

CENSUSES IN UKRAINE: PAST AND PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The paper provides a brief overview of the history of population censuses in modern Ukraine before 1991. The situation with the population censuses after Ukraine gained independence and the peculiarities of conducting them in the future are described.

Keywords: population census, Ukraine.

1 Population censuses on the territory of modern Ukraine before 1991

Census data are a photograph of the demo-social state of the country. A comparison of census data over a certain period of time makes it possible to assess the direction and speed of the country's movement on various aspects of life. This applies not only to demographic aspects (births, migration, age and sex structure), but also social (marriage, family) and economic (accommodation on the territory, living conditions, sources of livelihoods, etc.). On the other hand, the history of the country determines the peculiarities of the census.

Throughout its history, the territory of modern Ukraine has been a part of different countries. Before the First World War, the territory of Ukraine was a part of the Russian Empire and Austria-Hungary. Since the middle of the 19th century, six censuses have been conducted in Austria-Hungary, and only one in the Russian Empire. In the period between the First and Second World Wars, the territory of Ukraine was a part of five countries (Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the USSR). Now, according to the current administrative division, Ukraine consists of 25 oblasts (regions). The table 1 shows the data on population censuses on the modern territory of Ukraine conducted by different countries.

It should be noted that the general principles of modern censuses were formulated at the Eighth Session of the International Statistical Congress in 1872. Census programs and the procedure for conducting them are constantly being improved, but the principles laid down 150 years ago are still relevant today.

In the USSR demography and demographic processes were always considered in the political aspect. Apparently only the 1920 and 1926 censuses did not have any political influence. The 1920 census failed to be conducted throughout Ukraine, which was a part of the former Russian Empire, due to hostilities. In my opinion, the 1926 census was one of the best in the history of the USSR. This was due to the lack of political pressure on statistical bodies, scientific approach to the entire census process, open analysis of the quality of results and a large number of publications.

The next census was scheduled for 1933, but was postponed first to 1935 and later to 1936. The census finally took place in 1937. The reason for the postponement was the Soviet government's desire to hide the after-effects of the demographic catastrophe caused by collectivization and famine of 1932–1933. Despite postponing the census for three years, it could not but reflect the effects of the famine. The population of Ukraine in 1937 turned out to be 428 thousand less than in 1926. It was necessary either to publish the results of the census (but then they would have to be explained) or to

declare them incorrect. Eight months after the census, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR adopted a resolution declaring the results of the census to be "defective," and the census itself methodologically incorrect. The materials of the development were classified, and the organizers of the census were repressed (shot or sent into exile). Ukrainian scientists¹ were also repressed. For many years after, the 1937 census was considered to be a classic example of a "defective census." The general results of this census were first published only in 1991. According to the modern experts, the 1937 census met the standards of conducting censuses.

Table 1. Population censuses on the territory of modern Ukraine

Country that conducted the census	Number of censuses	Years	Number of oblasts within modern borders
Before the First World War			
Austria-Hungary	6	1857, 1869, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910	5
Russian Empire	1	1897	20
Between the First and Second World Wars			
Czechoslovakia	2	1921, 1930	1*
Hungary	1	1941	
Poland	2	1921, 1931	5
Romania	1	1930	1
USSR (1917–1939)	4	1920, 1926, 1937, 1939	18 (14**)
After the Second World War			
USSR (1945–1991)	4	1959, 1970, 1979, 1989	25
Ukraine	1	2001	25

Note. * – Zakarpattya oblast; ** – 1920.

Source: compiled by the author.

In 1939 a new census was conducted. Unlike the "defective" 1937 census, the results of the 1939 census were recognized by the government. Before the war, only brief results of the census were published in the press; the main results were published only in 1992. Although abortion was banned in the USSR in late 1936 to compensate for the loss of population due to the famine of the 1930s, the 1939 census also showed the effects of famine. In order to conceal the effects of the famine, statistical bodies, under pressure from the authorities, resorted to the deliberately inflated data. Thus, the population of Ukraine was overstated by more than 800 thousand people (Rudnytskyi et al. 2015).

In the first years after the end of the Second World War, most European countries conducted population censuses. In the USSR, the first post-war census took place only 14 years later, in 1959. The main reason for this delay was the reluctance of the Soviet authorities to show the true extent of human losses, as well as financial difficulties.

In the 1959 and 1970 censuses, the Soviet government tried to "finally resolve" the issue of the Crimean Tatars. In 1944, the Crimean Tatars were deported from the Crimea to the Soviet republics of Central Asia, most of them to Uzbekistan. When publishing the ethnic composition of the population of the USSR and the republics, the data on the Crimean Tatars were absent. During the census, they were included in other ethnic groups, mostly Tatars. In response, the Crimean Tatars in 1964, 1971 and 1973–1974 conducted a "self-census of the Crimean Tatar people." This is a unique case in the history of censuses.

2 Censuses after 1991

Since gaining independence in 1991, only one census has been conducted in Ukraine, in 2001. The second census has not yet been conducted. A characteristic feature of population censuses in the years

¹ In 1938, the world's first specialized Institute for Demography of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences was closed (since 1934 it had been called the Institute for Demography and Sanitary Statistics). Many employees were repressed, including its permanent director M.V. Ptoukha. The Institute was re-established in 2002 as the Institute for Demography and Social Studies. In 2007, the institute was named after M.V. Ptoukha.

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of independence is their constant rescheduling. If the first census was postponed only once, the date of the second census has been changed five times (table 2).

Table 2. Planned and actual years of the population census of Ukraine

Census order	Planned years	Year of the census
The first	1999, 2001	2001
The second	2011, 2012, 2013, 2016, 2020, 2023	?
<i>The third</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>???</i>

Source: compiled by the author.

All postponements were justified by the lack of money to finance the work. The closest to success the State Statistics Service, which in Ukraine is responsible for conducting censuses, was in 2012. Tens of millions of forms and instructions were printed, and about two hundred thousand census staff were recruited and trained. All that remained was to carry out field work. But at the last moment the census was postponed to 2013.

The lack of a census for more than twenty years leads to growing discrepancies between population estimates and the actual population in a given area. The urgency of this problem increases with the reduction of the administrative level of the territory: state – oblast (region) – raion (district) – territorial community. Inter-budget transfers (grants, subsidies, subventions), investments in the development of a certain territory depend on the population and its age and sex structure. With the use of demographic indicators, plans for the development of administrative-territorial units are developed. In 2020, the administrative-territorial reform was carried out: instead of 490, 140 districts were formed, which, in turn, consist of 1,469 territorial communities. This required a significant number of calculations. In half of the cases, the new districts had territorial boundaries that did not coincide with the boundaries of the old districts. There were no territorial communities at all. That led to discrepancies between the data of statistical bodies and the data of district administrations and territorial communities.

The lack of the reliable basic information reduces the quality of demographic forecasts.

In Ukraine, the registration of the natural population movement is established at a high level. All births are registered, otherwise the child will not be able to "go through life". There may be problems with the registration of deaths in the remote rural areas, in the event of homicides or accidents, but they do not have a significant impact on the quality of demographic data. In Ukraine as in many countries, accounting for migration is a bigger problem. After the census, the level of short-term labor migration in Ukraine has increased. Some migrant workers remained for permanent residence in other countries, but they are registered in Ukraine. At the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014–2015, IDPs (internally displaced persons) appeared in Ukraine, and some people from the zone of active hostilities left for the border countries (including the Russian Federation and Belarus). Due to the occupation of the part of Donbass, it is unknown how many of them have returned to Ukraine.

The full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine on February 24, 2022 brought the problem of IDPs and forced external migrants to a new level of quality. This makes the need to record demographic events and conduct a census an urgent state problem

Even before the full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine, the problem of conducting a census acquired a state character. This was also due to the fact that as a result of the administrative-territorial reform, the registration of migrants was transferred from the State Migration Service of Ukraine to the territorial communities. The territorial communities were not ready for this either organizationally, methodically or technically. Although there was a decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to conduct a census in 2023, few people believed it. The President of Ukraine had to confirm this date several times.

The Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine got involved in the organization of the census and began to influence the methodology of the census, although the census does not belong to its functions. The influence was that the idea of conducting a census in 2023 using the data of the registers was being promoted. Simultaneously with the preparations for the 2023 census, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine began preparations for the 2030 census, which was proposed to be conducted only on the basis of registers. Differences in conducting population censuses according to the classical methodology and on the basis of registers are given in table 3.

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Table 3. Comparison of the separate stages of population censuses according to the classical methodology and on the basis of registers

	Population census according to the classical methodology	Population census based on registers
Census preparation		
Development of the census program	List of questions permitted by law	Limited by available information in the registers and its completeness
Conducting a pilot census	One of the mandatory stages	Testing of technology
Mapping and address lists	Mandatory	Not required
Census tools	Development of forms and instructions	Instructions on how to form data base
Estimation of the current population according to the registered data	Mandatory	Not required
Recruitment and training of census staff	Mandatory	Not required
Conducting a census		
Collection of information	Survey	Not required
Creating a database with primary information	Data entry, arithmetic and logical control	Automatic

Source: compiled by the author

The stages of developing census results and disseminating the results do not differ. In the intermediate version (conducting a census using registers) the basis is the classical methodology.

With the assistance of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), in December, 2020 a working group was set up at the State Statistic Service of Ukraine with the participation of international experts to develop a "Roadmap for Ukraine's transition to a census based on registers". It was planned to conduct such a census in 2030. A general conclusion of the group was that Ukraine is not ready for the 2030 census solely on the basis of registers.

The reason is the condition of the registers in Ukraine: the lack of the basic registers, incomplete registers, the lack of analysis of the consistency of the data from different registers, the lack of a single identifier. The group recommended to conduct a 2030 census using registers. At the same time, a Roadmap for Ukraine's transition to a census based on registers was developed. Due to the large number of legal, organizational, methodological and technological issues that need to be addressed in order to conduct a census based on registers, the recommendations do not contain a specific date.

Table 3 shows that the main differences between the census according to the classical methodology and on the basis of registers are in the first stages, namely: preparatory work and the formation of the database. When forming a database during the census according to the classical methodology, information is obtained directly from the population. According to Article 6 of the Law of Ukraine "On the All-Ukrainian Population Census" (Law 2000), census documentation is filled in on the basis of information received from respondents without its documentary confirmation. When conducting a census on the basis of registers, the database is formed using information from various registers according to the developed technology. Strictly speaking, a census based on registers is not a census. It combines existing information from different sources. Wherein the information in registers is the information legally (documentary) confirmed. Difference in the status of information (without documentary evidence and documented) is the main difference between censuses. This causes differences in the possibility to obtain and interpret the results (table 4).

The benefits of the register-based census are usually:

- reduction of spending per unit of population;
- quickness of the census;
- solving issues related to the refusal of the respondents to participate in the census.

However, the question arises, what information the users need: real or formal? In Ukraine, quite often the actual place of residence is different from the registered one. What information do local authorities need: the actual number of residents or formally registered? At present, issues concerning the ethnic composition of the population and language are important for Ukraine. This information

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cannot be obtained from the registers. From the existing registers it is not possible to even formally determine the composition and structure of the family.

Table 4. Status of information obtained by two types of census

Data collected during the Population Census (Article 5 of the Law)	Population Census according to the classical methodology	Population Census based on registers
Population category	Available and permanent	Legal
Sex	Correct	Correct
Age, date of birth	There may be inaccuracies	Legal
Place of birth	There may be inaccuracies	Legal
Ethnicity	Actual status	Impossible to determine
Linguistic features	Actual status	Impossible to determine
Citizenship	There may be inaccuracies	Legal
Education	There may be inaccuracies	Legal
Sources of livelihood	Actual status	Legal
Employment	Actual status	Legal
Migration activity	Actual status	Impossible to determine
Housing conditions (housing characteristics)	Actual status	Legal
Housing conditions (including family composition)	Actual status	Formal status
Composition and family relations of household members	Actual status	Formal status
Marital status	Actual status	Legal

Source: compiled by the author.

Conclusion

Given the real situation (Russian-Ukrainian war; problems with completeness and consistency of the registers; significant uncontrolled migration; the need to obtain information on the actual location of the population), in my opinion, the next census should be conducted exclusively according to the classical methodology. It is better to conduct the census 1–2 years after the end of the war, when migration processes have been stabilized.

In addition to traditional use, the data of the next census are important for the reconstruction of the demographic dynamics and determination of demographic losses. Reconstruction should consist of three stages: 2002–2014, 2015–2022, 2022 – the year of the census.

As for the procedure for conducting the next censuses, it is too early to talk about it.

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