There have been many methodological reflections on how to mitigate this problem, in a variety of fields: the dynamics of emancipation and citizenship in the Roman Empire¹, business history in the modern era², the practical administration of colonial justice (*justice de paix coloniale*) in French Indochina³, the persecution of Jews during the Second World War⁴, and the intersecting influences of family and gender in twentieth-century commitment to the communist cause⁵. While each has its own particularities, these historical studies all consider the absence of information as a problem in its own right, the discussion of which enables considerable heuristic gains in the fields under study. They also seek to reduce uncertainty, impute missing values, and evaluate bounding scenarios in order to limit historical possibilities, doing so in a variety of ways ranging from the simple (such as comparing durations when assessing the sentences handed down in Indochinese colonial justice) to the most sophisticated (specification of a complex algorithm including uncertainties to model the dynamics of emancipation during the two centuries preceding Caracalla’s general grant of 212-213 ce). Outside the field of historical studies, there have been repeated calls to give serious consideration to the patterns surrounding missing data, with a view to measuring and reducing

¹ Lavan Myles, “The Spread of Roman Citizenship, 14-212 ce: Quantification in the Face of High Uncertainty”, *Past & Present*, 2016, 230, 3-46.

² Bennett Robert J. & Hannah Leslie, “British employer census returns in new digital records 1851–81; consistency, non-response, and truncation – what this means for analysis”, *Historical Methods*, 2022, 55 (2), 61-77.

³ Claré Thomas, “Juger aux marges de l’Indochine: le cas des trafiquants d’opium de Lào Cai (1902-1940)”, *Moussons* [online], 2020, 35.

⁴ Mercklé Pierre & Zalc Claire, “Peut-on modéliser la persécution ? Apports et limites des approches quantifiées sur le terrain de la Shoah”, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 2008, 73 (4), 923-957.

⁵ Cohen Gidon, 2002, “Missing, Biased and Unrepresentative: The Quantitative Analysis of Multisource Biographical Data”, *Historical Methods*, 2002, 35 (4), 166-176.

sampling biases⁶, refining data imputation techniques⁷, and sociologically accounting for the differential logic of whether to respond to questionnaires⁸. One of the most eloquent of these appeals recently came from Sinologist jurists, who called for a better understanding of the uncertainty inherent in the massive data posted online by Chinese judicial institutions (some jurisdictions disseminate everything or almost everything, while others disseminate nothing, with no obvious links to major economic or demographic variables), so as to understand how Chinese litigants make recourse to courts in order to involve the State in settling their private disputes⁹.

The approach proposed in this article shares this fundamental idea that far from being failures, gaps within the trajectories and social profiles of individuals should instead be considered as positive values. It nevertheless differs, for our objective is not to reduce or limit the uncertainty arising from the absence of information. Far from the positivist belief that a better quantitative estimate necessarily produces a better description of historical phenomena, our aim is to instead take advantage of uncertainty and silences to raise afresh general questions of social history as they relate to trajectories, identification processes, and the logic of identity assignment or of passing. This necessarily involves integrating, within the narrative of historical evidence, a reflection on how the figures were constructed, which immediately situates our approach within a series of methodological, thematic, and epistemological renewals of quantitative social history.

There is no need to go into detail here regarding the many criticisms levelled at the “new” quantitative social history of the 1960s and 1970s¹⁰: quantification of aggregates, ignoring details, irregularities, silences, blanks, and dismissing individual agency; anachronistic transposition of contemporary categories with a view to forging large series over the long term; administration of proof often based on the stacking of tables, maps, and graphs; hyper-division and hierarchization of research bordering on an intellectual Fordism of sorts that reinforces gender, race, and class domination within academic spaces. Today, at a time when substantial funding – driven by neoliberal policies of project-based research funding and the drying up of permanent endowments to academic and research institutions – is being

⁶ Bielby W. T., Hauser R. M., Featherman D. L., “Response Errors of Black and Nonblack Males in Models of Status Inheritance and Mobility”, *American Journal of Sociology*, 1977, 82 (6), 1242-1288. Biemer P. P. et al. (eds.), 1991, *Measurement Errors in Surveys*, New York (NY), Wiley. Bound J., Brown C. C. & Mathiowetz N. A., “Measurement Error in Survey Data” in J. J. Heckman & E. Leamer (eds.), *Handbook of Econometrics*, Amsterdam, North Holland, vol. 5, 3705-3843, 2001. Chang Hwan Kim, Tamborini Christopher R, “Do Survey Data Estimate Earnings Inequality Correctly?: Measurement Errors Among Black and White Male Workers”, *Social Forces*, 2012, 90 (4).

⁷ Chen J., Shao J., “Nearest Neighbor Imputation for Survey Data”, *Journal of Official Statistics*, 2000, 16 (2), 113-131; Cranmer Skyles J & Gill Feff, “We Have to Be Discrete About This: A Non-Parametric Imputation Technique for Missing Categorical Data”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 2013, 43 (2), 425-449; Ronsse Stijn & Standaert Samuel, “Combining Growth and Level Data: An Estimation of the Population of Belgian Municipalities Between 1880 and 1970”, *Historical Methods*, 2017, 50 (4), 218-226.

⁸ Baudelot Christian, 1990, “L’âge rend-il plus savant ? Un exemple de biais de réponses dans les enquêtes”, in *Populations. Mélanges en l’honneur de Jacques Desabie*, Paris, INSEE, 159-173. Mercklé Pierre & Octobre Sylvie, “Les enquêtés mentent-ils ? Incohérences de réponse et illusion biographique dans une enquête longitudinale sur les loisirs des adolescents”, *Revue française de sociologie*, 2015, 56 (3), 561-591; Manzer, Dana, et al., “Myths, misunderstandings, and missing information: Experiences of nurse practitioners providing primary care to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender patients”, *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 27 (2), 2018, p. 157-170.

⁹ Liebman Benjamin L. et al., “Mass Digitization of Chinese Court Decisions: How to Use Text as Data in the Field of Chinese Law”, *Journal of Law and Court*, 2020, 8 (2), 177-201.

¹⁰ Stone Lawrence, “The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History”, *Past & Present*, 1979, 85, 2-24 ; Sewell William H., “The Political Unconscious of Social and Cultural History; or, Confessions of a Former Quantitative Historian” in *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 22-80, 2005; for a synthesis see Lemerrier Claire & Zalc Claire, *Quantitative Methods in the Humanities*, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, 2019, “Chapter I – Quantitative History from Peak to Crisis”.

directed towards collective projects promising the massive collection of quantitative data, the question nonetheless arises regarding the risks of falling back into the old ruts of positivism and quantophobia. This would inevitably lead, as it did in the 1980s and 1990s, to a new wave of disillusionment, augmented by “unadulterated postmodernist rhetoric seeking to limit history to the interpretation of discursive representations using unspecified methods.”¹¹ In other words, how can one conduct a large-scale quantitative history today, based on jointly collected and processed data, without succumbing to at times intense criticism¹²? What methods are available for dealing with silences in sources? To address these issues, we will experiment with a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach in order to grasp the materiality of archival documents, as well as the links between social configurations (residential contexts, kinship, etc.), trajectories (migratory and professional), and identification.

Canonical Sources, Methodological Experiments

This paper focuses on one of the most canonical sources of the “new social history”: a census, or more precisely a population register¹³. Our reflection on the heuristic power of silences is based on a case study connected to a broad collective research effort, the Lubartworld Project¹⁴, namely the missing information in a population register for a small Polish town – exhaustively digitized¹⁵ – with a population that was half Jewish and half Catholic in the 1930s and 1940s (Table 1). This register, completed by local officials on the basis of declarations by heads of household, is shot through with blanks and silences. Information as crucial as the date of arrival in the town or the date of birth is blank for 2,000 and 760 people respectively (out of 11,950). More importantly for our effort to understand the logic of persecutions and the survival of Polish Jewry, 911 of the town’s inhabitants did not declare their faith, or were not identified according to their faith. What did it mean, especially in inter-war Poland, to move beyond the usual distinctions between Jews, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians? Did this invisibility of faith result from strategies for concealing the stigma associated with being recognized as Jewish, or with fleeing in a context of anti-Semitic persecution¹⁶? Was this due to the processes used by local officials when reporting or recording information?

Answering these questions requires an experimental relationship to censuses and population registers. First, historical sources treated quantitatively (i.e. imputed in a database) should no longer be

¹¹ Lemerrier & Zalc, *Quantitative Methods...*, 25.

¹² Such as the one expressed by Lawrence Stone, one of the most prominent proponents of the new quantitative social history: “It is just those projects that have been the most lavishly funded, the most ambitious in the assembly of vast quantities of data by armies of paid researchers, the most scientifically processed by the very latest in computer technology, the most mathematically sophisticated in presentation, which have so far turned out to be the most disappointing.” Stone, “The Revival of Narrative...”, 13.

¹³ This document is not a census for which civil servants walked from building to building and met people in person. Here the registration procedures involved a mix of self-declaration and administrative identification. Registration was based on forms and registration cards filled in by the inhabitants of Lubartów, and deposited at the City Hall by the owner of the building. See Zakrzewski, “The 1932 population register”, *Lubartworld Paper*, 2020, <https://lubartworld.cnrs.fr/en/register-1932/>. Forms and cards were written in Polish, which was not neutral in a country where a significant part of the population had a mother tongue other than Polish, such as Yiddish.

¹⁴ This project, directed by Claire Zalc, has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement N° 818843). See <https://lubartworld.cnrs.fr/en/> for more details.

¹⁵ Skowroński Tymoteusz *et al.*, « Retour d’expérience sur la saisie collective d’une source administrative : le registre de population de Lubartów, Pologne, 1932 », *Genèses*, 2021, 125, 112-134.

¹⁶ Zalc Claire, Perdoncin Anton & Escaich Gabrielle, “The Dynamics of Mobility and Immobility in the Face of Danger: Polish Jewish Migrations during the 1930s from Below”, *Journal of Migration History*, 2013, 9 (3), 323-355.

considered as long and homogeneous series, but as an intricate set of trajectories and interactions that represent individual agency, small-group strategies, as well as their relationship with the institutions seeking to manage and control them. Taking silences in a population register seriously, and trying to interpret patterns of missingness, calls for examining how the producers of the source worked, in this case the local government officials in charge of completing the large register sheets. To do this, particular attention must be paid not only to what a source says (the data extracted regarding individuals, aggregated to establish counts and proportions), but also to how it says it, to the material traces left by the bureaucratic work of registering, checking, and identifying individuals: marginal notes, handwriting, ink colour, erasures, additions, etc. The quantitative objectification of identification processes and interactions between citizens and administrations is nourished by an ethnographic approach to historical sources, one that promotes reading documents “along the grain”¹⁷, and grasping them as closely as possible to the materiality of the source¹⁸. An ethnographic approach to historical sources¹⁹ thus drives a quantitative approach aimed at objectifying identification processes and interactions between citizens and administrations.

Table 1 – Faiths in the Lubartów Register

	N	Percent
Roman Catholics	6,820	57.1%
Jews	4,143	34.6%
Missing	911	7.6%
Other faiths	76	0.7%
Total	11,950	100%

Source: Lublin National Archives (APwL), Lubartów Population Register. Field: all individuals registered.

Second, we consider the population register not as a fixed source for establishing the sociography of a population, but as a dynamic observatory of local configurations that are open to forms of quantification on micro and meso scales, with a view to analysing the diversity of trajectories and the varied ways in which individuals were confronted with norms, opportunities, choices, and negotiations. The Lubartów population register is intrinsically dynamic. It records births and deaths, arrivals and departures, as well as changes of residence within the city. Configured at the level of houses and apartments, it also allows for situating individuals in a range of groups: professional, residential, family, or kinship. Capturing changes in positions or states and the various links that bind individuals within the register to one another thus opens up a dynamic study of identifications, belonging, and identity assignments, raising the question of the social conditions for crossing boundaries between confessional groups from silence to the declaration of a faith.

Third, exploring silences in a historical source entails paying close attention to the categories used to identify and classify individuals. What did it mean, in interwar Poland, not to fit into the pre-coded confessional categories that divided—to put it bluntly—Jews and Roman Catholics? How did ethnic or racial affiliations (as objectified by faith) and other forms of gender or class relations intersect? And

¹⁷ Stoler Ann, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, Princeton University Press, 2009.

¹⁸ Skowroński Tymoteusz *et al.*, “Retour d'expérience...”, *Genèses*, 2021, 125, 112-134.

¹⁹ Karila-Cohen Karine *et al.*, “Nouvelles cuisines de l’histoire quantitative”, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 2018, 74 (4), 771-783.

how can they be statistically objectified? Adding these new questions to the analysis of a traditional source of social history calls for deconstructing categories, and for considering faith as an identifying category that must not be taken for granted. The deconstruction of categories is a sine qua non for their use as instruments of objectification²⁰. The interpretation of clues²¹, the critique of categories, and the political dimensions of categorization within the administration of quantitative proof should be mobilized against the scientific pretensions of quantitative history²².

Fourth and finally, quantification from this type of historical source allows for quantifying at a micro-scale, thereby taking full consideration of individuals, and making it possible to go back and forth from statistical regularities to individual singular cases. Quantification therefore consists of formalization and scaling, with the aim of discovering patterns of behaviour in specific contexts. Modelization – such as regressions or network analysis – is used in such a way so as to capture individual agency, and to bolster what has been called the “exceptional normal”²³: how are we to know if an individual is exceptional if not by positioning their particular trajectory or social characteristics within a large number of trajectories and characteristics. The objective is less to objectify general laws than to document diversity, identify exceptional cases, and select them for in-depth studies.

Silences and the Logic of Identification

In this condensed version of our paper, we would like to focus on the absence of information regarding faith in order to explore the ordinary character of power relations, namely by focusing on administrative practices. More precisely, the central issue is to look closely at the forms of negotiation of self-presentation within an administrative context, doing so by promoting an interactionist analysis of power relations²⁴. Who were the Jews? What was faith in 1930s Poland? Was the recording of faith in a population register the product of social interactions²⁵? We will attempt to observe what Erving Goffman has called a “social occasion,” and to use this lens to explore the relationship between Jews and Catholics in the city²⁶. This, of course, is only one form of provisional coalition for groups whose ordinary social relations were marked by distance, indifference, mistrust, and confrontation. It is nevertheless possible to study it through its absence: it is from the blanks and silences in archival materials that we wish to ask whether the Jewish faith represented a stigma in the city.

Taking patterns of missingness seriously implies a conceptual shift concerning interactions and their observation. The constraint that arises from the impossibility, by definition, of observing these interactions also contains its own relevance, since administrative relations are very often in written form: papers, letters, documents, registers, etc. These administrative interactions for the most part did not involve in-person interrogations or encounters²⁷. They were carried out almost exclusively through

²⁰ Desrosières Alain, “How Real Are Statistics? Four Possible Attitudes”, *Social Research*, 2001, 68 (2), 339-355; Desrosières Alain, *The Politics of Large Numbers. A History of Statistical Reasoning*, Harvard UP, Cambridge MA, 2002; Didier Emmanuel, “Alain Desrosières and the Parisian Flock: Social Studies of Quantification in France since the 1970s”, *Historical Social Research*, 2016, 41 (2), 27-47.

²¹ Ginzburg Carlo, “Clues: Roots of a Scientific Paradigm.” *Theory & Society*, 1979, 7 (3) 273-288.

²² Perdoncin Anton, “Le genre des sources: identifier, catégoriser, quantifier”, *Histoire & Mesure*, 2022, 37 (2), 151-182.

²³ Grendi Edoardo. “Microanalisi e storia sociale.” *Quaderni storici*, 1977, 12 (35), 506-520.

²⁴ Goffman Erving, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, 1963, Prentice-Hall.

²⁵ On ethnicity as a product of social interactions, see Frederik Barth (eds), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, Boston, Little Brown, 1969.

²⁶ Goffman Erving, *Behavior in Public Spaces. Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*, New York, The Free Press, 1963.

²⁷ See special Issue « Interrogatoire », *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 178, 2009.

stacks of paper, through the exchange of documents. Power was exerted at a distance, through the exchange of information on paper, documents, and other justifications. For historians, the work of observation consists in analysing the infra-ordinary traces left within this administrative document, such as notes scribbled by civil servants, mentions in the margins, and coloured pencil strokes marking the interest given to a particular category. It also implies a shift in how identities and identification processes are analysed. How identity is captured in an administrative register – civil status, name and surname, profession, attachments, and above all faith – are the result of confrontations between: 1) how individuals perceive themselves, and how they say who or what they are; 2) the strategies behind their use of these different elements in their relations with administrations; and 3) the ways in which the agents of the administration hear them, record them, and register them.

A first hypothesis can be made, which we refer to as “the lazy bureaucrat hypothesis”. How did registering proceed? Specific forms were designed for different groups of residents. For example, permanent residents registered before early August 1932 had different forms from those moving in after that date, as did new-borns. Before a final entry in the register, the official had to verify the information by comparing the forms with various documents held by the local administration. Any change of residence was accompanied by correspondence with the old and new place of residence. Declarations of birth and death followed the same procedures, passing via the owner of the building within a period of 48 hours. The registers and their accompanying population control books were instruments of close surveillance, providing various institutions with up-to-date and verifiable information on their citizens. For instance, extracts from the register were sent to the courts or police stations as necessary. These extracts could also be used by municipal authorities to establish identity documents. In this respect, it is noteworthy that ministerial instructions encouraged municipal authorities to systematically monitor the mobility of the population by verifying the accuracy of register entries, especially through home visits and annual administrative checks. The implementation of these new procedures for registering and controlling the population was not without consequences. Although we have not found any evidence of resistance in the archives of the Lubartów *gmina* – as Gérard Noiriel documented with the introduction of republican civil status in early-nineteenth-century France²⁸ – we can nonetheless observe the consequences of major changes to the bureaucratic organization of municipal services. For instance, in order to facilitate the handling, storage, maintenance, and filing of forms, the municipality was obliged to acquire specific furniture, for which local companies were invited to submit bids. Several plans and proposals were received by the municipality.

Despite this meticulous organization, it remains plausible that the local bureaucrats in charge of maintaining the register tried to minimize their workload, or left room for manoeuvre for information that was either obvious or, on the contrary, changing, uncertain, or difficult to apprehend²⁹. Two individual cases could potentially be in keeping with this hypothesis.

The first is that of Aleksander Slowikowski, who was added to the register in 1932, as indicated by a pencil notation. Slowikowski, who was born in Tarnopol, arrived in the city in 1931, and left in 1934. No faith is listed, but we learn that he was issued an identity card. The identity card application was submitted in February 1932 in the name of Brother Expedit (crossed out), with the address of the

²⁸ Noiriel Gérard, “L’identification des citoyens. Naissance de l’état civil républicain”, *Genèses*, 1993, 13, 3-28.

²⁹ Lipsky Michael, *Street-level bureaucracy: dilemmas of the individual in public services*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010 [1980].

monastery. Brother Expedit was a monk who lived for a few years in a monastery in Lubartów, but his faith is not indicated by the civil servant in charge of the register.

In another case, Chana-Bajla Kapota is listed as a family in the register, with her Jewish husband and child, also Jewish. Of the three, she was the only one born outside the city, and the only one for whom the box for faith is left blank. In 1939 she suffered the same fate as her family, as she was deported to the nearby village of Ostrow Lubelski during the forced removals of autumn 1939. How else to explain this blank, if not by her status as a migrant? Theoretically, this implies that the civil servant must contact the authorities in the place of birth to verify the person’s declaration, and it is likely that he was busy with other tasks.

Table 2 – Anova Table³⁰ of Multilevel Logistic Model (no faith vs. faith)

	Sum Square	Mean Square	Degrees of Freedom	F Statistics	p
INDIVIDUAL LEVEL (Bureaucratic work)					
Checked in Civil Registers (p/a)	0.52	0.52	1	16.89	<.001***
Use of Pencil	4.87	4.87	1	157.92	<.001***
Number of Blanks per Individual	10.33	3.44	3	111.52	<.001***
Struck Out	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	.969
Kennkarte	1.49	1.49	1	48.28	<.001***
INDIVIDUAL LEVEL (Sociodemo. Info)					
Migratory Experience	0.91	0.30	3	9.79	<.001***
Gender	1.31	0.65	2	21.20	<.001***
Period of Registration	16.97	5.66	3	183.28	<.001***
HOUSEHOLD LEVEL					
Place of residence	0.00	0.00	2	0.03	.973
Building Faith Composition	2.83	1.41	2	45.84	<.001***
Residential Status of Head of Household	1.89	0.38	5	12.23	<.001***
Profession of Head of Household	0.40	0.08	5	2.59	.024*
Relationships in Household	0.54	0.13	4	4.34	.002**

Indicators of bureaucratic activity can be established to determine whether these cases can be generalized. During the inputting process, columns were added by the inputting team in the spreadsheet to make note of any comments. In these columns, team members were invited to note when something special occurred in the source, such as a change in ink or type of pencil used, information crossed out,

³⁰ The ANOVA test is a standard method for testing sampling variations. It assesses differences between categories of “treatment”, in our case between two groups: Lubartowians with no recorded faith, and Lubartowians with a recorded faith.

etc. Writing in pencil – which indicates uncertain information – can be counted for each line of the dataset, as well as for corrections or erasures. Another indication of bureaucratic work is the total number of empty boxes per row of the dataset, indicating either the recurrent absence of information about an individual, or an event that prevented the normal course of that individual’s entry in the register. These indicators of bureaucratic work are incorporated into a multilevel logistic regression model, testing the probability of belonging to the group with no recorded faith (vs. belonging to the group with a recorded faith, see Table 2 & Figure 1).

In this short version of the article, we do not have the space to analyse all of the model’s results in detail. Suffice it to say that the variables relating to bureaucratic work are all (with one exception) significantly correlated to the probability of not having a recorded faith (Table 2). What’s more, pencil use and the number of blank spaces are among the variables that contribute the most to the model’s total variance (Mean Square). If we go into the details of covariate effects estimation (Figure 1), we see that, all things being equal, individuals for whom information has been modified after verification in a civil register have a lower probability of not having a faith, while pencil use is positively correlated with faith being left blank. Finally, the mention of a Kennkarte is negatively correlated with not having faith indicated. Put another way, more bureaucratic work goes toward firmer identification based on confessional criteria, while fuzzy records marked by uncertainty (pencil and paper) are associated with not having a recorded faith. Bureaucratic work matters.

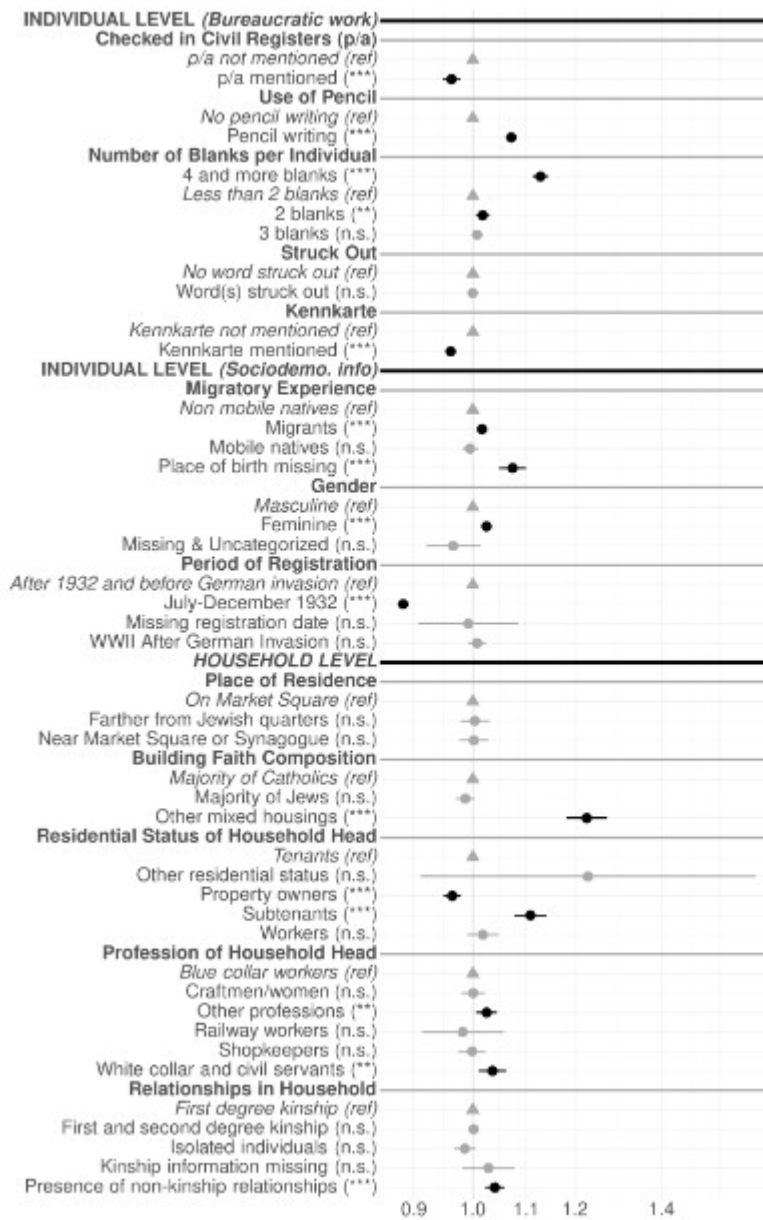
Silence as an Art of Resistance

The lazy bureaucrat hypothesis is not the only one that should be considered. A competing hypothesis is the “arts of resistance” hypothesis, in which we adopt an interdisciplinary approach that borrows from both Erving Goffman and James C. Scott³¹. Considering identities and identification as processes of interaction, one wonders whether the ways of declining faith in this social scene may be the result of interactions, meaning that the declaration could depend on different factors. Is it possible to interpret the silence of the source as a way to say something positive about their faith? Are there motivations for the non-declaration of faith, in particular in a context of war and anti-Semitic persecution? How we understand silences changes, since it would no longer involve those in charge of registering individuals, but the individuals themselves. Does not declaring one’s faith entail resistance? Are these silences traces of hiding, or rather “arts of resistance”? Was this a strategy for concealing the stigma associated with faith in Poland in the late 1930s, and even more so between 1939-1942?

The model (Table 2 and Figure 1) provides some intuitions about possible room for manoeuvre when facing the administration: the probability of not declaring a faith increases for people living in the most ethnically mixed buildings (compared to those living in a predominantly Catholic environment), for sub-tenants (compared to people living in a household where the head of household is a tenant), and for people living in a household composed solely of people linked by kinship ties. The residential and relational context is a key factor in understanding people’s agentivity. In this case, living in a context where the relational framework is looser (greater mixing, subletting, composite household) goes hand in hand with being less frequently identified according to a faith.

³¹ Scott James C., *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1990.

Figure 2 – Covariate Estimates of Multilevel Logistic Model (no faith vs. faith)



Source: Lublin National Archives (APwL), Lubartów Population Register. Field: all individuals registered.

Note: N Individuals = 11,950; N households = 2,998; AIC = -3,079; BIC = -2813; Marginal R^2 (fixed effects) = 0.166; Conditional R^2 (fixed + random effects) = 0.591; $\Omega^2 = 0.643^{32}$; ICC = 0.51. Odds ratios are

³² Marginal R^2 represents the proportion of variance explained by fixed effects (Individual Level), relative to the total variance. Conditional R^2 is the proportion of variance explained by the fixed and random effects (Individual + Household Level) in the model. Ω^2 is another measure of the explained variance. The Interclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) measures the degree of internal homogeneity at the aggregate level introduced in the model. In this case, the indicator measures the collective nature of the phenomena modeled, at the household level. The closer to 1, the more similar behaviours within the same household.

represented on a logarithmic scale. Multi-level binomial logistic model: an individual and a household level are modelled. Significance thresholds: *** 1 per cent, ** 5 per cent, * 10 per cent.

Two cases briefly illustrate these mechanisms. This articulation allows us to show a certain way of doing social history, which is not satisfied with the division, sometimes still very much alive, between quanti and quali approaches, as well as between macro structural and micro structural scales.

Case 1: the Akierajzen's. The members of the Akierajzen household were registered in 1932: we found on the same page of the register Joel, his wife Zyja, and a child, who bears his mother's the name. The child was born in 1933; the parents were married in 1934. All are identified as Jews. They left for Warsaw in 1937. When they returned to Lubartów in 1939, they were re-registered, accompanied by the wife's mother and a new child, a daughter named Frojda who was born in Lubartów in 1935. None of them had any faith listed at the time. In December 1941, another daughter was registered, Golda, this time as a Jew. She died on 14 December 1941. This leads us to reflect on the very specificity of the historicity of declarations. The silence surrounding their faith upon returning to the city in 1937 can be explained by the highly anti-Semitic climate in town. Violent episodes increased, with Jacob Lestschinsky counting 1,289 Jews injured in anti-Semitic attacks in 150 Polish towns and villages in 1935-1936³³. Lubartów was no exception. On a market day in March 1937, rumours circulating in the town generated 'an atmosphere unfavourable to the Jews. Against this backdrop, a crowd of a few hundred people gathered and staged an anti-Jewish demonstration, calling for the closure of Jewish stores (...). Anger among the demonstrators was so great that the police had to intervene and make the crowd disperse to restore order.'³⁴ So it is not far-fetched to interpret the blanks upon returning to the city in 1937 as a way of protecting themselves. Here once again, the context of the war changes the situation. Germans entered the city in September 1939. Identification by faith became a norm of persecution, and the first persecutions began right away: forced displacements, violent scenes, ghettoization. Stigmatisation grew more intense. This prompted us to look in more detail at the cases of children, and in particular a very interesting case of what might be described as passing.

Case 2: Soszia Zalcstajn. Soszia was the sixth child of the Zalcstajn family. She was born in July 1941 in Lubartów, and is the only one registered as a Roman Catholic, whereas her father, mother, brothers, and sisters are all indicated as Jews. However, the term "Roman Catholic" is crossed out in red ink, and replaced by "mosaic", meaning Jew. This modification most likely occurred very soon after Sosza was born, because she died in January 1942, and the whole family was deported in April 1942. As this case shows, it is crucial for these inconsistencies, which are so often labelled as "non answers" and excluded from analyses, to be included in our understanding of identifications and trajectories, especially with regard to persecutions.

Perspectives

We propose three avenues for expanding this article.

1. the first perspective is to work from a quantitative point of view on this hypothesis of the arts of resistance, pursuing the interpretation of the model.

³³ Jacob Lestschinsky, *Jewish migrations* (Jerusalem 1944).

³⁴ APwL, 35 459 0 – 253, Komenda Wojewódzka Policji Państwowej, 15 March 1937.

2. the second is to work, as a number of colleagues have done recently³⁵, on bounding scenarios. To put it simply, we are comparing two highly improbable and manifestly false situations: either all of the non-responses are Catholic, or they are all Jewish. And we observe how our understanding of phenomena such as survival rates or urban segregation are modified.

3. Finally, Soszia Zalcstajn's case raises the question of changes in faith. Were they frequent? Who were they for? What do they tell us about forms of identification in Poland in the 1930s and 1940s, and about the room for manoeuvre in the face of anti-Semitic persecution? In order to understand such changes, we will rely on the dynamic facet of the register: some individuals are recorded twice when they move from one address to another. We will also compare the register with other Polish sources, such as identity cards, in order to analyse differences and discrepancies.

³⁵ Liebman Benjamin L. *et al.*, "Mass Digitization of Chinese Court Decisions: How to Use Text as Data in the Field of Chinese Law", *Journal of Law and Court*, 2020, 8 (2), 177-201. Lavan Myles, "The Spread of Roman Citizenship, 14-212 ce: Quantification in the Face of High Uncertainty", *Past & Present*, 2016, 230, 3-46. Cohen Gidon, 2002, "Missing, Biased and Unrepresentative: The Quantitative Analysis of Multisource Biographical Data", *Historical Methods*, 2002, 35 (4), 166-176