

Numbers and Estimates in Holocaust Research: Limitations, Risks, and Prospects

Debates surrounding the Holocaust frequently involve disputes over estimates and numerical data such as, among others, the victims of concentration and extermination camps, the Jedwabne massacre, the number of Poles who denounced and murdered Jews, or conversely, those who rescued them and faced punishment as a consequence. As these issues have become deeply politicized, a cognitive dissonance has emerged: on the one hand, claims have circulated about millions of Poles involved in aiding Jews; on the other, approximately 200,000 or more Poles have been implicated in their mass murder—with each position invoking analyses and source-based data. Quantitative research aimed at verifying estimates found in both the scholarship and public discourse, and, above all, at providing data that may serve as a basis for new hypotheses, is characterized by numerous limitations. These include gaps in the source material and, at times, its limited reliability or accidental character. Moreover, numbers alone cannot explain the phenomena under examination and must be supplemented by qualitative research. In both cases, a critical approach to the sources is essential as is the setting aside of emotions, the development and application of appropriate research methods, and the creation of a space for academic debate.

In the forthcoming issue of *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* (*Holocaust: Studies and Materials*), we invite a critical reflection on estimates and numerical data in Holocaust research. Our interest extends not only to the territories of occupied Poland and Polish debates, but also to a broadly understood international perspective. We welcome contributions from scholars working on quantitative methodologies—including analysts, statisticians, and demographers—as well as researchers addressing specific issues through quantitative approaches. We also invite submissions discussing the significance of such research, its difficulties, limits, risks, and the manipulations to which quantitative findings may be subjected. We further encourage texts that synthesize and assess the debates conducted to date.

Suggested thematic areas include:

- Reflections on the sources used in the quantification of aspects surrounding the Holocaust, including the usefulness and limitations of documents produced during the war and occupation
- The role of databases and new analytical tools in deepening and expanding knowledge about the number of Holocaust victims
- Considerations on the definitions of individuals and phenomena being quantified
- Controversies surrounding the number of Holocaust victims in general and the victims of specific crimes committed during the Holocaust
- The significance of numerical data in postwar debates on the Holocaust and the involvement of Poles in rescuing or denouncing/killing Jews
- The limits of quantifying social phenomena: what can and cannot be counted or estimated?
- Blind spots in quantitative research: aspects that have yet to be studied, as well as numbers that have remained unchallenged in academic discussions
- The problem of extrapolating data from smaller samples to larger populations, or from one region to another

In addition to articles focused on the main theme of the issue, we also accept manuscripts dealing with authors' current research, including the presentation of newly discovered archival sources.

Manuscript submission timeline and procedure

May 15, 2026 – deadline for submitting article proposals, which should contain:

- an overview of the article, including the title, main theses, methodology, and sources; up to 1,800 characters
- a short biographical note about the author with information about his/her academic career, current affiliation, research interests and achievements, and a list of significant publications

The article proposal should be sent by email to the editorial board:

redakcja@holocaustresearch.pl

May 30, 2026 – deadline for the editorial board's final decisions regarding the acceptance of proposals and commissioning of articles

January 2, 2027 – deadline for submitting manuscripts through the journal's online submission system at: <https://zagladazydow.pl/index.php/zz/about/submissions>

Holocaust: Studies and Materials adheres to the [Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing – COPE \(Committee on Publication Ethics\)](#).

The editorial board of *Holocaust: Studies and Materials* follows [review procedures](#) that comply with the review guidelines set forth by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, as outlined in its brochure “Dobre praktyki w procedurach recenzyjnych w nauce” [Best practices in scientific peer review procedures], particularly:

- Manuscripts undergo a preliminary review by the editorial board. Assessment criteria include the thematic scope of the submitted manuscript (whether it fits the journal's profile), fulfillment of the formal criteria of a scholarly publication, and adherence to the recommended style guide. On the basis of a preliminary recommendation of at least two members of the editorial board, the manuscript is either accepted for further review or rejected. In either case, the author will be notified about the editorial board's decision.
- The editorial board applies the principle of double-blind review, in which reviewers do not know the author's identity and vice versa.

Guidelines for authors – <https://zagladazydow.pl/index.php/zz/zasady>

We are pleased to announce that the annually published journal *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały (Holocaust: Studies and Materials)* is indexed in many international and national citation databases, including SCOPUS and DOAJ.

This means that in the upcoming national evaluation in 2026, authors can expect a significant increase in the number of publication points, appropriate to the prestige of our journal.