



Estimating the scale of gastronomic services in Warsaw during the German Occupation 1939-1944: a review of the evidence

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Abstract. It is frequently asserted that gastronomic services (or the hospitality sector) in Warsaw during the Occupation was, paradoxically, larger than before 1st September 1939. The evidence for this assertion, by known and highly respected authors, is argued here to be internally inconsistent even though their conclusions are largely the same. This paper comes to contrary conclusions, namely, that the scale of gastronomic services was smaller than before the war, though it was still surprisingly large, given the terrible conditions existing in the city. (Obviously, in either case, the evidence one draws upon can often be circumstantial and partial). The research draws on an analysis of telephone directories published in Poland from 1930 to 1945, some of which, but not all, are some of the sources used by the authors.

Keywords: gastronomic services, estimating scale, German Occupation, review, Warsaw.

Introduction

Gastronomic services (or the hospitality sector¹) is a crucial element of the economic and social geography of any significant city and can be said to embody the cultural spirit of the city and country. This applies especially to Warsaw, and research on, and interest in, gastronomic services has been growing for some time up to the present, for example with the works of Nowicki (1992), Herbaczyński (2005), Makowiecki (2013), Mencwel & Wiśniewski (2011), and Paluszkiwicz (2022). Of growing interest is what happened to gastronomic services in Warsaw during the German Occupation 1939-1944. A surprising aspect of this, contrary to expectations, is the suggestion that gastronomic services actually grew strongly during the Occupation, and actually exceeded the scale of them before the War. Thus, in his well-known book on daily life in Warsaw during the Occupation, published in its fourth edition in 2010, Szarota (2010, p. 213 et seq.) describes how, very quickly after the capitulation of the city at the end of September 1939, gastronomic services came to life again and grew very rapidly. He describes the occupation authorities, as early as July 1940, being concerned by this, saying further growth was unnecessary, and they accordingly tried to restrain it. This phenomenon was so noticeable, and also paradoxical given the severe living conditions of most of the Polish population, that, as described by Strzeżek (2012) in her excellent study of gastronomic services in Occupation Warsaw, she quotes a courier of the London Polish Government reporting in December 1940 that “the number of [catering] establishments exceeded the pre-war number” (p. 81).

¹ In more modern discussions of the scale of a hospitality sector, it is usual to talk about it in terms of “accommodation + food + drink”. Here we talk largely about “food + drink” and make little reference to hotels.

The factors which account for this paradoxical situation of booming gastronomic services during a period of catastrophic living conditions for the bulk of the population of the city are numerous, and will not be explored in depth in this paper. The paper focuses instead on a specific issue: was the report of the London Polish Government accurate? Appearances can be deceptive. The courier of the London Polish Government obviously would not have had access to survey data. Both [Szarota \(2010\)](#) and [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) stress the difficulty of formulating estimates of the scale of gastronomic services in order to make comparisons with the prewar situation (Strzeżek uses other sources as well). But both conclude that gastronomic services were indeed more extensive during the Occupation than they were prewar. A key data resource they use are prewar and Occupation telephone directories.

The author of this paper has reasons to differ with the conclusions of these two authors on this issue, while otherwise finding their research extremely valuable. To explain these reasons, and the differing conclusions, the paper is structured as follows. First, given the centrality of the telephone directories as a source of evidence, the next section provides a background to the telephone system of Warsaw and its growth from 1930, the first year for which directories are regularly available. This will provide a statistical base within which to place the subsequent presentation of alternative estimates of the scale of gastronomic services in Warsaw. Second, the next section outlines the findings of [Szarota \(2010\)](#) and [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) leading to their conclusion that the scale of gastronomic services in Warsaw was greater during the Occupation than before the War. Third, the approach the author developed for estimating the scale of gastronomic services is outlined and the results presented. Fourth, the author's findings are set alongside of Szarota and Strzeżek and the similarities and differences discussed. Finally, the paper then concludes.

The Telephone System and Telephone Directories in Warsaw from 1930

The development of the phone system, and the parallel telephone directories for it, tell us a lot about Poland in the last years of peace, and what changed under the Occupation. The upper reaches of Polish society did not constitute a particularly large world, and everyone knew, or knew of, everyone else, especially in Warsaw. Private telephone ownership would be relatively high in this sector of society. This aspect of life in late 1930's Poland, especially Warsaw, is presented formally in histories (e.g. [Ericsson, 2005](#)), but is more graphically illustrated by leafing through the telephone directories of the period. They indicate that while Poland, compared to its more developed neighbours like Germany and France, was in general terms clearly not nearly so well developed, nevertheless, in the metropolitan centres, especially Warsaw, the telephone directories indicated the existence of a diverse and sophisticated society and economy growing rapidly until the start of the war, with everything then changing abruptly.

From 1930/31, you can gather for Warsaw some nine directories stretching to 1942/43, after which things unravelled, and no more are available until November 1945². But those we have tell us so much, though this requires laborious analysis of the raw documents. So far as the author is aware, there is limited data available on the growth of the system,

² The directories are listed in the References.

especially in terms of the numbers of private telephone subscribers. To overcome this, estimates were developed by taking an interval sample of 30 pages from each directory and counting the number of private subscribers on each of the sampled pages. It was then possible to gross up from this to get an overall estimate with confidence intervals. Thus, Table 1 shows the approximate number of private subscriber telephone numbers (of individuals and private businesses and organisations) in Warsaw. Central and local public authorities are not included. The 95% confidence interval (CI – with finite population correction) around the central estimate is expressed in percentage terms. Thus for 1938/39, for instance, there is only one chance in twenty that the number of private phone subscribers falls outside the range 64,638 to 67,411.

We can say in summary that, between 1930/31 and 1939/40, the number of private subscriber phone connections grew by 6.3% per annum on average, reaching almost about 73,000 by the time of the outbreak of war. There was then a catastrophic fall of 87% to much less than 10,000 private phone connections, recorded in the first Occupation telephone directory of March 1940, building back up slowly, and not reaching 1930/31 levels until 1942/43, significantly reflecting an influx of German civilians and businesses. The catastrophic fall was due to removal of the Jews from the directory, the incarceration or murder of the intelligentsia, the bombing out of businesses and residences in September 1939, the unaffordability of phones with job losses, flight out of Poland, and so on. Within this general background, we can now consider the scale of gastronomic services before and during the Occupation.

Table 1. Private Telephone Numbers, Warsaw 1930/31 to 1942/43 (approximate number not including public authorities)

Directory	Under Aegis of	Central Estimate	95% CI in% +/-	Directory Pages	"Yellow" Pages
1930/31	Poland	42,149	2.6	299	86
1936/37	Poland	51,975	3.5	330	39
1937/38	Poland	60,563	2.8	386	50
1938/39	Poland	66,025	2.1	417	52
1939/40	Poland	72,961	2.1	468	55
Mar-40	Germany	9,377	3.6	71	37D & 37P
Oct-40	Germany	25,370	7.7	181	16
May-41	Germany	32,475	3.1	213	27
1942/43	Germany	47,030	6.8	199	N/A

Notes: 1. No significance should be attached to the literal number (central estimate) of phone numbers calculated as a statistical estimate. 2. 95% CL is the +/- 95% sampling confidence limit expressed as a percentage of the central estimate. 3. Directory pages is the number of "Part 1" (private) pages in each directory. It does not include the listings for outlying towns and villages which are now part of post war metropolitan Warsaw. 4. The correlation between phone numbers and directory pages is quite close ($r = 0.96$), but an estimate of the number of phone numbers is more illuminating. 5. "Yellow" pages are the classified section of the directories arranged by commercial sectors and professions. In March 1940, these were duplicated in German (D) and Polish (P).

Source: individual telephone directories for each year cited (see Annex).

The Findings of Szarota and Strzeżek on the Scale of Gastronomic Services in Warsaw

Szarota (2010, p. 216) says:

„Unfortunately, today we do not have data on the number of all catering establishments in occupied Warsaw. However, I decided to use an auxiliary source for this purpose, which is the telephone books issued by the occupying authorities. Of course, it does not contain the names and addresses of all the establishments, but it is nevertheless very interesting material. It turns out that on 15 August 1940, 61 bars, 26 restaurants, 29 cafés and 41 pastry shops were open in Warsaw (these are, of course, establishments with telephones). Two years later, as of 1 August 1942, there were 552 restaurants and bars, 233 cafés and 121 patisseries in the city. It is reasonable to assume that Warsaw had never had such a strong gastronomic ‘base’ before.”

Szarota (2010) does not explicitly refer to prewar figures, but the final sentence above clearly implies that he feels that the scale of gastronomic services during the Occupation was greater than before the War. Strzeżek (2012, p. 81) also talks about the difficulty of estimating the scale of gastronomic services in Warsaw. She says it was difficult:

„to give the number of establishments [because of] the ephemerality of the Warsaw catering market – the constant emergence of new establishments and the closing of those making losses.”

On the same page, as we noted above, she quotes a courier of the London Polish Government reporting in December 1940 that *„the number of [catering] establishments exceeded the pre-war number”*, and finds support for this in the evidence provided by Warsaw telephone directories, quoting the data as given in Table 2.

Strzeżek (2012, p. 81) adds further:

„For comparison: List of subscribers to the Warsaw telephone network of the Polish joint-stock telephone company in Warsaw in 1937/1938 lists the addresses and telephones of 51 bars, 32 pastry shops, 26 cafés, and 23 restaurants. Summarizing all the lists, it is easy to see that the number of restaurants equipped with telephones, already in the first year of the war, exceeded that of the years 1937-1938 and in fact grew steadily.”

So Strzeżek (2012) quite explicitly says the gastronomic sector was larger during the occupation than before the War. If we add the data presented above published separately by Strzeżek and Szarota, but close together chronologically, into a single table, we get Table 3.

While some of the numbers where the two sources are quoting data for the same year (1940 and 1942) are reasonably similar, some are very different, especially for 1942, where Szarota's figures are much higher (in total, over three times higher). A further problem is that the dates of the directories may be inconsistent, or possibly wrong. There certainly were 1937/38, and 1939/40 directories, and these would probably have been published about mid-year 1937 and 1939 and were Polish publications. In 1940, two directories were published by the Occupation authorities, in March 1940, and October 1940 (according to the dates on the covers – see listing of directories in the References). Szarota (2010) was probably using the October 1940 directory for his figures, where it says on p.1 that the directory records the state of the system on 15th August 1940 (that is, the Octo-

ber 1940 directory included all subscribers notified to it up to 15th August 1940). [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) was also probably using the same directory, as the individual data items quoted by both for this year are of the right order of magnitude, though Strzeżek's total is almost 17% higher than Szarota's.

An overall problem in looking at this data is that there is no indication of how the data was compiled, by hand/eye, or machine aided. One suspects it was a manual exercise, very slow and prone to error. This is important, as inspection of the directories indicates that there can be much variation in the way establishments are listed. They may indeed just be listed discretely as a bar, or restaurant, or kawiarnia, or cukiernia, but very frequently there are multiple entries, such as bar/restaurant, kawiarnia/bar, cukiernia/bar, etc, so there is a certain flexibility in nomenclature. Then there are other types of establishments not listed in Table 3 but are listed by [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) on an individual basis for the whole wartime period up to the Warsaw Uprising (that is, until 1st August 1944). A general problem is one of the size of individual establishments: a directory entry may refer to an establishment that has capacity for only a few people, or one that can accommodate hundreds (note that before the war, Café Club at Nowy Swiat 15 had about 100 employees ([Paluszkiewicz, 2022](#), p. 204). Its capacity to cope with a high number of customers would be correspondingly great, especially as the premises were very large.

Table 2. Number of Warsaw cafés, restaurants, bars, and confectioneries in 1939-1942 equipped with a telephone

Lokal	1939/1940	1940	1941	1942
Cafés/Kawiarnie	56	39	64	76
Restaurants/Restauracje	36	42	34	46
Bars/Bary	78	66	85	102
Cake shops/Cukiernie	55	36	49	49
Total	225	183	232	273

Note: *Lokal* means "premises" defined by type below in the first column to correspond with the table title. Source: Based on the 1939/1940 census of subscribers to the telephone network of the City of Warsaw and the official [telephone books for the General Government](#) issued by the German Eastern Post Office in 1940-1942.

Table 3. Numbers of Gastronomic Establishments Listed in Warsaw Telephone Directories by Strzeżek and Szarota 1937/38 to 1942

Directory	Listed by	Café	Bar	Restaurant	Cake shop	Total
1937/38	Strzeżek	26	51	23	32	132
1939/40	Strzeżek	56	78	36	55	225
1940	Strzeżek	39	66	42	36	183
15 th Aug 1940	Szarota	29	61	34	41	157
1941	Strzeżek	64	85	27	49	225
1942	Strzeżek	76	102	46	49	273
15 th Aug 1942	Szarota	233	Inc in rest's	552	121	906

Source: based on data quoted by [Szarota \(2010, p. 216\)](#) and [Strzeżek \(2012, p. 81\)](#).

Another feature of gastronomic services during the Occupation, which would not appear in the directories, is that establishments were largely segregated. The occupation authorities tried to keep the racial groups apart: they worried about Germans mixing with Poles, even though German soldiers showed a definite inclination to visit Polish establishments despite the designations “Nur für Deutsche” (Only for Germans) and “Nur für Polen” (Only for Poles). (Of course, the establishments in the Ghetto from 15th November 1940 – when the Ghetto was closed – were, in theory, only for Jews).

It is hard to give definitive figures for the numbers of individuals involved in each ethnic group, as the composition was constantly shifting during the Occupation, but Bartosiewicz (2008, p. 302; p. 509) gives some details for 1942 and 1943, to which we may add figures quoted by Szarota (2010, pp. 59-75) and Lehnstaedt (2016, pp. 20-21) (Table 4).

One will note in Table 4 that in May 1943 there should have been, according to the pronouncements of the Occupation authorities, no Jews at all in Warsaw, but many were, in fact, hiding outside the former Ghetto area (see Paulsson, 2002, p. 229 and p. 231). The population of Warsaw in May 1943 in Table 4 seems rather low, given that before the War the population was about 1,300,000. Of course, about a third of these were Jews, who had to move into the Ghetto before 15th November 1941. The population of Warsaw soon after the closing of the Ghetto may have been much higher than its prewar level in the first half of 1941, with the population swollen by additional Jews from outside Warsaw transferred there, plus all the German occupiers, civilian and military³. The ethnic composition of the population was reflected in the occupation geography of the city: apart from the Ghetto for Jews (called the Jewish residential area by the Germans), the Germans established a German residential area south of the city centre, while the Poles had whatever the occupiers did not want. Of course, the population of the Ghetto rapidly declined with starvation, extermination in Treblinka, and the liquidation of the Ghetto after the Uprising, so the total population in the Table 4 reflects events. But the table will be useful for the ensuing discussion on segregation of gastronomic establishments.

We can make a table of these overall listings of gastronomic establishments for “Only for Poles”, “Only for Germans” (as Strzeżek lists them separately), and establishments in the Ghetto. The data here is not derived only from telephone directories, but also from

Table 4. Ethnic composition of the population of Warsaw in May 1943 after the Ghetto Uprising

Ethnic group	Number
Poles	975,000
German civilians (including dependents)	30,000
German military (Wehrmacht)	40,000
SS and German police	8,000
Foreigners	1,900
Jews	28,000
Approximate Total Population	1,082,900

Source: Bartosiewicz (2008), Szarota (2010), Lehnstaedt (2016) and Paulsson (2002).

³ Engelking & Leociak (2009, p. 49) quote various estimates of the population of the Ghetto, but one by the Germans for March 1941 is the highest at 490,000. If this were true, the population of Warsaw then was more like 1.5 mn.

multiple other sources (e.g. newspaper advertisements). Equally, some may have existed for short periods only, or for the whole war (Table 5).

To avoid any confusion, the row identifiers of Table 5 are given in Polish, German and English (Table 6). Directories published during the Occupation used both Polish and German.

Table 5. Numbers of Gastronomic Establishments by Type and Ethnicity Listed in Warsaw in Various Sources for the Period 1939-44

Type of venue	"Only for Poles"	"Only for Germans"	For Jews in the Ghetto	Total
Kawiarnia	79	17	41	137
Bar	158	36	2	196
Winiarnia	4	6	0	10
Restauracja	149	59	10	218
Jadłodajnia	5	0	0	5
Cukiernia	67	3	16	86
Paszteciarnia	13	0	0	13
Herbaciarnia	0	2	0	2
Kantyny Wehrmachtu	0	5	0	5
Bar mleczny	0	6	0	6
Herbaciarnia	0	0	2	2
Miejsce niepubliczne	0	0	22	22
Ogród/ogródek	0	0	3	3
Total	475	134	96	705

Sources: for Poles and Germans – [Strzeżek \(2012, pp. 207-226\)](#), for Jews – [Engelking & Leociak \(2009, pp. 634-640\)](#).

Table 6. Linguistic equivalents of row identifiers

Polish	English	German
Kawiarnia	Coffee house, café	Kaffeehaus
Bar	Bar	Bar
Winiarnia	Wine bar	Weinlokal, weinstube
Restauracja	Restaurant	Restaurant, Gaststatte
Jadłodajnia	Eating house	Spiesehaus
Cukiernia	Cake shop	Konditorei
Paszteciarnia	Pastery shop, snack bar	Konditorei
Herbaciarnia	Tea house	Teestube
Kantyny Wehrmachtu	Army canteen	Wehrmachtskantinen
Bar mleczny	Milk bar	Milchbar
Miejsce niepubliczne/Scene – in Ghetto, social gatherings in a private residence		
Ogród/Ogródek/Garden – in Ghetto, a garden, usually attached to a café		

English equivalents extracted from dictionaries.

Source: Polish and German terms as used in [Szarota \(2010\)](#) and [Strzeżek \(2010\)](#).

One can see immediately that the total of the first two columns in Table 5 comes to just 609 (the number of separate establishments that [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) identified from all sources for the whole Occupation), which is less for the whole period of the Occupation than [Szarota \(2010\)](#) counted in what he calls the August 1942 directory, which is presumably, as we said above, the same as the 1942/43 directory (according to the cover title). In addition, the table *de facto* tells us, as far as was possible (given the fraught period), how many establishments existed at one time or other during the Occupation but cannot tell us how many existed at some particular point in time (as the directories can)⁴.

Now, counting gastronomic establishments (or any type of address) over several years is inherently error prone if you are doing it manually, as there are just so many pages and addresses to sort through (Table 1 would suggest there are about 1,000 pages and 230,000 addresses for the more limited number of years they covered, still nevertheless a substantial task). So [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) and [Szarota \(2010\)](#) would be bound to differ in some respects, but not by as much as they do in 1942.

A New Approach to Estimating the Scale of the Gastronomic Sector In Warsaw Before And During the Occupation 1930-1942

The inconsistencies between the analyses of data quoted by [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) and [Szarota \(2010\)](#), and the limited use by them of the available directories, suggested the need for a fresh attempt to estimate the scale of gastronomic services in Warsaw during the Occupation. To do this, the author used the digital versions of the files created to compile the data in Table 1 and converted them to OCR PDF files, so that any item desired could be searched for in seconds within a whole directory. This allows the compilation of another table for the period the author was interested in (1930/31 to 1942/43) which may be compared with the tables above for the work of [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) and [Szarota \(2010\)](#) (Table 7).

At first sight, the ability to have digitised files with OCR (optical character recognition) would mean we can simply, for instance, type in “bar” and the software will produce how often this occurs in an instant (though we should not underestimate the substantial effort and computer manipulations which were required to get to this stage: see the Annex). We, however, encounter an initial problem, in that the use of descriptors like bar/restaurant, etc means that the same establishment may be counted twice, first as a bar, then as a restaurant. Then there is the problem that OCR does not always work so well on old, printed matter, as the clarity of the text may be poor (from initial poor print quality, and then page wear from use), so cases may be missed by the OCR software. This may be compensated by visual checking where there are clusters of bars, for instance. Overall, the Table 7 has the advantage of having a long time sequence going back to 1930, and it seems to proceed from directory to directory relatively consistently.

⁴ It is remarkable that the number of Jewish gastronomic establishments in the Ghetto was not far short of the number of “Nur für Deutsche” establishments (96 *vis a vis* 134), but, of course, the Jewish population of the Ghetto, at its peak, vastly exceeded the number of Germans. Though most of the Ghetto establishments probably had short lives, some were quite large and were probably the equal of several “on the other side”, and there were well known ones, especially Café Sztuka, where Władysław Szpilman and Wiera Gran performed together (as depicted in Polanski’s 2002 film “The Pianist”, though Gran is not featured as Szpilman does not mention her in his memoir).

Table 7. Numbers of Gastronomic Establishments by Type Listed in *Warsaw Telephone Directories 1930/31 to 1942* (based on OCR scans of digitised individual telephone directories)

Directory	Kawiarnie	Café	Club	Bar	Winiarnie	Restauracje	Jadłodajnie	Cukiernie	Pasztecianie	Bar mleczny	Herbaciarnie	Hotel	Dancing	Total
1930/31	87	7	27	88	1	68	4	97	6	0	0	18	2	405
1935/36	124	5	42	167	5	67	8	98	16	1	16	27	7	583
1937/38	128	24	76	135	11	111	16	157	24	4	27	19	13	745
1938/39	157	22	70	152	9	139	16	166	35	3	36	26	19	850
1939/40	135	33	73	165	13	51	12	118	24	1	22	25	10	682
Mar-40	23	7	2	49	1	33	1	31	9	0	1	20	3	177
Oct-40	59	12	4	104	0	53	0	101	7	0	0	36	3	376
May-41	53	97	5	44	1	27	0	84	6	0	0	39	0	356
1942	11	1	6	163	3	33	0	65	7	0	2	38	0	329

Comparison of New Estimates with Previous Estimates

Ideally, this table might clarify the discrepancies between [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) and [Szarota \(2010\)](#) and check the observation (made by both) that there were more gastronomic establishments operating in Warsaw during the war than before the war. This is easier said than done, as the categorisation of establishments varies between authors.

A possible way round this is to get all the data presented on the same basis, in terms of the grouping of establishments. A general issue is that the nomenclature of bar, restaurant, kawiarnia, etc is fairly artificial, as none of these terms are defined anywhere, and much may be down to the owner's inclinations when applying to the authorities for a directory entry, as well as the traditions surrounding a particular establishment. Hence, one can suggest a threefold classification consisting of kawiarnia/coffee house, restaurant, and cake shop/cukiernia. These classifications would group establishments as follows (in Table 8), with linguistic alternatives (used in text searches as directories during the occupation were bilingual).

The hotel and dancing columns of Table 7 are excluded, though clearly many hotels would include bars. The data on the Ghetto is excluded to maintain comparability with Szarota and Strzeżek. We are now able to compile Table 8 which includes all the data from the three sources on a comparable basis.

The table is interesting but is subject to qualifications. Firstly, an obvious one is that summarising the gastronomic sector in terms of simple numbers of establishments by category takes no account, as we have said above, of variation in the size of establishments. An establishment like Café Club, which employed about 100 people before the war, would, as a single establishment, be larger, in terms of the number

Table 8. Grouping of Gastronomic Establishments

Kawiarnia/coffee house	Restaurant	Cukiernia/cake shop
kawiarnia/coffee house, café/ kaffeehaus; bar mleczny/milk bar/milchbar; klub/club; herbaciarnia/tea house/teestube.	restauracja/restaurant/ bar, winiarnia/wine bar/weinlokal/ weinstube; jadłodajnia/eatery or eating house/ spiesehaus	cukiernia/cake shop/konditorei pasztecziarnia/pastry shop, snack bar/konditorei

Source: derived from Table 6.

of people it catered for, and its turnover, than the aggregation of dozens, or even hundreds, of smaller establishments.

Secondly, we do not know how many establishments in each year existed without having a telephone. During the occupation years, having a telephone number recorded your existence, and left you vulnerable to sudden searches by the security forces, so there was a perverse incentive not to have a phone⁵. On the other hand, it might have been difficult for Poles to get a phone to service a going gastronomic establishment⁶. There is no way of knowing if the effects of these factors had a significant effect on the overall number of phone subscribers which we use as a proxy for measuring the size of the gastronomic services sector.

Third, another qualification is that we have an incomplete idea of how the different data sources were compiled. For the part of the table compiled by the author, one can say how he did it, but that gives only a partial insight into its accuracy. One could automatically count the number of entries which contained key words, but one could not account for cases where an entry contained two or more of the key words. So, an element of double counting of the number of establishments may have occurred, but we cannot say how much double counting. On the other hand, this is counterbalanced to an unknown extent by missing cases where the scanning has not been accurate enough to pick out the key words. Ideally, every entry (name/address) should be inspected to eliminate inaccuracies, but this is physically impossible. Table 1 indicates that the directories for the 1930-1942 period cover about 408,000 directory entries spread over about 2,600 pages of closely printed directory. Having said that, the pattern of data summarised in Table 9 of the data compiled by the author has a plausible progression and consistency, even if the gross totals may not be strictly accurate. The total number of establishments with phones rose from 385 in 1930/31 to 805 in 1938/39, a compound annual rate of growth of almost 9.7%, though perhaps not that remarkable in a dynamic metropolitan economy of about 1.3 million people. Interestingly, in the 1939/40 directory (probably published about mid-1939) the total falls back to 649, making one wonder if gastronomic entrepreneurs were making their bets on the likelihood of war, and voting with their feet.

⁵ The possibility of a raid by security forces on a gastronomic establishment would have existed in the minds of a significant proportion of the population of Warsaw who would have had direct experience of it from the Tsarist police before World War One. [Grzelak \(1965, p. 107\)](#) describes this in his memoir of working in the *Udziałowa* (the precursor of *Café Club*).

⁶ [Dłużniewska \(1965, p. 130\)](#) notes in her memoir that: “At the end of 1942, no Pole could get permission to install a telephone”. The 1942/43 directory would have been published in mid-1942, so may have avoided some restrictions on Poles applying for new phones.

Table 9. Summary Data on the Scale of the Gastronomic Sector in Warsaw 1930-1944

Directory	Source	Kawiarnia etc	Restauracja etc	Cukiernia etc	Total
1930/31	EJ	121	161	103	385
1935/36	EJ	188	247	114	549
1937/38	EJ	259	283	181	723
1937/38	STRZ	26	74	32	132
1938/39	EJ	288	316	201	805
1939/40	EJ	266	241	142	649
1939/40	STRZ	56	114	55	225
Mar 1940	EJ	33	84	40	157
Oct 1940	EJ	75	157	108	340
Oct 1940	STRZ	39	108	36	183
Oct 1940	SZA	29	95	41	165
May 1941	EJ	155	72	90	317
1941	STRZ	64	112	49	225
1942/43	EJ	20	199	72	291
1942	STRZ	76	158	49	283
1942	SZA	233	552	121	906
1939-44	STRZ (P)	79	316	80	475
1939-44	STRZ (D)	25	104	3	132
1939-44	STRZ (P+D)	104	420	83	607

Notes: EJ – data from analysis of directories by Judge; SZA – data from analysis of directories by Szarota (2010); STRZ – data from analysis of directories by Strzeżek (2012). Data for 1939-44 is based on any available source including directories. (P) indicates establishments for Poles only, (D) for Germans only, and (P+D) gives combined totals. Establishments could be open for a short time, or for the whole of the 1939-44 period.

Source: aggregation of data from Tables 3 and 7.

This possibility emerges even more strongly if one compares the number of subscribers with the number of catering establishments over the period considered, using only the data compiled by the author (to maintain comparability) (Table 10).

By comparison, the totals quoted by [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) for 1937/38 and 1939/40 in Table 3 are much lower than those quoted by the author (132 versus 723 for 1937/38, and 649 versus 225 for 1939/40). These figures by [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) seem exceedingly low for a growing metropolitan economy of 1.3 million people. Even the figures quoted by the author are not that high and may include an element of double counting (balanced to an unknown extent by scanning errors).

Moving on to the Occupation period, the author quotes from his work a total of 157 establishments with phones in March 1940. This seems plausible just a few months into the Occupation, with dislocation, destruction, population flight and removal of the Jews. Six months later in October 1940, this has more than doubled to 340. By comparison, [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) quotes 183, and [Szarota \(2010\)](#) 165 (Table 3). These figures are close together, and roughly half what the author quotes. The reason for the difference is not clear, maybe some double counting on the author's part, but overall, they are not far apart.

Table 10. Numbers of Warsaw phone subscribers and gastronomic establishments 1930/31-1942/43

Year	Phones	%AAC	GE's	%AAC
1930/31	42,149	—	385	—
1935/36	51,975	4.3	549	7.4
1937/38	60,563	7.9	723	14.8
1938/39	66,025	9.0	805	11.3
1939/40	72,961	10.5	649	-19.4
Mar-40	9,377	-87.1	157	-88.1
Oct-40	25,370	632.0	340	368.0
May-41	32,475	44.8	317	-10.0
1942/43	47,030	37.3	291	-7.1

Notes: Phones – private phone subscribers; GE's – gastronomic establishments; %AAC – annualised average rate of change over the previous Phones or GE's figure. For the years 1930/31 to 1938/39 the correlation between the number of private telephone subscribers and the number of gastronomic establishments is 0.9989. Source: derived from Tables 1 and 9.

In 1941 the author quotes 341, and [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) quotes 225, narrowing somewhat. In 1942/43, the author quotes 291, and [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) 283, nearly the same, but [Szarota \(2010\)](#) quotes 906, highly implausible, exceeding by 50% the 607 establishments in the combined list (for Poles and for Germans) compiled from all sources (not just telephone directories) by [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) for the whole Occupation period 1939-44 (in the final line of Table 9). It is not clear where [Szarota \(2010\)](#) got 906 from, but it exceeds any figure, even for the prewar period, but it is on this basis he says that the gastronomic sector was larger under the Occupation even than prewar.

The problem is that the 1942/43 directory was published probably in mid-1942, while there were still more than another two years to run before the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising. For this period there are no statistics. But it is possible that the totals [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#) and the author quotes for 1942/43 grew significantly in the following two years until 31st July 1944. But even if this happened, it is most likely that the total would still be far short of the figure quoted by [Szarota \(2010\)](#) for 1942. On the other hand, it is also possible that the total number of establishments started to fall off after 1942, as they did in the case of the 1939/40 directory. After the fall of Stalingrad in January 1943, the writing was on the wall for the Germans, and the advance of the Red Army to Warsaw was only a matter of time. Equally, the German security forces in 1943 and 1944 became even more repressive in Warsaw. It is highly likely that owners of gastronomic establishments were more inclined, at the margin, to liquidate an increasingly risky activity, and also think very hard before starting new ones.

We get a deeper insight into what was happening if we plot the author's data in time series fashion. Looking at the data as raw data takes no account of the fact that the telephone directories were not published at equal intervals. The gaps between directories might be a few years, or as little as six months. Presenting the data in visual time series fashion gives a much more illuminating impression of what was going on in the Warsaw gastronomic services sector. Hence, Figure 1 presents the phone subscriber data and the gastronomic establishment data separately on the same graph. The phone subscriber

data is measured on the left-hand vertical axis, while the gastronomic establishment data is measured on the righthand vertical axis. Time in months is measured along the horizontal axis, from 1 for January 1930 to 156 for December 1942.

The graph brings out several features which are less easily seen if one just looks at the data in Table 10. Firstly, from 1930 to 1938, the subscriber data and the gastronomic establishments data track each other closely, but diverge in 1939, where the subscriber data seems to continue its upward path, but the gastronomic data drops off sharply. The data points are joined by straight lines for presentation purposes, but for both data sets for 1930 to 1938, the data seems to be slightly curvilinear upwards. This continues for subscribers for 1939. In fact, a second order polynomial (quadratic regression) fits the phone subscriber data very well for 1930-1939 ($R^2 = 0.9995$), and also for 1930-1938 for gastronomic establishments ($R^2 = 0.9983$). The reason the latter R^2 for gastronomic establishments is based on one year less (that is, it does not include 1939) is obviously that the number of gastronomic establishments dips sharply downwards, from 805 in 1938 to 649 in 1939. As suggested earlier, this is likely due to entrepreneurs guessing correctly that war was imminent, and they either exited the sector, or did not enter it in the first place. The scale of this dip is probably much higher. If the growth in the number of gastronomic establishments had continued into 1939 at the same rate as during 1930-1938, the total number of gastronomic establishments in Warsaw would have grown to about 922, an increase of 117 over 1938. So, the actual number of gastronomic establishments recorded in the 1939-1940 directory was 30% less than would have been expected if war had not broken out.

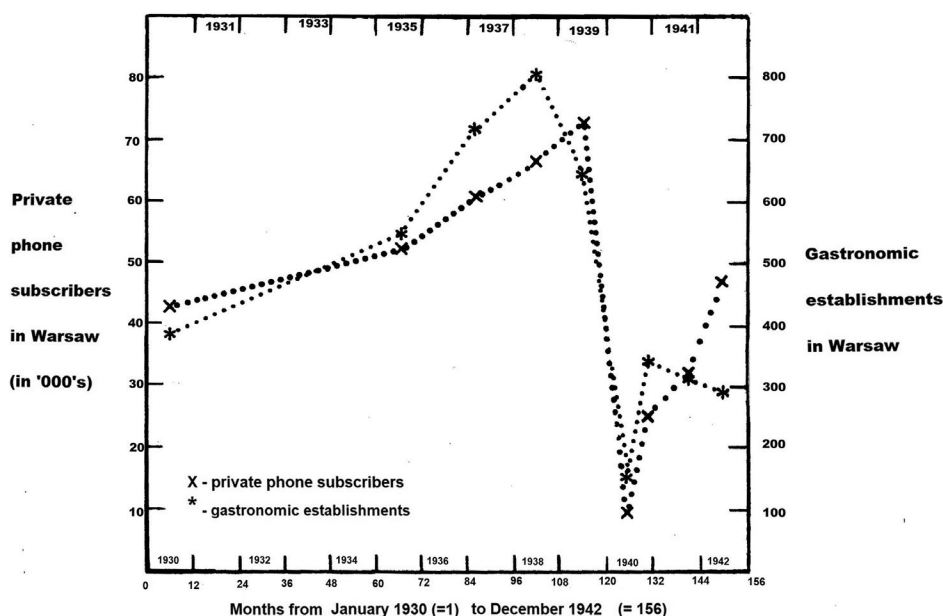


Fig. 1. Time series plot of Warsaw private telephone subscribers and Warsaw gastronomic establishments, 1930-1942

Source: compiled from the data in Table 10.

If we look at the part of the graph covering the period of the occupation up to 1942, we can notice that after the catastrophic drops in the number of private subscriber phones, and the number of gastronomic establishments recorded in the March 1940 directory, the pattern seems to mimic in a way what happened with the 1939-1940 directory. Things recover quickly by October 1940, though the number of phones and gastronomic establishments are still well down on prewar figures. But even though the number of private subscriber phones continues to increase up to July 1942, the number of gastronomic establishments falls in 1941, and further in 1942. While the influx of German personnel may explain the continued growth of private phone numbers, even where restrictions were placed on Poles, the decline in the overall number of gastronomic establishments so soon in the War may reflect underlying fears of German and Polish gastronomic entrepreneurs about the future after the start of Barbarossa on 21 June 1941, compounded by the failure of the 1941 offensive against Russia to achieve victory by Christmas 1941, all suggested caution. Numbers continued to decline to 1942-43, and the publication of the 1942-43 directory in about July 1942 was the same month as the start of the Battle of Stalingrad, and only six months before the German surrender there. There are no documentary sources to trace how the long decline in German fortunes in the next year and a half reflected itself in the experience of the gastronomic sector in Warsaw. It could have gone in several directions.

One must reiterate how partial and inadequate are our impressions of the scale of the Warsaw gastronomic sector during the Occupation. While one may disagree with the conclusions of [Szarota \(2010\)](#) and [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#), one must recognise the difficulty of drawing hard conclusions about an ill-documented and shifting area of activity. While simple numbers of gastronomic establishments is a highly imperfect measure of scale, one also needs to recall a dimension which falls outside the scope of this paper. Namely, the function of the gastronomic services sector during the Occupation was very much different to what it was before the War. The Occupying authority used it to entertain a rotating mass of military personnel on leave from the Front. For the Poles, their part of the sector was used for a much wider range of activities than before the War. The Occupiers wished to suppress and corrupt the culture and cultural life of the country by allowing only debased and frivolous activities mixed in with alcohol and pornography. The gastronomic services sector became a substitute for the prewar theatre and music sector, facilitating performances which would not be allowed in the German controlled theatres and actors' organisations. Thus the sector offered an escape from grim reality, and an avenue for the dissemination of forbidden and secret information, and underground data gathering. While bars and coffee houses could be dangerous places to be found in, as the war progressed, it was more and more dangerous simply to be out in the open on the street. Thus, the last eighteen months before the Uprising may have got more frenetic with an expanding gastronomic services sector to the end, at least in the central area. This theme is very well described by [Szarota \(2010\)](#) and [Strzeżek \(2012\)](#).

Some idea of what possible scenarios might have existed could be indicated by further analysis of the data. The digitisation of the directories should facilitate the processing of the data to yield more indication of change in the location of gastronomic establishments through time in the sector, and the degree of stability/instability. The key to this may require the development of software tools to allow fast data processing and mapping.

Conclusions

On the balance of the evidence available, it seems unlikely that the gastronomic services sector in Warsaw was larger than prewar, but whether it was or was not, it seems safe to assume that, despite the conditions under which it operated, there were very good reasons for it still to be large, though fulfilling a very different function than it did before the war.

Unless otherwise stated, the sources of tables and figures are the author, based on his own research.

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Annex: Warsaw Telephone Directories 1930-1945

Telephone directories generally are key resources for historical and genealogical research for periods where alternative documentary resources are scarce, or non-existent. This applies very much to Warsaw for the Occupation period. Also, several directories are available to allow data series to extend back to the prewar period allowing the monitoring of trends and comparisons over a longer period. While a directory exists for Warsaw even for 1914, this paper has focussed on directories from 1930 where suitable online files are readily available. Polish telephone directories are available from many internet sites, but it is not always easy to download complete digitised directories.

For the purposes of this paper, the author was fortunate that all the directories used were available from one source, namely the Mazowsze Digital Library (Mazowsze Biblioteka Cyfrowa (MBC) at: <https://mbc.cyfrowemazowsze.pl>). The process of setting up a data base which allows digital searches is nevertheless fairly time consuming. Files for a directory are typically downloaded as single page DJVU files. Each page is then converted to a PDF file. The PDF files for a single directory are joined together to make a single file, and software such as Adobe Acrobat convert the PDF files to be text searchable. The process is fundamentally simple, though very time consuming even using powerful computers, as thousands of files must be converted and aggregated into single documents.

The titles of the directories are given in the References with publication dates (exact or estimated). During the Occupation, directories were in both Polish and German, so both titles are given, though for some the title on the cover was given only in German. The first postwar directory from November 1945 is listed, though this is not available from the Mazowsze Digital Library but from the National Library of Poland. It was not used in the paper as it was compiled and published within six months of the end of the war, when Warsaw was largely in ruins along with its gastronomic services sector, and so the directory was very thin and mainly oriented to the needs of official organisations.