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Dawid DziubaORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6074-3189>

University of Szczecin, Doctoral School

email: dziuba.d@wp.pl

Reporting Infant Deaths at the Szczecin Civil Records Office in the Late 19th Century: General Conclusions

Zgłaszający zgony niemowląt w szczecińskim Urzędzie Stanu Cywilnego pod koniec XIX wieku. Wnioski ogólne

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze the structural characteristics of the information held in Civil Registry Office records on people reporting the death of an infant. Some fifteen thousand death records held at the CRO in Szczecin (Stettin) at the end of the 19th century were examined in order to answer the fundamental question of what research information is provided by people reporting the death of an infant. The research shows that despite the sparse information in the CRO files on people reporting infant deaths, interesting relationships can be observed. These include professional or family ties between the notifiers and the parents of the deceased infants.

Abstrakt

Celem artykułu jest przeanalizowanie informacji dotyczących osób zgłaszających zgony niemowlęcia, zawartych w aktach USC, pod kątem cech strukturalnych. Badaniu poddano około piętnaście tysięcy akt zgonów wytworzonych przez USC w Szczecinie pod koniec XIX wieku, aby odpowiedzieć na zasadnicze pytanie, jakich informacji badawczych dostarczają osoby zgłaszające zgony niemowlęcia. Z przeprowadzonych badań wynika, że pomimo niewielkiego zestawu informacji w aktach USC o osobach zgłaszających zgony niemowląt, można zauważyć interesujące zależności. Dotyczą one między innymi powiązań zawodowych czy rodzinnych między zgłaszającymi a rodzicami zmarłych niemowląt.

Keywords

people reporting, infant mortality, deaths, historical demography, 19th century, parish registers, Civil Registry Office records, population history, social history, Szczecin, Poland

Słowa kluczowe

osoby zgłaszające, umieralność niemowląt, zgony, demografia historyczna, XIX wiek, księgi metrykalne, akta USC, historia ludności, historia społeczna, Szczecin, Polska

Introduction

In the modern era, we have two types of sources that recorded the population's vital statistics: parish registers and Civil Registry Office (CRO) registers. The former predominated from the mid-16th to the end of the 18th century, while CRO records did not emerge until the 19th century. Both sources have many similarities, especially in terms of the range of information they contain. However, there were also differences between them, in particular, in terms of how they were kept. As a rule, parish registers were kept by clergymen, frequently had no single consistent format for all parishes, and there were also instances of irregular record keeping.¹ Public records, on the other hand, were (and still are) kept only by secular officials. They had one universally applicable format, and the means of keeping public registers were explicitly governed by law.

Another distinction between the two types of sources is their research purpose. Originating in the 16th century, parish registers were not originally created for statistical, historical or anthropological research. As a result, many contemporary Polish and foreign researchers devote a great deal of space to extensive outward and inward criticism of parish registers, as this directly or indirectly affects the results obtained over the course of research.² This was somewhat different for 19th century

¹ The issue of how to keep parish registers is extensively covered in both Polish and international literature, so it will not be discussed in detail here. See, for example, Cezary Kukło, *Demografia Rzeczypospolitej przedrozbiorowej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2009); Jan Baszanowski, *Przemiany demograficzne w Gdańsku w latach 1601–1846* (Gdańsk: Uniwersytet Gdański, 1995), 91–130; Tomasz Bzukała, “Przyczyny śmiertelności mieszkańców parafii bolechowickiej w latach 1821–1841 w świetle parafialnych ksiąg zmarłych,” *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne* 134 (2007): 65–80; Paul Delsalle, *Histoires de familles. Les registres paroissiaux et d'état civil, du Moyen Âge à nos jours. Démographie et généalogie*. (Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2009), 11–28; Edward Higgs, *Essays: Registration Before Civil Registration*, accessed March 30, 2023, <http://www.histpop.org/ohpr/servlet/View?path=Browse/Essays%20%28by%20kind%29&active=yes&mno=2088>.

² A good example is, for instance, Elżbieta Kościk's monograph *Przemiany w strukturze społeczno-zawodowej i demograficznej ludności Opola w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX w. na podstawie ksiąg parafialnych i akt USC* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu

public records. Unlike parish registers, CRO records were already designed to be used, for example, in the rapidly developing national statistics of the time. A good example was the so-called census cards (Zahlkarte) used from 1871 in Prussian Statistical Offices. They contained all the key information from a particular registry entry, and were distinguished by their small size.³ These were then processed by statistical offices and on their basis, information on, for example, the number of deaths or births in the provinces or large metropolises was published in, for instance, the historic *Preussische Statistik* (Statistics of Prussia).

There is no shortage of works in the Polish and foreign literature that draw on the rich sources that are civil registers. In terms of criticism of Registry Office records, the foreign literature is much richer than the Polish, however, which often boils down to a cursory outward and inward critique.⁴ The core of both domestic and foreign studies relying on the CRO is the findings from an analysis of the source, e.g., on the history of population change in a given area. In the Polish academic literature, the only work to extensively examine the public records externally and internally is one written more than 40 years ago by Zygmunt Klotzke, pertaining to the history of the CRO in Luzin from 1874 to 1918.⁵ This raises the question

Wrocławskiego, 1993), where she discusses the “technical” aspects of record books. Also noteworthy are the works of Agnieszka Zielińska, “Umieralność w Toruniu w XIX wieku w świetle ksiąg metrykalnych,” in *Kondycja zdrowotna i demograficzna społeczeństwa polskiego na przestrzeni wieków*, eds. Kazimierz Mikulski, Agnieszka Zielińska, and Katarzyna Pękacka-Falkowska (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Grado, 2011), and Hanna Kurowska: *Gubin i jego mieszkańcy. Studium demograficzne XVII–XIX w.* (Zielona Góra: Oficyna Wydawnicza Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, 2010). While these authors focus on the topics of mortality, and the family, they devote a good deal of space to the intrinsic criticism of record books. There are, of course, many more works of this type; however, I aimed here to highlight the issue in question.

³ The undoubted advantage of these cards was the ability to freely combine criteria, instantly sort and count, aggregate and group data. Thanks to the use of these “cards” there was no need to sift through a huge number of CRO books for a given year. For more, see Christine von Oertzen, “Die Historizität der Verdattung: Konzepte, Werkzeuge und Praktiken im 19. Jahrhundert,” *NTM Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Wissenschaften* 25, no. 4 (2017): 416–20.

⁴ See e.g., Anne Cameron, “The Establishment of Civil Registration in Scotland,” *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 2 (2007): 377–95; Delsalle, *Histoires*; Arjan Nobel, “Between Continuity and Change: The Introduction of the Civil Registry Office (Burgerlijke Stand) in 1811,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 133, no. 3 (2020): 523–46; Andreas Fahmeir, “Too Much Information? Too Little Coordination? (Civil) Registration in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” in *Registration and Recognition Documenting the Person in World History*, eds. Keith Breckenridge and Simon Szeter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 93–113; Michael J. Cullen, “The Making of the Civil Registration Act of 1836,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 25 (1974): 39–59.

⁵ Zbigniew Klotzke, “Ludność obwodu urzędu stanu cywilnego Luzino w latach 1874–1918,” *Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski – Poland’s Demographic Past* 12 (1981): 65–104. Other works that use public records, but no longer focus so much on criticizing the source itself, are, for example, those by Krzysztof Wisniewski, Edmund Piasecki and Robert Benewiat. See Krzysztof Wiśniewski, “Ludność parafii Szwelice (pow. makowiecki) na przełomie XIX i XX stulecia w świetle ksiąg metrykalnych,” *Rocznik Lubelskiego Towarzystwa Genealogicznego* 1 (2009); Edmund Piasecki, “Umieralność niemowląt w parafii bejskiej w XIX i pierwszej połowie XX w.,”

of the small body of work on external and internal critiques of CRO files. It is important to remember that the records in question are much clearer in their construction and research qualities than parish registers. As a result, they do not raise so many content-related concerns and, in a significant number of cases, do not require such in-depth examination as parish records.

Prussian parish registers contained no information on those reporting a death. This changed only with the introduction in Prussia and the Second German Reich of civil registrations kept by particular government officials. A complete novelty was the introduction of rubrics relating to the persons reporting, which was regulated by the CRO Act of 1874. In Prussian CROs, reporting persons appear for birth and death records. In marriage records, information on the declarant does not appear.⁶ Information on people reporting a death was given at the very beginning and was recorded in the following order: occupation, forenames and surname (with maiden name for married women) and address (street and house number). In addition, the declarant was required to sign the document at the bottom.⁷

Although the subject matter of this article on the reporters of infant deaths is of a rather contributory nature, it also leads us to conclude that a detailed analysis and critique of the sources is extremely important, as interesting correlations can be detected in the process. While conducting research on descriptions of infant mortality in the Polish literature, a clear correlation was noted between the parents of deceased infants and the people reporting the death in the CRO records.⁸ Importantly, in both the international and Polish literature, there is no academic article examining, even in a cursory manner, the issue of declarants. This therefore renders the present article partially exploratory in nature. However, the present work is not intended to explain infant mortality in Szczecin, as this would require a much more extensive search of both Polish and foreign literature.

The thrust of the paper will be to show what general conclusions can be drawn by analyzing the people who reported the death of a deceased infant. First and foremost, it is crucial to answer the following questions: why are the people reporting

Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski – Poland's Demographic Past 11 (1979): 23–67; Robert Benewiat and Zdzisław Budzyński, "Ludność wsi Hoczew obrządku łacińskiego w latach 1867–1918 (w świetle ewidencji metrykalnej), in *Studia i materiały z dziejów społecznych Polski południowo-wschodniej*, ed. Zdzisław Budzyński, vol. 1 (Rzeszów: Uniwersytet Rzeszowski, 2003).

⁶ Bear in mind that the law of March 1874 also regulated civil marriage before a registrar. As a result, there was no point in entering the declarant in the marriage records.

⁷ The set of information above applies to both birth and death certificates.

⁸ For more on infant mortality in Polish research, see: Dawid Dziuba, "The Issue of Infant Mortality in Polish Historical Research," *Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski – Poland's Demographic Past* 42 (2020): 9–35, <https://doi.org/10.18276/pdp.2020.42-01>. The issue of reporting was not addressed in the above article. It would have distracted from the issue of reporting on the deaths of the youngest children in Polish academic publications.

a demographic event singled out only in the public records; do the reporters have family ties to the parents of the deceased infants; what socio-professional groups are represented by the reporters; is there a direct or indirect relationship between the reporters and the scale of infant mortality in the 19th century? This will be shown using the example of 15,454 infant death records from 1892–1900 from the Szczecin Civil Registry Office at the end of the 19th century.⁹ In order to be able to properly process such a vast amount of information from the CRO files, a database was created in Access. The years in question marked the peak of infant mortality in Szczecin. According to Prussian state statistics and the Szczecin CRO death registers, in the last decade of the 19th century up to 50% of all deaths in the city were of infants under one year of age.¹⁰ Information on the reporters from these death records was collected and processed in a database, which enabled some interesting relationships to be detected and described. The topic of older children and adults reporting deaths was intentionally omitted because it requires a separate study.

This article is divided into four parts. First, it briefly describes how Prussian Civil Registry Offices functioned, with attention to the political and legal context. Next, there is a detailed discussion of who reported the death of an infant in the Szczecin Registry Office in 1892–1900, noting whether the death was reported by a family member or a stranger. The socio-occupational class of those reporting the death of an infant is also discussed, using the contemporary HISCO and HIS-CLASS occupational classification methods. Finally, there is a discussion of how the addresses of people reporting infant deaths in Szczecin was presented.

How the Prussian CRO functioned

Although, in the modern era, parish registers and their production remained in the hands of the clergy, the state authorities had a keen interest in exercising control over the production of public registers.¹¹ The result was the introduction

⁹ The records used in this article are from the Archiwum Państwowe w Szczecinie, the State Archives in Szczecin (hereafter: APSz). The death records cover the years 1892–1900 and have the designation: APSz 65/672/0/3. The identification numbers used in this article, on the other hand, range from 460 to 533. The death records in question for the years 1892–1900 are available on the website of the State Archives in Szczecin and on the following website: https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/strona_glowna.

¹⁰ This was noted by Dariusz Chojecki in his two-part article on infant mortality in Szczecin. For more, see “Jedno miasto, dwa (różne) światy. Społeczno-przestrzenne różnicowanie umieralności niemowląt w Szczecinie w latach 1876–1913. Część 1,” *Zapiski Historyczne* 75, no. 1 (2010): 65–96; “Jedno miasto, dwa (różne) światy. Społeczno-przestrzenne różnicowanie umieralności niemowląt w Szczecinie w latach 1876–1913. Część 2,” *Zapiski Historyczne* 75, no. 2 (2010): 103–150.

¹¹ Nor should it be forgotten that in modern times, clergymen were often one of the important cogs in the state machinery, as is well illustrated, for example, in 18th-century Prussia. From 1717 onward, the Prussian pastor had the status of civil servant, and his main role, in addition to his

of state regulations on how they were kept.¹² Even so, there were still cases of poor recording. Interestingly, despite the meticulous state regulations relating to the keeping of parish registers in, for example, France, Prussia and England, no specific regulations were introduced regarding the people notifying.¹³ Moreover, in Prussian or French registers, for example, there is no heading or column for those reporting a baptism or death.¹⁴ We should cautiously assume that in parish registers, the actual information on who was baptized, died or married was more important than the reporter.¹⁵ Information on those reporting appears only with the advent of Civil Registry Offices.

The impetus for creating a purely secular system of vital registration was the French Revolution of 1789. In 1792, the duty to register births, marriages and deaths passed from the clergy to the mayor and his appointed deputies. This date is widely regarded as the origin of Civil Registry Offices. By contrast, most European countries did not introduce Registry Offices until the 19th century. However, it should be remembered that the process of introducing secular public records was country-specific and took a different course in each nation.¹⁶ Due to the subject matter of this article, the development of the CRO will be covered only in the state of Prussia.

Under the Hohenzollern monarchy, the idea of a CRO was pushed by the Prussian government in the Landtag on as many as three occasions between 1859 and 1861.¹⁷

religious duties, was to educate his Prussian subjects. The pastor ceased to be a civil servant only after the introduction of Civil Registry Offices in 1874.

¹² In England, for example, until the creation of the General Register Office (GRO) in 1837, there were parishes where, despite regulations brought in by the 18th century, registers were unreliably kept. The same was true in France, where two ordinances by the French kings in Blois (1579) and Saint-Germain en Laye (1667) virtually imposed state control over parish registers. For more, see Delsalle, *Histoires*, 11–28; Higgs, *Registration*.

¹³ There is no mention or paragraph on notifiers in either the French Ordinance of Saint Germain en Laye of 1667 or the Prussian Landrecht of 1794.

¹⁴ However, in the birth registers, in addition to the parents' data, information on the godparents was also recorded. In CRO records such information is obviously absent.

¹⁵ Information on baptisms, marriages and deaths was entered by the parish priest or his nominee. It is possible, therefore, that the notifier's details were irrelevant because the parish priest recorded them.

¹⁶ The CRO was established in France in 1792, in the Netherlands in 1811, in England in the 1830s, while neighboring Scotland was as late as 1857. For more, see Nobel, "Between Continuity," 523–46. Cameron, "Civil Registration," 377–95.

¹⁷ The establishment of Civil Registry Offices was primarily of interest to military authorities and statistical offices. The latter, in particular, insisted on their being established so that they could have good-quality statistical data, since Prussian parish registers, despite the regulations introduced in 1794, continued to suffer from incompleteness. Maciej Szukała, "Powstanie, organizacja i działalność urzędów stanu cywilnego w okręgach wiejskich na Pomorzu w latach 1874–1875," in *Dzieje wsi pomorskiej. II międzynarodowa konferencja naukowa*, eds. Radosław Gaziński and Andrzej Chłudziński (Dygowo–Szczecin: GZOiK Dygowo, 2003), 49–56; Wolfgang Schütz,

Due to resistance from the royal court, which supported the position of the Protestant church, the CRO bill was ultimately dropped in 1861.¹⁸ Civil Registry Offices were not introduced in Prussia until 15 years later, when the political situation in the Prussian state and the then Germany completely changed.¹⁹ On March 9th, 1874, thanks to Otto von Bismarck's close political ally, Adalbert Falk,²⁰ a law was passed in the Prussian Landtag on the registration of marital status and the method of marriage before a government official (*Gesetz über die Beurkundung des Personenstandes und der Eheschließung*).²¹ Its introduction in both Prussia and the Reich was due to the rise of the Bismarckian *Kulturkampf* and the struggle against the Catholic Church and the Catholic Zentrum party. German historian Andreas Fahmeir has drawn attention to the intense debate over the law itself. In addition to the criticisms of an ideological and political nature, led mainly by the head of the Zentrum party, Ludwig Windthorst, other flaws in the Act were highlighted.²² Among the most serious were concerns over the authority of registrars to keep personal records and verify residence information.²³ Only a few cities in Prussia made it compulsory to provide a full address when giving information for CRO records.²⁴ One of these was Szczecin, in which it was compulsory to add, in addition to the street, also the house number, which made it much easier to establish the place of residence of a parent or a person reporting, for example, a death.²⁵

100 Jahre Standesämter in Deutschland. Kleine Geschichte der bürgerlichen Eheschließung und der Buchführung des Personenstandes (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Standesamtswesen, 1977), 15–17.

¹⁸ Szukała, "Powstanie," 50–2; Schütz, *100 Jahre*, 14–16.

¹⁹ In 1871, Germany was unified with the Kingdom of Prussia and the Second German Reich was founded.

²⁰ Adalbert Falk headed what was known as the Kultusministerium. This was a ministry with a very broad range of activities, as in addition to religious matters, it also dealt with health, cultural and educational issues throughout Prussia.

²¹ This law was promulgated in the *Gesetz Sammlung für die Königlichen Preussischen Staaten*, 1874, no. 7, available at: https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Gesetz_%C3%BCber_die_Beurkundung_des_Personenstandes_und_die_Eheschlie%C3%9Fung. It should be added that an identical law was passed less than a year later in the Reichstag in 1875 under a similar title. Aside from minor changes of a legal nature, it was a copy of the 1874 law. The 1875 law was promulgated in the *Deutsches Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1875, no. 4.

²² Jörg Vögele, *Sozialgeschichte städtischer Gesundheitsverhältnisse während der Urbanisierung* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001); Fahmeir, "Too Much Information?," 93–113. This author pointed out that the marriage ceremony, at which a CRO official was required by law to be present, had become secular. Entering birth and death records, on the other hand, in addition to the fact that this was done by a civil official and not a clergyman, stayed the same in terms of form.

²³ This applied both to the reporting party and to the person who had been born or died, and was particularly troublesome if the person frequently changed his or her place of residence.

²⁴ Vögele, *Sozialgeschichte*, 64–65.

²⁵ Dariusz K. Chojecki, *Od społeczeństwa tradycyjnego do nowoczesnego. Demografia i zdrowotność głównych ośrodków miejskich Pomorza Zachodniego w dobie przyspieszonej industrializacji i urbanizacji w Niemczech (1871–1913)* (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu

The CRO in Prussia and Pomerania began operations on October 1, 1874.²⁶ By a decree of the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Count Friedrich Albrecht zu Eulenberg, dated March 17, 1874, the Oberpräsidenten of the provinces (including Pomerania) were obliged to establish a network of Registry Offices.²⁷ Registries were divided into three types: urban, rural and mixed. Supervision and operation of the Civil Registry Office in a rural municipality rested with the Landrat and deputies appointed by him. In an urban municipality, on the other hand, it was the responsibility of the mayor and his appointed officials. The Prussian Civil Registry Offices kept three registers: one each of births, marriages, and deaths.²⁸

The main goal of Minister Falk and Chancellor Bismarck in establishing the CROs was for the state to wrest control of public recordkeeping from the church.²⁹ The government of the Second German Reich clearly articulated that the task of the offices was the “constant and reliable” registration of vital statistics.³⁰ Paragraph 2 of the law stipulated that civil registration districts should be created for one or more small municipalities and, if necessary, divided into several districts, which applied mainly to large cities.³¹ As a result, a citizen could quickly complete

Szczecińskiego, 2014), 16–17. Chojecki also remarked that 3 years before the CRO was founded, the city had introduced mandatory viewing of corpses.

²⁶ In Prussia by the 1874 law, and in the Reich by the 1875 law. In other states of the Reich, CROs became operational on January 1, 1876.

²⁷ A week later, the Pomeranian Oberpräsident, Baron Ferdinand von Münchhausen, sent a letter to Pomeranian Landrats and mayors to begin work on establishing a network of CROs in their areas. In 1875, there were 679 registry offices in the entire Pomeranian province, of which 298 were in the Szczecin administrative district, 287 in the Koszalin administrative district and 94 in the Stralsund administrative district. Szukała, “Powstanie,” 52–55; Arthur von Fircks, “Die Bildung der Standesamtsbezirke im Preussischen Staate,” *Zeitschrift des Königlich Preussischen Statistischen Bureaus* 15 (1875): 321–24.

²⁸ Chojecki, *Od społeczeństwa*, 16–17; Klotzke, “Ludność,” 66–8. It should also be added that for each of these three registers there were both first copies (kept at the respective CROs) and second copies submitted at the end of each year to the district court. To avoid errors when listing a particular event, each record had a specific color of paper on which it was printed. Birth records were white, marriage records were light blue, while deaths were recorded on yellow cards. Each clerk filling out a particular record was required to write the details legibly. Of course, each of the listed CRO registers had a particular set of information that had to be included. What exactly was contained in the CRO files was noted by Zygmunt Klotzke in his work on the CRO in Lutzen. Each entry in these registers had its own appropriately labeled format: birth certificate (form A), marriage certificate, (form B), death certificate (form C).

²⁹ Note that the registrar could not be a clergyman. Klotzke, “Ludność,” 69–70.

³⁰ Chojecki, *Od społeczeństwa*, 15–17.

³¹ The creation of small CRO districts in the Prussian provinces was deliberate on the part of the authorities, as they included a small number of residents. A citizen was therefore able to quickly complete all formalities related to, e.g., registering a birth or death. *Gesetz über die Beurkundung des Personenstandes und die Eheschließung*, available at: https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Gesetz_%C3%BCber_die_Beurkundung_des_Personenstandes_und_die_Eheschlie%C3%9Fung.

all formalities related to the registration of e.g., a death. Such a division was necessary because the law explicitly stated that the corresponding death certificate was to be drawn up within a maximum of 24 hours of the event's occurrence.³²

Research methodology

The article primarily focuses on the use of statistical methods, which are essential when analyzing mass events and with a vast database. Accordingly, computational methods for descriptive statistics were also used to show changes and trends in relation to people reporting infant deaths and specific correlations. In creating the database, it was important to properly homogenize the data (qualitative categories and quantitative variables—the field content). Such a procedure was necessary to efficiently use the capabilities of the pivot table to capture in the huge number of records of interesting events and their in-depth analysis and interpretation. In order to be able to effectively analyze the socio-occupational theme of reporting infant deaths, it was crucial to use the HISCO and HISCLASS international classification systems. By coding the several hundred types of occupations included in the database in HISCO and HISCLASS, it became easier to group individual occupations and draw crucial conclusions.

Reports of infant deaths in the Szczecin CRO, 1892–1900

Database

The source for the discussion of the present topic is Szczecin's infant death records from 1892–1900. At the end of the 19th century, infants accounted for up to 50% of all the deaths in the city. Due to the vast amount of information in the records, a database in Access was created for the purpose of the research, containing more than 15,000 records. Each record is a report of a single infant death. The database consists of forty-one fields in one main table. Four additional tables were also created, containing the names of the reporting parties, the names of the deceased infants, and the names of the child's mother and father.³³ There are several fields on the reporting parties themselves: occupation, first and last names of the reporting

³² *Ibidem*. The registration of births within a week's time is referred to in §. 24, while the 24-hour time limit for the registration of deaths is referred to in §. 56. See also Fircks, "Die Bildung," 321–24. Citizens were required to comply with these deadlines, otherwise they faced a fine of up to 150 marks.

³³ An additional table has also been created that includes the occupations of unmarried mothers; however, in this article it is mainly for informational purposes in order to be able to distinguish between the occupations of fathers and those of single mothers.

party, and their precise address of residence. On the surface, this is not a significant set of data, but through the use of at least simple and cross-search queries, interesting conclusions can be drawn. Importantly, the results presented here are from an exhaustive study for the years 1892–1900. There was no focus on creating non-random samples for the study, as this would have required at least looking into Prussian state statistics and making a broader analysis of the scientific literature.³⁴

Results

When an infant died, the law was rather brief as to who was obliged to report it: the head of the family or any other stranger³⁵ present at the time of death. This contrasts sharply with those who could report the birth of a child, since the law of 1874 clearly listed who should report the birth.³⁶ In the case of deaths, there was no longer such a distinction. More importantly, the law did not explicitly state that the mother of a deceased infant could also do so.³⁷ The total number of people reporting the death of an infant over the period 1892–1900 was 15,454, of whom 8,363 (54%) were women, while 7,091 (46%) were men.³⁸ Of the more than 8,300 women reporting the case, 6,179, or more than three-quarters, were the mothers of the deceased infants. Significantly, of these 6,179 mothers, more than 2,355 were spinsters.³⁹ Where mothers were reporting the death of their youngest child, in the box where occupation was to be given, the entry stated that she was *verehelichte* (married), *Witwe* (a widow), or *gescheidene* (divorced). This was followed by her name and address. This information, on the other hand, was not repeated in the section on the parents' personal details. Unfortunately, no data was given on whether a married mother had an occupation, such as laborer.

³⁴ A subject at least worthy of attention would be a discussion of those reporting the deaths of illegitimate children over a broader period than the years 1892–1900 discussed here.

³⁵ If the head of the household was not at home.

³⁶ These were: the father, the midwife, the doctor, a stranger staying in the dwelling during labor, and the mother. In the mother's case, there was a provision that she could do so if she had the strength to do so after giving birth. Of note is the clear gradation of the persons listed in the Act. A large proportion of births were reported by parents and midwives, while the fewest were reported by doctors and strangers.

³⁷ The question is important in the context of at least the death of an illegitimate child and the fact that a significant number of infant deaths involved women rather than fathers.

³⁸ Information based on the database compiled, with infant death records for the years 1892–1900. On average, about 3,500–4,000 people died in Szczecin annually, half of whom were infants.

³⁹ What attracts attention not only in the records, but also in Prussian statistics, is that the word "spinster" was avoided. Instead, the German word "ledig" (literally, free) was used, mainly in Prussian statistics, or the word "unverehelichte" (literally, unmarried) in CRO records. This could indicate, with a kind of "spitefulness" on the part of officials, that "a woman has a child, but no marriage." This was due to the mentality of German society at the time, where a child from an extramarital union was treated much worse than those whose parents had married.

Along with women who were the mothers of deceased infants, women who were not family members, including midwives, should be distinguished separately. Of the 8,300 women reporting, women who were not family members accounted for 20%, while the remaining 5% were midwives and unmarried women unrelated to the family.⁴⁰ In Szczecin's civil registers, a woman who reported a case but did not belong to the family had for example, "bricklayer's spouse," "carpenter's widow," "divorced from a laborer," etc., written as her occupation. It is clear that "divorced" or "spouse" is not a designation of occupation. It should be assumed that this form of entry in the CRO records served as a kind of "distinction" between a parent and a person unrelated to the family. The entry formulated in this way should rather be seen as underscoring that the woman was not related to the parents of the deceased infant, and that her spouse was engaged in, for example, carpentry. At the same time, one cannot exclude the thesis that the reporting party could have been, for example, a neighbor living at another address or a stranger, but living at the same address as the parents of the deceased infant.⁴¹ It should also not be forgotten that about 5% were midwives and unmarried mothers. Of the 598 people, no fewer than 548 were midwives, while 60 people were unmarried mothers who were unrelated to the family of the deceased infant, but worked as, for example, housekeepers, servants, etc. The distinction of midwives is important because by analyzing, for example, infant mortality by seasonality, we are able to answer the question of how many of the youngest babies died either during or shortly after childbirth.⁴²

In terms of men reporting infant deaths, it is important to approach this in a similar way to the paragraph above and divide them into family and non-family members. As with women, just over 60% (about 4,000) of the men reporting infant deaths were the fathers. If the father's personal information was given in the reporting sections, it was not given again in the parent sections. The remaining 40%, or about 3,000, were men who should be divided into three categories: non-family members, funeral directors and porters. The non-family members were recorded in 1892–1900 as numbering around 700. They tended to have different surnames and usually resided on a different street from the deceased child's family.⁴³ As for the last two categories, funeral directors and porters, the situation is more complicated. In the years in question, 1892–1900, the death of the youngest child was reported by funeral directors about 2,000 times. Together, their significant share (more than 25% of 7,000) among men reporting was probably indicative of the fact that they

⁴⁰ With over 95% of this group consisting solely of midwives.

⁴¹ See, e.g., APSz, sygn. 65/672/0/03/460, akt zgonu, nlb. [nr 0182/1892].

⁴² For example, due to high summer temperatures, which can be determined due to the exact time of death of the child in the CRO record.

⁴³ One caveat is that this is not a definitive rule, as there were possible cases where the applicant may have been related to the family.

had assumed responsibility for reporting deaths to the CRO as part of the funeral services they provided.⁴⁴ It should be noted, however, that the 2,000 notifications from funeral directors did not mean that funeral services in and around Szczecin were actually provided by that many of them. The death records examined included about 40 people who were engaged as funeral directors in the entire Szczecin area at the time. One undertaker in particular, Bernhard Mundt, deserves attention. Throughout the entire period under study, instead of “undertaker,” he had “merchant” written in the occupation field.⁴⁵ It is reasonable to cautiously assume that those providing funeral services also had other occupations. Nor can it be ruled out that Herr Mundt was not only an undertaker but may also have sold, for example, coffins, flowers, or candles, etc., hence the entry as merchant. The question of porters, who accounted for 383 entries, although there were actually only five of them and they worked at the municipal hospital in Pomorzany, is similar.

Occupations of people reporting infant deaths

No less crucial is the occupation of those reporting. In the records analyzed for the years 1892–1900, they had about 500 different occupations.⁴⁶ It should also be noted that these professions included both those of high social status, e.g., lawyer, doctor, or officer, and those which were socially and financially less well-positioned, e.g., laborers, cobblers, etc. Nor should we overlook individuals belonging to craft guilds, e.g., carpenters, masons, bakers, coopers, etc., who had a specific position in a given guild, e.g., masters, journeymen, and apprentices. As a result, “master blacksmith,” “journeyman blacksmith” or “apprentice blacksmith” are not representatives of three different professions but one, and the difference comes down only to the degree of skill. It is also noteworthy that often the occupation was given without specifying whether someone was a master or journeyman. As a result, the person may (or may not) have had a higher degree of skill, which, for example, is not detected by the coding of occupations in the international HISCO and HISCLASS system.⁴⁷ Differences can only be picked up when comparing the occupation in question with the credentials of another person.⁴⁸ Another explanation is simply that the writers approached the recording of information pragmatically, abbreviating the recording of the occupation to save time.

⁴⁴ Bear in mind that the law did not specifically address whether the funeral director could report the death or not.

⁴⁵ See e.g., APsz, sygn. 65/672/0/03/462, akt zgonu, nlb. [nr 1298/1892].

⁴⁶ The same is true for the occupations of fathers of infants.

⁴⁷ In these systems this is important because apprentices, masters and journeymen are designated differently.

⁴⁸ The first and last names of this person would have to be matched and compared if the names of the professions are identical.

Table 1. Number of people reporting infant deaths by 90 most common occupations between 1892 and 1900

Occupations of those reporting	Number reporting	Occupations of those reporting	Number reporting	Occupations of those reporting	Number reporting
1	2	3	4	5	6
laborer	1341	musician	28	assistant brakeman	13
merchant	387*	master baker	27	butcher	13
tailor	386	barber surgeon	25	printer	12
porter	383*	letter carrier	25	assistant switchman	12
cobbler	115	master painter	24	senior sergeant	12
carpenter	94	boiler stoker	24	insurance clerk	12
master tailor	93	railroad worker	23	typesetter	12
bookkeeper	67	switchman	23	agent	11
accountant	66	journeyman locksmith	22	bookbinder	11
barge owner	65	tax clerk	20	master plumber	11
master cobbler	64	journeyman tailor	19	master locksmith	11
inspector at the city hospital	63	wallpaper maker	19	brewer	11
dowager midwife	63	hairdresser	18	clerical assistant	11
bricklayer	60	sergeant	18	laborer	11
tradesman's assistant	57	master butcher	17	owner	11
locksmith	57	pensioner	17	foreman	10
carter	56	gardener	16	wheelwright	9
master carpenter	53	journeyman joiner	15	royal police	9
restaurateur	53	potter	15	lithographer	9
policeman	52	letter carrier's assistant	15	baker	9
trader	46	currency exchange office owner	15	basket maker	9
fireman	46	teacher	14	sailor	9
pastor	44	painter's assistant	14	cobblestone worker	8
waiter	41	turner	14	blacksmith	8
bricklayer apprentice	40	gas lighter	14	servant	8

1	2	3	4	5	6
trainee midwife	39	assistant at the magistrate's office	13	roofer	7
journeyman carpenter	39	cooper	13	brakeman	7
joiner	35	journeyman cooper	13	coal trader	7
painter	28	machinist	13	builder	7
Total					4,776

Note: The total number of those reporting who had a recorded occupation (i.e., those also not included in the table above) is 5,594. The following were not included as notifiers: funeral directors, midwives, spouses, widows, divorced, fields left blank, and mothers reporting the death of their child. This was necessary in order to focus on discussing only the particular occupations that were related to the occupation of the fathers of deceased infants.

* Note that about 300 filings from the merchant profession came from one person, the aforementioned Bernhard Mundt. For porters, the majority (about 300 submissions) were from 5 people from the Pomorzany City Hospital.

Source: own calculations based on the database.

In the database created for this article, the most prevalent occupations for those reporting were 90 professions with a high degree of diversity. These include laborers, bricklayers, merchants,⁴⁹ letter carriers, clerks, etc. Note that the above table does not include all the occupations in the database, as there are about 500 in total. However, these 90 occupations shown above account for about 85% of all reporting occupations. The largest percentage of those reporting cases were laborers, tailors, cobblers, locksmiths, carpenters, and joiners. There was also no shortage of people from the middle classes (teachers, clerks) and the upper classes, and even the military (sergeants, or even in one case a general). However, the way the occupations are presented, as in table 1, has many shortcomings, as it does not show us the other 400 occupations. Here the modern classification of occupations in the HISCO and HISCLASS systems comes to our aid.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ The following were not included as notifiers: funeral directors, midwives, spouses, widows, divorced, fields left blank, and mothers reporting the death of their child. This was necessary in order to focus on discussing only specific occupations that were related to the occupation of the fathers of deceased infants. It is also important to keep in mind the distinctive nature of the merchant / funeral director Bernhard Mundt, discussed earlier. In the entries field, between 1892 and 1900, merchants other than B. Mundt numbered 89.

⁵⁰ In this article, the classification in *Preussische Statistik* can be used; however, the results would coincide to some extent with the HISCO system. The modern classification has the advantage over the Prussian Statistics in that it is more precise.

Table 2. Number of people reporting infant deaths between 1892 and 1900 by major occupational groups in the HISCO system

Main occupational groups in the HISCO system	Number of people reporting a death
0, 1 – professional workers, technicians and related professions	797
2 – administrative workers and managers	117
3 – clergy, clerks, postal workers and related professions	369
4 – owners, salesmen, merchants and related occupations	635
5 – service workers and servants and related occupations	2,520
6 – agricultural workers, animal husbandry, fishermen and hunters	38
7,8,9 – production workers, equipment operators, drivers, laborers, etc.,	4,633
Total	9,109

Source: own calculations based on the database.

Before the result from the table above is analyzed, a few words should be said about the HISCO occupation classification system itself. It is based on ten major occupational groups divided into smaller sub-groups. This provides an opportunity to analyze the similarities and differences between the various socio-occupational groups. For this study, it provides a unique opportunity to compare which occupational groups among those reporting most frequently reported the case of an infant death. The HISCO system has the advantage that it is possible to assign multiple occupations to one group, e.g., laborers is group 9. Thus, with even several hundred different occupations in the database, it is relatively easy to sort them into nine main groups.

Nearly 50% of all occupations of those reporting were from groups 7, 8 and 9, i.e., workers in industry and crafts. The second group, which accounted for 25% of the notifications, were representatives of group 5. This group includes funeral directors or midwives. A sizable number also came from group 4, represented mainly by merchants and tradesmen. In terms of the number of applications, no fewer than 50% from this group were the previously mentioned B. Mundt. More importantly, however, this group also included people living on barges on the Oder River.⁵¹ Barge owners accounted for about 10% of all entries in group 4. The remaining 25% of people were representatives of groups 0 through 4. These groups include occupations held mainly by the upper and middle classes, which were better paid and required higher skills, e.g., actors, artists, policemen, etc.

⁵¹ The designation in the HISCO system is 4–10.40; however, this should be considered an approximation, since HISCO itself does not provide for “barge owners.” In the CRO records, on the other hand, “barge owner” was entered.

The remaining groups from 5 to 9 are represented by the lower social classes, where work was tougher and less well paid, e.g., laborers, carpenters, bricklayers, etc.

To conclude the discussion on the occupations of those reporting the death of an infant, it is worth illustrating how the occupations of those reporting the case were classified according to the HISCLASS system. The data in the HISCLASS system was cross-referenced with the occupational coding in the HISCO system,⁵² and then all the occupations were divided into eleven groups. It should be noted, however, that the HISCLASS system, unlike HISCO, places more weight on the qualification level of people in given occupations by dividing them into two main levels: lower and higher. Unfortunately, the occupations of those reporting deaths in the CRO records preclude a precise determination of the degree of qualification of the occupations. Some exceptions among those reporting are those who were masters or journeymen in the craft guilds in question.

Table 3. Number of people reporting a death between 1892 and 1900
by main HISCLASS groups

Major HISCLASS groups	Number of people reporting a death
1. Senior managers	108
2. Senior specialists	154
3. Junior managers	103
4. Low-level professionals, clergy and salespeople	3,185
5. Low-level clergy and salespeople	124
6. Foremen (supervisors)	5
7. Semi-skilled laborers	1,939
8. Farmers and fishermen	10
9. Low-skilled laborers	1,109
10. Low-skilled farmers	5
11. Unskilled laborers	2,344
12. Unskilled farmers	23
Total	9,109

Source: own calculations based on the database.

On analyzing the above table, one can see a fairly approximate distribution of occupation groups reporting the case as when discussing the HISCO system. However, the HISCLASS system is more general, which has certain consequences. In the database, according to the HISCLASS system, we have four main groups

⁵² E.g., group 9–99.00 in HISCO is group 11 in HISCLASS, etc.

of reporting occupations: the fourth, seventh, ninth and eleventh (see table 3). Together they account for almost 90% of all notifications. The most diverse is group 4, where there are technicians, merchants, funeral directors, tradesmen and so on. The bulk of the people in this group are funeral directors, porters and midwives (about 75%). The 7th group includes members of craft guilds, both masters, journeymen, and apprentices, e.g., tailors, carpenters, or joiners, etc. The last two groups, the 9th and 11th, are mainly laborers and industrial workers, e.g., boiler stokers and also coachmen.

Addresses of people reporting infant deaths

A final issue concerning those reporting infant deaths is their residential address. As mentioned above, Szczecin, compared to other Prussian metropolitan centers, had the advantage that specific residential addresses were added in addition to streets. Of the more than fifteen thousand infant deaths reported between 1892 and 1900, nearly eleven thousand involved only 46 streets in Szczecin. Interestingly, the remaining approximately 4,000 notifications came from people who resided on another 150 streets.⁵³ It should be remembered that a significant proportion of those reporting the death of an infant were the parents themselves, the mother or father. As a result, in a significant number of cases, the address of the reporting party and the one at which the child died are identical.⁵⁴ However, a certain number of deaths of the youngest children were reported by persons not related to the family, e.g., funeral directors, police officers,⁵⁵ midwives, etc. It also cannot be ruled out that those reporting were acquaintances, e.g., from work, or distant family members who lived on another street. The above thesis is worth considering using the example of three Szczecin streets: *grosse Lastadie* (Energetyka Street), *Oberwiek* (Christopher Columbus Street) and *Breitestrasse* (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński Street).

In two of the three streets featured above, infants who died on the same street as the reporting party made up the vast majority (from two-thirds to as high as 90%).⁵⁶ The same was true for a significant portion of the two hundred streets in Szczecin. There were exceptions to this, however, as is well illustrated by *Breitestrasse* (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński Street). A significant portion of the infants on this street (636 out of 724) died on a different street from the reporting party. Why?

⁵³ Excluding “gaps” there were about 3,750 notifications.

⁵⁴ For more on the streets where infants died, see the rest of this article.

⁵⁵ Only by police officers if the case was criminal in nature, e.g., infanticide.

⁵⁶ On *grosse Lastadie* (Energetyka Street), 505 infants died on the same street as the reporting party, while 89 infants died on a street other than the reporting party. On *Oberwiekstrasse* (Christopher Columbus Street), 465 infants died on the same street as the reporting party, while 23 infants died on a different street than the reporting party. The situation was similar on other streets in Szczecin.

First of all, a significant number of cases from this street (636) were reported by funeral directors who were not the parents of the deceased child.⁵⁷ Notably, the street in question was home to several different funeral directors, and their operations covered the whole of Szczecin at the time. The second reason is the occupational structure of Wyszyński Street, since it was not a street inhabited only by low-skilled laborers, but also by other professions, such as master tailors, funeral directors, merchants, etc.

There was a similar situation on Mühlenbergstrasse (Stefan Czarniecki Street), where out of 424 reports, only 38 were reported by the parents of deceased infants, or their relatives or friends.⁵⁸ The reason for this was the already mentioned fact that five different porters lived on this street between 1892 and 1900, probably working at the hospital located on Pommerendorferstrasse (Zygmunt Chmielewski Street).⁵⁹ Consequently, when we analyze even the scale of infant deaths on the basis of streets, it is impossible to rely only on the address of the person reporting the death, as they are not entirely reliable, as can easily be proven by the examples of Breitestrasse and Mühlenbergstrasse.

The above findings are by no means exhaustive on the subject of the addresses of those reporting a death. A separate analysis is required on the distribution of reporting persons in the City of Szczecin and a comparison of them in terms of family correlation with the parents of the deceased infants.

Conclusion

A general analysis of the more than 15,000 reported death records contained in Szczecin's civil registry records prompts reflection. It should be noted that, of the number given above, about two-thirds of the deaths, or 10,000, were reported by the mothers (including unmarried mothers) and fathers of deceased infants. The remaining 5,000 were reported by funeral directors, midwives, porters and non-family members. For the parents of the deceased infants, more than 60% of the cases (or 6,000 out of 10,000) were reported by the mothers, while the remaining 40% were reported by the fathers, a ratio of 3:2 in favor of the women. However, given that of the 6,000 mothers, one-third, or about 2,000, were those who were unmarried, the issue becomes slightly more complicated. If we exclude unmarried mothers, (out of a total of 6,000 mothers), we find that the death of a child from

⁵⁷ Interestingly, in the death records analyzed, there was no instance of a funeral director's child dying.

⁵⁸ This is due in part to the proximity of the streets or just a different house number on the same street.

⁵⁹ In the course of compiling the database, about ten different people were identified as porters, five of whom worked at the hospital in Pomorzany, and it is from them that most of the reports from Mühlenbergstrasse came.

a marriage was reported to the same extent by both mothers and fathers.⁶⁰ Thus, in terms of sex, the ratio of parents reporting the death of married children is not 3:2 in favor of women, but 1:1.

Some key conclusions can also be drawn by analyzing the occupations of those reporting infant deaths according to modern methods for classifying occupations, such as HISCO and HISCLASS. First of all, a significant proportion of those reporting came from the lower-income classes, e.g., laborers, noting that more than two-thirds of the cases were reported by the parents of deceased infants. This correlates clearly with the scale of infant mortality in Szczecin, as the parents of children who had not reached the age of one came from laborer backgrounds, among others. In contrast, the remaining 1/3 of cases were reported mainly by funeral directors, midwives, and porters.⁶¹

However, a very promising subject that requires separate and in-depth analysis is the addresses of those reporting infant deaths. Szczecin had the advantage over most German cities at that time in that it contained precise residential addresses. This makes it possible, for example, to analyze the spatial distribution between parents and those reporting, or to look for family correlations within a specific area of the city.

It seems to me that future Polish historical research should pay a little more attention to the analysis of the CRO records themselves (not just the notifiers). They provide interesting conclusions for historical demography and the population history of large urban centers such as Szczecin. Many conclusions in particular come from the analysis of the occupations and addresses of the reporting parties. However, a certain paucity of contributory works describing collateral topics arising from the analysis of CRO records can be noted in the academic literature. A good example is the case of those reporting the death of an infant, as discussed in this article. Despite the apparent fringe nature of the subject of reporting persons, the conclusions that can be drawn encourage a deeper study of the subject in question.

The answers to the above questions and the conclusions contained in this article by no means exhaust the subject of those reporting deaths, but are more an invitation to further and in-depth discussion of the matter. At the very least, it would be an interesting idea to do a future socio-professional analysis of the reporters of adult and child deaths based on the academic literature and nineteenth-century Szczecin CRO records. This would be a kind of “marriage” of anthropology with historical demography, the merits of which were pointed out almost 20 years ago by the Wrocław historian and demographer Mikołaj Szofitysek.⁶²

⁶⁰ This would then give us about 4,100 women and 3,900 men.

⁶¹ Future research should pay attention to the activities of funeral directors, of whom there were about forty in Szczecin in the 1890s.

⁶² Mikołaj Szofitysek, “Czy antropologia odkupi demografię?,” *Historyka* 35 (2005): 171–183.

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Reporting Infant Deaths at the Szczecin Civil Records Office in the Late 19th Century: General Conclusions

Summary

This article gives an overview regarding people reporting infant deaths in Szczecin's Civil Registry Office records at the end of the 19th century. The primary objective was to analyze more than 15,000 death records from 1892–1900, at the peak of infant mortality in Szczecin. There is an attempt to show what general research themes could be analyzed for those reporting infant deaths. Among other things, the gender ratio of the reporters, socio-professional issues, the family relationship between the reporters and the parents, and residential addresses were analyzed. This article, however, does not exhaust the research possibilities on this topic, and constitutes a kind of invitation for a broader discussion and deeper research on people reporting deaths (not only those of infants). Importantly, the subject of individuals reporting deaths in nineteenth-century CRO records is not very widely covered in non-Polish academic literature.

It was also noted that governments of the time were taking control of public records. This was important because parish registers did not contain any information regarding the people reporting demographic events. The very concept of recognizing the people reporting vital statistics emerged only with the introduction of civil registration records in the early 19th century. In the section introducing the subject of notifiers, there is a brief but factual discussion of the history of the establishment of the CRO in the Kingdom of Prussia. The establishment of the CRO in the province of Pomerania was also touched upon, as well as what sections made up civil registers. There was also a brief description of the Prussian USC Act of March 9, 1874, in the context of the declarants and their responsibilities. The article concludes by remarking that Polish research pays scant attention to those reporting infant deaths in 19th century CRO records. The author also argues that future research work on 19th century Prussian CRO records should pay more attention to the people reporting these events, as the conclusions for historical and demographic research could be genuinely promising.

Zgłaszający zgony niemowląt w szczecińskim Urzędzie Stanu Cywilnego pod koniec XIX wieku. Wnioski ogólne

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono zarys problematyki dotyczącej osób zgłaszających zgony niemowlęcia w szczecińskich aktach USC pod koniec XIX wieku. Celem podstawowym było przeanalizowanie ponad 15 000 akt zgonów z lat 1892–1900, kiedy to w Szczecinie miało miejsce apogeum umieralności niemowląt. Podjęto się próby przedstawienia, jakie ogólne wątki badawcze można przeanalizować w przypadku osób zgłaszających zgon

niemowlęcia. Przeanalizowano m.in. stosunek płci osób zgłaszających, kwestie społeczno-zawodowe, relację rodzinną między zgłaszającymi a rodzicami oraz adresy zamieszkania. Niniejszy artykuł nie wyczerpuje możliwości badawczych w tej tematyce, stanowiąc swoistego rodzaju zaproszenie do szerszej dyskusji i pogłębiania badań dotyczących osób zgłaszających zgony (nie tylko niemowląt). Co ważne, tematyka osób zgłaszających zgony w dziewiętnastowiecznych aktach USC nie jest zbyt szeroko poruszana w zagranicznej literaturze naukowej.

Zwrócono także uwagę na fakt przejmowania przez ówczesne państwa kontroli nad rejestracją metrykalną. Było to ważne, ponieważ księgi metrykalne nie zawierały żadnych informacji dotyczących osób zgłaszających zdarzenia demograficzne. Sama koncepcja wyróżniania osób zgłaszających przy rejestrowaniu ruchu naturalnego pojawiła się dopiero przy wprowadzaniu akt stanu cywilnego w początkach XIX wieku. Przedstawiając tematykę osób zgłaszających, nie pominięto krótkiego, lecz rzeczowego omówienia historii powstania USC w Królestwie Prus. Poruszono także wątek powstawania USC w prowincji pomorskiej oraz omówiono, z jakich części składały się księgi stanu cywilnego. Scharakteryzowano także zwięźle pruską ustawę o USC z 9 marca 1874 roku w kontekście osób zgłaszających sprawę i ich obowiązków.

W zakończeniu artykułu zwrócono uwagę na fakt, że w polskich badaniach naukowych nie poświęca się wiele uwagi osobom zgłaszającym zgony niemowląt w dziewiętnastowiecznych aktach USC. Ponadto postawiono postulat, aby w przyszłych pracach badawczych dotyczących dziewiętnastowiecznych pruskich akt USC zwrócić większą uwagę na osoby zgłaszające, gdyż wnioski dla badań historycznych oraz demograficznych mogą być naprawdę obiecujące.

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