

Russians in Lithuania According to the 1897 and 1923 Censuses: Comparative Analysis

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ABSTRACT: This article analyses essential factors for the rate of Russians and their territorial distribution in independent Lithuania in 1918–1940. The first general population census of the Russian Empire in 1897 and the first general population census of the Republic of Lithuania in 1923 are the two statistical sources that underlie the comparative analysis. Rather than summarising major statistical figures of the censuses, the priority of this research is to comprehensively reveal how the particular numbers came about and how census categories *and* figures were constructed. The authors deliberately took into account the trends of the political construction historically occurring during the general censuses. What are the interests of the power institutions during the census? With an eye on this question, the article scrutinises the criteria for constructing the ethnic (and partially religious) categories in the multinational and mono-ideological Russian Empire on one hand, and in the Lithuanian-dominated nation-state of Lithuania, on the other. What was the position of the ‘Russian’ category on the list of the ethnic categories in the 1897 and 1923 censuses? This research reveals the link between the census results and the expectations of the state authorities.

Key words: POPULATION CENSUS, CONSTRUCTION OF CATEGORIES, RUSSIAN POPULATION, TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF RUSSIANS.

Censuses as a political construct

Census data serves as a basis for nearly all demography-related research in contemporary historiography and social sciences (including historical demography). This article, which focuses on the case of Russians in the Republic of Lithuania in 1918–1940, is no exception. Statistics on the rates of the Russian population and their distribution by place of residence constituted the core material for the analysis. The results of the first general census of Lithuania in 1923 should be named as the main source (*Lietuvos gyventojai* 1923). The data of the first general census of the Russian Empire in 1897 was also broadly used in order to reveal the dynamics of the demographic rates of Russians in Lithuania in a wider perspective (*Первая всеобщая перепись... 1904*).

In this article we consider the censuses not only as a factual source for demographic research, but as a particular political and ideological construct reflecting the then-existing structure of the society. The authors find it impor-

tant to consider political prerequisites of holding censuses and their role in the state policy when analysing and interpreting census data. Motives of data systematisation must be also kept in mind as relevant for the censuses of both 1897 and 1923. What stood behind them were not the mere figures of a group's rate, distribution, social status or education level, but a particular image of the society constructed by the power institutions interested in a specific outcome. It was a decision by the authorities as to what criteria for population categorisation should be considered important or not.

The historiography of some countries has researched and theorised the political construction of census, but realising the scope of the problem, we are not going beyond the goal to identify the crucial primary elements of the political construction during the 1897 and 1923 censuses. Nevertheless it is worth mentioning that the American political scientist Jacob Murray Edelman used a metaphor of political spectacle to describe the concept of "political construct".¹ Political spectacles may vary in their ideology or tools of affecting society in different historical ages. Censuses have been a device in the hands of the state authorities for more than a century, assisting them in creating images of the society's socio-ethnic structure. It does not mean the censuses are of no actual value as sources of information about the society's composition. One should take notice of external factors that determine their content. Any generalisations considering the societal situation of particular ethnic groups (in our case – Russians) are to be formulated only once these factors are assessed.

The history of general censuses is rather recent. It was only in the 20th century when they became an apparent object of exclusive interest as a state-important procedure. Censuses became a common phenomenon in well-developed countries; they are still widely used to show the situation in a society and to create better possibilities to compare world trends and processes.

Over time, the introduction of improved technologies and more progressive strategies allowed experts and societies to operate with large

¹ J. Murray Edelman claims that "Accounts of political issues, problems, crises, threats, and leaders now become devices for creating disparate assumptions and beliefs about the social and political world rather than factual statements. The very concept of "fact" becomes irrelevant because every meaningful political object and person is an interpretation that reflects and perpetuates an ideology. Taken together, they comprise a spectacle which varies with the social situation of the spectator and serves as a meaningful machine: a generator of points of view and therefore of perceptions, anxieties, aspirations, and strategies". This author also notes that social "problems come into discourse and therefore into existence as reinforcements of ideologies, not simply because they are there or because they are important for wellbeing" (Edelman 2002: 18, 20–21).

amounts of data and to make censuses more reliable. In today's world the census data has ceased to be just an object of social scholars. It would be difficult to imagine any social policies or election procedures in a modern state without census data. On the other hand, the worldwide-adopted strategies and methodologies of census are still usually limited to the issues of verification, representativeness, survey accuracy and data-coding. The issue of the interrelation of censuses and politics (censuses as a social phenomenon and a political proceeding²) is marginalised.

Valery Tishkov claims that, with rare exception, censuses in Russia (or the Soviet Union) remain beyond in-depth studies. According to him, the academic community use census data actively and even become participants of the procedure (e.g. by composing lists of ethnic self-identification, peoples and languages), but they remain influenced by methodological dogmas and still view censuses only as "the most exhaustive and universal image of the existing reality" (Тишков 2003: 178). The first universal census of the population of the Russian Empire in 1897, which also included three Lithuanian gubernias³, Vilnius, Kaunas and Suwalki, was no exception. This census did deliver extensive data about the population of the large and multiethnic state, but the interpretation of it has been frequently followed by mystifications, speculations and ungrounded conclusions.

As for the first general census of 1923 in Lithuania, it is commonly used as a ground for the analysis of the demographic situation of the society in 1918–1940. The reliability of this data, as well as that of the census procedures, is never questioned in academic studies. Does it necessarily mean that the 1923 census really produced an unbiased picture of Lithuanian society of that time? This is not exactly the case. The interest of foreign authors regarding the issue of data falsification (though only in papers on German and Polish minorities of Lithuania⁴) proves there is some ground for extra analysis on the above-mentioned census in the Lithuanian historiography. It has also created an impetus to elaborate the case of Russians in greater detail.

² Q.V. a monograph on the world experience of covering the race, the ethnicity and the language during censuses: Kertzer, D. T. & Arel, D. (eds.) (2002) *Census and Identity. The Politics of Race, Ethnicity and Language in National Censuses*. Cambridge.

³ *Gubernia*, or governorate, is a major administrative unit in Russian Empire.

⁴ Find more in: Hermann, A. (2000) *Lietuvių ir vokiečių kaimynystė*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos. P. 323; Buchowski, K. (2003) „Retorsijos įkaltai (Lenkai Lietuvos Respublikoje 1918–1940 metais)”. *Darbai ir dienos*. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla. T. 34. P. 49–102.

Constructing population categories in the 1897 and 1923 censuses

A basic structural principle of the censuses is the categorisation of population according to criteria predefined by the census-takers. The content of the society categorisation is undergoing constant evolution, thus the population categories (including ethnic ones) are always changing. For a long time previously it was the church rather than the state that was the key initiator for taking censuses in the states of Europe. The Catholic Church has been busy registering parishioners since the 16th century. Confession being a crucial factor, it goes without saying that only a limited section of society was covered by those censuses. The general censuses were a phenomenon of the new historical age, as at the end of the 18th – beginning of the 19th century, European and North-American⁵ states started developing national statistical systems. These played a crucial role as a facility of state modernisation later on (Kertzer, Arel 2002). Lithuania was, to a certain degree, experiencing the process, as in 1790 a census was held in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Jasas, Truska 1972). Thus the history of establishing the population rates and categorising residents into socio-cultural pillars by their self-identification (such as race, ethnic group, language, religion) covers more than two centuries. In today's world few states are not arranging regular population censuses. Rather than the weakness of the state apparatus or lack of funds, the reason to avoid censuses is usually the danger of dividing the population to various self-identification categories. The historical experience is very controversial and manifold in this field.

Benedict Anderson once used the example of colonies to demonstrate the role of statistics in consolidating and expanding state control. This scholar highlighted the meaning of censuses as a primary mechanism facilitating the functioning of colonial states, and noted that “the real innovation of the census-takers of the 1870s was not in the construction of ethnic – racial classifications, but rather in their systematic quantification” (Anderson 1999: 189). Anderson claimed that the state converted everything on the disposed territory into its property, and “by a sort of demographic triangulation, the census filled in politically the formal topography of the map”. It was the census procedure that became the basis for identifying cleavages and drawing borders; this is how imperial governments

⁵ Starting with the 1850 census in the US, the separation between the ‘native’ and the ‘foreign-born’ population was made, reflecting the still-existing principle of categorising residents by the period of immigration.

gained the ability to mark out “peoples, regions, religions, languages” among the governed population (Anderson 1999: 183–208). The 1897 general census in the Russian Empire is one more example.

It would be difficult to deny that from the very beginning and until now the basic pre-assumption behind all population censuses is that all people belong to some stable and clear-cut group categories. They are defined by features like race, nation, citizen or non-citizen, believer etc. This way of thinking views population groups not as something situational therefore neglects the complex and flexible context of social ties. Yet, census categorisation data is always conditional in respect of the population, just as a geographic or administrative map is always conditional in respect of the depicted area (Appadurai 1993: 332). Still this data becomes a justification of various state-run political procedures that strongly impact on the situation of ethnic groups in a society (e.g. determine the scope of social aid for minority organisations and religious communities, the nature of educational institutions etc.).

On the other hand, state still considers censuses as a tool to construct a special social image of everybody belonging to the single category of citizens or residents of a particular region or a state, irrespective of their ethnic, religious or social divisions. This is the way to conceptualise the political community feeling for all of the individuals who supposedly (presumably) share a collective identity. This image was also a subject of political and legal proceedings (e.g. taxing, military duty etc.). Similar goals remain important nowadays, along with some new tasks posed upon censuses.

Although political, economic and social innovations are bringing new colours to census content, still the shape of population-registering has undergone little change so far. The 1923 census-takers were guided by different objectives to those of the 1897 census, as they took into account changes in Lithuanian society after World War I and the political interests of the country. In this article we are not going beyond the comparison of how ethnic and religious categories were constructed. Some extra analysis of certain collisions of categorising population by citizenship is provided.

The criteria of constructing categories

Valery Tishkov has neatly noticed that the census agents of 1897 were not instructed to stick to the individual self-identification criterion, as it would be in the today's society. Residents of the Russian Empire were simply not aware of the modern concept of ‘ethnicity’ or ‘ethnic nationality’ (Тишков 2003: 186–187). It is an important reservation that is frequently ignored. As a result, ungrounded interpretations appear as an attempt to deconstruct

the ethnic composition of the Russian Empire at the end of the 19th century. One should keep in mind that the priority of the 1897 census was the linguistic category. However, in the view of today, the language criterion grabbed only a conditional composition of the Russian Empire's ethnic structure. The takers of the 1923 and later censuses in Lithuania, in their turn, were guided by different criteria. Various publications (especially non-academic ones) often disregard an important circumstance that the concept of 'Russian' (just as 'Lithuanian', 'Pole' or 'Belarusian') underwent a serious transformation between the end of the 19th century and the year 1923. These circumstances must be taken into consideration when comparing figures of ethnic categories of the censuses in the Russian Empire and the Republic of Lithuania.

'Mixing up' the ethnic origin and the language spoken by a respondent produces three fundamental problems. Firstly, the concept of native language at the end of the 19th century most likely meant the language a person had best command of or used most often. This language did not necessarily correspond to his or her ethnic origin. Secondly, a part of the non-Russian population of the Russian Empire was subject to the linguistic assimilation by the dominant education system. Thirdly, some inhabitants did not distinguish between ethnic and confessional self-identification. A much more precise rate of ethnic Russians could be identified if we had the possibility to exclude unorthodox population from the 'Russian' category. It could have been possible when systematising the census material, but the census-takers did not find it necessary in 1897. Everybody who spoke Russian, regardless of whether they considered themselves to be Russian, as well as believers of the official Orthodox religion could have fallen within the category of 'Russians' (find more in the section 'Constructing categories of religion').

The language-based construction of the ethnic categories was often in line with the political interests of the Russian Empire in the ethnic provinces dominated by non-Russian populations. Three Slav-language groups of Great Russians, White Russians and Little Russians were joined up into one concept of 'Russians'. Manipulations of this concept reinforced the numerical weight of 'Russians' among the local population. The historian Vladimir Kabuzan who analysed the demographic processes in the territory of the Russian Empire arrived at the conclusion that the application of the language criterion "disfigured the rates of some ethnicities and partially raised the rate of Russians" (Кабузан 1996: 10).

The contrary trend during the 1897 census was dividing non-Russian population groups by the language criterion in order to construct an image of these groups as inhomogeneous, few in number and too immature for independent political existence. The ideological guidelines of imperial govern-

ments contained some survival recommendations for such minority groups, which were commonly accommodated within the existing political situation, siding with the dominant nation and giving up any political aspirations.

Besides, empires favour competition of two ethnic groups for the same territory. The official statistics contain examples of political manipulations with the multiplicity of the rivals, one of them being the breakdown of the 'Lithuanians' category in the 1897 census into 'Lithuanians' and 'Samogitians' ('*lietuviai*' and '*žemaičiai*').⁶ In Kaunas gubernia they amounted to 37.2 percent and 28.8 percent of population respectively, though the total would have been 66 percent, or a clear local majority (*Первая всеобщая перепись...* (T. 17) 1904: IX–X). On the contrary, the 1923 census-takers were interested in proving Lithuanian domination; therefore they would supposedly disfavour any divisions within the category 'Lithuanians'.

Some specific features of the censuses pave the way to multiple interpretations and make the long-run comparison of demographic rates of ethnic groups quite complicated. Moreover, as stated above, in the length of time the criteria of identifying ethnic origin changed. The self-determination criterion was declared decisive in 1923 in Lithuania. The Director of the Central Statistics Bureau Gustavas Feterauskas, who wrote the preview of the primary census results, noted that "the features of the ethnicity in 1897 and now are different; in the 1897 census the ethnicity was determined by the native tongue, while we were guided by the personal decision

⁶ Interestingly, similar political-ideological constructs are still being operated with today in various unexpected ways. In 2007, when this article was still at the preparation stage, debates about the 'Samogitian'-'Lithuanian' divisions flared up again in Lithuania. Certainly, the imperial past is not the only reason behind these debates. They partly resemble the contemporary European trends favourable to regionalism and prove the ongoing search for ethnic identity in some regions. "Samogitians say they are ready to go to the Strasbourg court for their right to be officially registered as Samogitians. One month ago, the Ministry of Justice permitted three residents of Telšiai to register their ethnicity as 'Samogitian', but later on the Ministry changed its mind and referred to the previous decision as a technical error, the LTV news service reports. [...] "I have never heard of anybody anywhere having to prove such a thing [i.e. ethnic origin – authors' note]. It is something you just declare. Could you imagine any Scot who should prove he is a Scot?" – the Samogitian Egidijus Skarbalius argues. The locals' reaction to these intentions is not unanimous; it ranges from romantic to realistic. An example of the latter category could be a comment posted on the DELFI web-portal by a visitor Nežiniukas who has urged for the situation of Samogitians to be assessed soberly: "fools who do not know much about the history... you should know that separating samogitia from lithuania once was an aspiration of german crusaders, and then of russians and poles, because the divided nation is easier to govern... stop these nonsense separatism ideas..." (not edited). Q.V.: *Žemaičiai žada net kreiptis į Strasbūrą*, 12.07.2007 <http://www.delfi.lt/archive/article.php?id=13762057>

of the respondent in this matter. These characteristics have certainly much in common, but still one should distinguish between them. [...] The issue of ethnicity in the demography is one of the most complicated. It is not possible to distinguish between ethnicities by a single clear characteristic. It can be neither religion, nor language”.⁷ The self-determination principle in 1923 was secured by the “deliberate self-registering of the residents” “without any possible coercion”⁸. The seniors of the municipalities were legally responsible for adhering to this condition. Some residents’ self-indications were reportedly changed two, three or four times, but these doubts were viewed by the census-takers as a sign of maturity and allegedly “proved that the people demonstrated the absolute consciousness in this significant matter” (*Lietuvos gyventojai* 1923: XXXIV).

In spite of these measures, the schematic approach common for all censuses was hard to avoid when identifying the ethnic affiliation of the residents of the Republic of Lithuania. Some individuals found it difficult to define their identity (e.g. in regard of their civil or religious affiliation) as the proposed list of categories could be too ‘tight’ for them. How were the identity dilemmas solved, and what was the factor of the final decision? Was it one’s mother tongue or the language he or she knew the best? Or maybe it was religious denomination? It is even more important, what the role of the census-agents was when resolving those dilemmas (e.g. if an individual told his ethnicity was an ‘Old Believer’, ‘an Orthodox’ or ‘a Lithuanian of Belarusian origin’ (*литовец белорусской национальности*) and so on?⁹

The answers to these questions cannot be found among the published census materials. They are hidden ‘between the lines’, but it is important to keep them in mind in order to deconstruct the peculiarities of the ethnic structure of society both in the Lithuanian *gubernias* and in independent Lithuania. In both cases there are some reservations complicating the long-run comparison of the demographic rates of Russians. Not surprisingly, when assessing the dynamics of the multiplicity of Russians between 1897 and 1923, the conclusions depend significantly on the definition (should we compare the rates of ‘Russians’ with ‘Great Russians’, or to the sum of ‘Great Russians’ and ‘White Russians’ etc.). Obviously, the error

⁷ The report of 9 November 1923 by the Director of the Central Statistics Bureau G. Feterauskas considering the primary census results (the addressee not mentioned, the most likely being the Prime Minister or the Government) // LCVA, f. 923, ap. 1, b. 313, l. 267.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ The request of 9 September 1921 by the owner of Vinteliškės country-seat (Telšiai district) A. Butvilovskis to the minister of Belarusian affairs of the Republic of Lithuania // LCVA, f. 377, ap. 5, b. 11, l. 35.

rate of statistical calculations depends on the comparison strategy; ignoring the above-mentioned reservations brings trivial conclusions.

One of the advantages of the 1923 census was the ‘others’; the residents of the Russian Empire did not have a chance to opt for a similar alternative (Sirutavičius 2004: 4–5). True, little percentage of the population fell within this category in 1923 (1 592 respondents or 0,1 percent of the total). It suggests that the undefined respondents mostly opted for one of the ethnic categories rather than for the neutral one.

Classification of the ethnic categories

The construction of the list of ethnic categories in the 1897 and 1923 censuses was carried out according to the informal classification originating from the census-takers’ political and ideological beliefs. It was decisions by the authorities that determined the content of the list, what categories were included and in which order of priority. In the 1897 census the basic construction principles were the same throughout the Russian Empire, in spite of the specific ethnic distribution of the population in Lithuanian regions.

Importantly, ‘Russians’ were positioned first on the list of ethnic categories. This principle was pre-determined by the exceptional status of ‘Russians’ in the society of the Russian Empire rather than their multiplicity. In the 1897 census, the ethnonym of ‘Russians’ (*русские*) embraced three Eastern-Slav linguistic groups (the then-called ‘races’ or ‘families’ (*племя*) – ‘Great Russians’ (*великорусский*), ‘Little Russians’ (*малорусский*) and ‘White Russians’ (*белорусский*). These categories were followed by less significant classifications, including traditional indigenous or autochthon peoples of the ethnic provinces. In the Lithuanian gubernias ‘Lithuanians’, ‘Samogitians’, ‘Poles’, ‘Jews’ and ‘Germans’ fell within these categories, although quantitatively each of these groups (except ‘Germans’) was bigger than ‘Russians’. The last positions within the classification were assigned to the ethnic groups of unchristian denominations (e.g. Tatars, Karaites etc.). In the Lithuanian gubernias they amounted to a small percentage of around 0.2 (see Chart 1).

In the 1923 census, the ethnic categories appeared better ‘crystallised’. The practice of the Russian imperial statistics to join up various linguistic groups into a single ethnonym was cancelled. This is why the above-mentioned trinomial conjunction of “Russians” split into separate categories of ‘Russians’, ‘Ukrainians’ and ‘Belarusians’. The only exception was the title nation that needed its dominance established; thus a single category of ‘Lithuanians’ replaced the formerly differentiated categories of ‘Lithuanians’ and ‘Samogitians’. The decisive criterion of the ethnic categories and their

position on the list was the multiplicity of the group; this is why every block of information was started by Lithuanians in the 1923 census, and then followed by all others in decreasing order down to the smallest ethnic groups. The selection of this criterion was in the common interest of a nation-state to have a mono-ethnic society. The Lithuanian political and societal activist of those times Rapolas Skipitis confessed in his memoirs that as late as during the debates on the draft constitution of 1922, the Lithuanian Government felt that minorities were much more numerous than the 1923 census later proved: “We had to speak about equal rights for all the citizens in that time, because it seemed that Vilnius, Kaunas and other cities of Lithuania were then dominated by the non-Lithuanians or at least non-Lithuanian-speaking majorities. At first glance, it seemed that the Jews, Poles and Russians were much more numerous in the whole country than it appeared to be after the 1923 census (Skipitis 1961: 76–77).

The data of this census must have given some form of relief for similar-thinking Lithuanian society activists, because it actually confirmed that Lithuanians constituted an absolute majority of 8.9 percent in their state (Vilnius and Klaipėda regions excluded). Other ethnic groups comprised 16.1 percent of the population. The second biggest group were Jews (7.6 percent), then Poles (3.2 percent), Russians (2.5 percent) and Germans (1.2 percent). In total, 26 ethnic groups were identified in the country (*Lietuvos gyventojai* 1923: XXXIV).

Let us have at least a brief glance at the basic principles of the ethnic categorisation of the population in the Lithuanian gubernias or the Republic of Lithuania. Besides suggesting a picture of societal composition and the outcomes of the colonisation processes in the imperial provinces, the 1897 census served as an important ideological device used by the Government of the Russian Empire. The attempt by authorities was to consolidate the politically dominant group and to substantiate their right to govern the so-called ‘aboriginal Russian’ territories. Handling the census data aimed to provide evidence supporting that Russians were not random newcomers in the provinces of the empire, and a justification for the state’s special concern about their needs (constructing churches and schools, property provision etc.). The historian Vldas Sirutavičius noted that “the authors of the censuses were interested in stressing “the Russian nature” of historical Lithuanian territories, so they went into trouble of finding out as many various “Russian” tribes as possible (besides Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians, they were lining up even smaller groups like Krivichs, Black Russians etc.)”. Another finding of this author were efforts made by the authorities to prove that the Russians were the autochthons of the province, while “the Polish element”, i.e. the Polish-speaking nobility of historic Lithuania, were presented as “alien newcomers” (Sirutavičius 2004: 5).

In nation-states, the census data is frequently referred to as a justification of the pro-majority social, economic, and cultural policy. It is also a tool of setting the 'majority – minorities' relations in the spheres of societal activities. A fundamental principle is emphasising the proportional representation of the group's influence. The abundant spectrum of ethnic categories and especially abundant minority groups are often at odds with the nation-state's interests, because in democracy it means more obligations of the majority to the minorities. It became a serious challenge for most of the states in the Eastern Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, which brought them to the consolidation of the authoritarianism. The policy of assimilating minorities had sympathisers among the representatives of the Lithuanian national ideology¹⁰, though it looks like the president Antanas Smetona was personally not in favour of radical measures. The subordination of minorities to the majority was enough to him: "Lithuanians are the creators/founders of their state, and the ethnic minorities are their assistants. Since we do not demand they melt into our nation, we allow their cultural communication with their compatriots. But in return they must be our territorial patriots: they should love Lithuania and respect the Lithuanian nation, be loyal to Lithuania and adhere to the legal order not by coercion, but deliberately" (Eidintas 1990: 141).

The ethnocentric ideas were not as influential during the 1923 census as on the eve of the Soviet occupation of Lithuania. We can only guess what could have been the ethnic composition of the society under the nationalists' (*tautininkų*) rule, as the second general census kept being postponed for unclear reasons (though legally scheduled for not later than 10 years after the first one). On 10 March 1933 the amendment of "The General Census Law" was proclaimed on behalf of the President Smetona. It stated: "the schedule, the programmes and the organisation of the general census shall be ad hoc established by the Cabinet of Ministers" (*Lietuvos valstybės teisės aktai* 1996: 528). However, the time for a census was never found until 1940, the reasons unlikely being financial or organisational. Presum-

¹⁰ The Lithuanian philosopher and pedagogue (1908–1987) Antanas Maceina noted in 1939 that "In our times the borders of a state must correspond to the borders of the ethnic nation, while the non-natives living within a nation must be denationalised and assimilated into the national culture, or move to their state, or stay as guests exercising their rights as refugees" (Maceina 1939: 227–230). In the same year, the Lithuanian geographer Stanislovas Tarvydas (1903–1975) compared the non-natives to dynamite "which can be used to blow up any state from inside if it has too much national minorities". He argued that "the most humane policy addressing foreigners would be the one favouring their emigration". This author believed "the naturalisation of ethnic non-Lithuanians must be stopped and immigration strongly restricted" (Tarvydas 1939: 104, 269).

ably, the authorities did not explore the risk of finding out unexpected outcomes (e.g. considering Germans in Klaipėda region, complicated relation with Poland etc.). For reference, neighbouring Latvia used to hold censuses every five years before the *coup d'état* of 1934 (four were held before 1935), but then the government of the authoritarian Republic of Latvia lost the interest in taking censuses.

In their domestic policy, nation-states are usually interested in having a solid ground (including statistics) to claim that the ethnic minorities living in a state are scant, territorially incompact and irrelevant for the civil life. Census-takers deliberately opted for the inter-institutional level instead of making decisions about census-related issues publicly. This point can be confirmed by a secret letter of 6 July 1923 from the Head of the Senior Census Commission Antanas Merkys to the Head of the Biržai–Pasvalys district commission. The letter contained a recommendation to take preventive measures against possible influence of minorities on the census outcomes, allegedly based on the experience of other parts of central and eastern Europe:

“The practice of censuses in other states (Latvia, Estonia, Czechoslovakia etc.) has revealed that the non-natives frequently attempt to use the census for an artificial augmentation of their minorities. The Senior Census Commission is asking you to assist preventing this situation in our state. Therefore we pledge to select the municipal managers and the census-agents with caution, especially in localities where the anti-state foreigners’ organisations are deeply rooted”.¹¹

This instruction is in fact a discrimination of ethnic minorities. Most likely, copies of it were sent to other district commissions who in turn must have recruited supposedly trustworthy and state-loyal census managers.¹²

The majority representatives could believe that the elimination of minorities out of the census proceedings would be a precondition to register the society members impartially. However, the purposes of the procedure monopolisation could have been different. The Government of Lithuania has never raised a question if the selected census-takers avoided falsification in favour of the dominant group.

Alongside with categorisation differences, the transformation of the concept of ‘Russians’ is making the comparison of the 1897 and 1923 census data even more complicated. The term ‘Russian’ meant two different

¹¹ The secret letter of 6 July 1923 by the Head of the Senior Census Commission Antanas Merkys to the Head of the Biržai-Pasvalys district commission // LCVA, f. 1381, ap. 1, b. 113, l. 41.

¹² Data from municipalities were sent to the districts, then to the Senior Census Commission, then to the Central Statistics Bureau, where the materials underwent final systematisation according to the pre-adopted programme until the beginning of 1925 (Kasnauskienė 2004: 14).

things at the end of the 19th century and in 1920s. This is why statistical data on the ethnic composition of pre-revolution Russia is often in need of revision. The transformation of the concept can be illustrated with the quotation from Anton Chekhov's book *The Lady with the Pet Dog*: "Is your husband a German? – Mr Gurov asked Mrs Anna Sergejevna, when heard her surname was Fon Dideric. She answered: "No, I think his grand-father was a German, but he is Orthodox". The nuances of the concept of 'Russian' were not a mere fiction of literature. Natalija Kasatkina, who in 1989–1992 conducted research on intellectuals of inter-war Lithuania, revealed that ethnic, linguistic or religious motives often posed a puzzle for the people trying to identify their identity at those times.

An example of a respondent's answer: "*According to the legend, the beginner of our family moved from Holland to Russia under the rule of Yelizaveta Petrovna. He was a turner or a mechanic. So his name was probably Dutch though we called ourselves "Germans". Most likely because we were Lutherans, though there were many Russians (the Orthodox) in the family, and Germans, of course. Some Frenchmen and Poles also, I think. We always spoke Russian at home. I became German only when I moved to Riga, but before that I used to be a normal Russian kid*" (Interview 24).

Another respondent: "*the most correct answer would probably be that I am a Pole. I was born in the family of deported Poles (after the 1830 insurrection), but I have always been and will always be a Russian. I speak and think in Russian. My parents are quite indifferent to the church, but I am religious*" (Interview 15, housewife)¹³.

Only after the 1926 census in the Soviet Union did the concept of 'Russianness' (*русскость*) become as narrow as a normal ethnic category. The executors of this census had to sort 'Ukrainians' and 'Belarusians' out of those who called themselves 'Russians'. As for the 1897 census in the Russian Empire, it included a question about language. It posed a possibility for the historic deconstruction of the ethnic composition of the population. Yet, mixing the former and current meanings of 'Russian' identity is still common in historical and demographic studies. The changing content of the concept of 'Russianness' is frequently overlooked. The result is mechanical projections of census data and politically charged conclusions about Russians as some deeply-rooted and stable collective structure rather than a changeable period-sensitive form of the self-identification (Тишков 2003: 193).

The transformations of the term of 'Russians' and related reservations are rarely explained well enough in Lithuanian historiography. Modern authors treat them as self-evident. As for scholars of those times – their reflections on the topic were even more vague. The Lithuanian public activist

¹³ Interviews conducted by Natalija Kasatkina in period of her research in 1989–1992 (Kasatkina's personal archive).

Petras Klimas, who was busy analysing the outlines of the future state of Lithuania shortly before the restoration of independence, noted: “Whom we call Russians are the Slavonian sorts of Great Russians, Little Russians and White Russians. The Great Russians and Little Russians are quite recent newcomers in Lithuania. These are the Orthodox and the Old Believers deployed here, namely the officials and the military in the cities, and the settlers in the rural areas” (Klimas 1917: 54). Modern Lithuanian historiography prefers the 1897 census category of ‘Great Russians’ as the most comparable to the one of ‘Russians’ in the 1923 census. According to the data of 1897, there were 175 955 ‘Great Russians’ in Lithuanian gubernias, or 4.7 percent of the population. Vilnius and Kaunas gubernias had much larger ‘Great Russian’ populations (78 623 and 72 872 respectively); in Suwalki gubernia their rate was 24 460. Their population share in each of the three gubernias was similar: 4.9 percent in Vilnius, 4.7 percent in Kaunas, and 4.2 percent in Suwalki (*Первая всеобщая перепись... 1904*).

However, the reservations applicable to each case make the comparison of these figures conditional and not adequate enough, precisely in the same way as the mechanical summation of ‘Lithuanian’ and ‘Samogitian’ categories in 1897 is not a precise and comparable equivalent of the ‘Lithuanian’ category in the 1923 census.

Constructing categories of religions

The way the census categories of religions were constructed also deserves special attention. The religion undoubtedly influenced the ethnic identity strongly, especially in places of the Russian Empire such as the Lithuanian provinces. The 1897 census-takers were well aware of this. The ‘Orthodox’ was the central category of the denomination mosaic in the Russian Empire’s society. Exposing ‘Orthodox’ as first on the list of the religions was a matter of the state ideology, which aimed to portray Orthodoxy as the only official denomination. The category of the ‘Old Believers’ fell to second. Though the communities of Old Believers were legally prohibited in the Russian Empire as ‘heresy’ (until 1905), and their followers prosecuted, still this religion was a characteristic of Russian identity. Western Christian churches (e.g. categories such as Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Evangelical Reformed etc.) and ‘Israelites’ constituted the next block of categories. Non-Christian religions (Islam, Caraitism etc.) were listed last.

Any attempts of deconstructing the ethnic composition of the Russian Empire’s population by religious categories are also risky and potentially speculative. The truth is that, with few exceptions, the Israelites and the Old Believers were, respectively, Jews and Russians, but the communities of the

Orthodox, the Catholics, and the Protestants were ethnically heterogeneous. The cases of religion and the ethnicity being groundlessly confused are noticeable in the working practice of census-accountants of the Russian Empire. The misleading deformations of this kind were especially evident in situations favourable for increasing the rate of Russians. The Russian historian Vladimir Kabuzan gave an example of such cases from the 1850s in his studies: in the Great Duchy of Finland the statistics officials of the Russian Empire considered all of the Orthodox believers as 'Russian', including the Orthodox Finns and Karelians (Кабузан 1996: 165). Lithuanian gubernias were subject to a similar treatment of both politically motivated and incidental confusion of the religion and the ethnic origin.¹⁴

The political situation in the Russian Empire was favourable for interpreting the Orthodox religion as a sign of Russian identity. The 1897 census failed to cover the community of the Uniate Church. The Uniatism was a common religion in Western provinces as late as at the beginning of the 19th century among the population identified as ancestors of today's Belarusians and Ukrainians.

The liquidation of the Uniate Church on territory of the former Great Duchy of Lithuania was an important political step tracing back to the Brest Union of 1596. The Uniate issue used to be a substantial political card in relations for two centuries between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Russian Empire. The Russian rulers manipulated this card to satisfy their imperial expansionist ambitions under the image of protecting the Orthodox population of the neighbouring state. They questioned every non-Russian component of the identity of Uniats, and finally brought them back to the alleged 'original faith' which was the Orthodoxy. With the flow of time, this step enabled the identification of Uniats with Russians. It also stood for the official demography that sought after the image of a religiously homogeneous 'Russian' society (e.g. the ancestors of the today's Ukrainians were given a compensational status of the 'Little-Russian-speakers' in 1897).

¹⁴ Examples of how Russian officials perceived the Protestant group are provided in Petras Klimas' works: "One can easily notice the significant share of Germans in Suwalki gubernia, particularly in municipalities of Vilkaviškis (15.91 percent) and Naumiestis (7.12 percent). But if we check the local census conducted there by Prof. Eduardas Volteris in 1889, we find out that only 14 percent of those 'Germans' were actually of German origin. All others were ethnic Lithuanian Lutheran-Evangelical believers. The Russian census-takers must have frivolously registered them as Germans, because they were Protestants. [...] The same must have obviously happened in Kaunas gubernia" (Klimas 1917: 61). The same logic could have guided the census-takers in 1897 to include the majority of the Orthodox believers in the category of 'Russians' all over the Empire. In this regard, the statistical data of Kaunas gubernia resembled the case of Finland, as the Orthodox there were absolutely predominant in the category of the 'Great Russians' (46 514 or 96 percent share) (*Первая всеобщая перепись ...* (Т. 17) 1904: 3).

One should note that the Orthodox-based unification of the Eastern Slavs was an important policy of the Government of the Russian Empire. The aim behind it was to create a religiously homogeneous group of Russians.¹⁵ Conversion to Orthodoxy was encouraged, commonly by force. Old Believers were a symptomatic example; they were subject to discrimination as early as patriarch Nikon's reform in the middle of the 17th century. Old Believers were treated as schismatics (Raskolniks) who had to be retrieved by the Orthodox Church. Contrary to the Uniats, the Old Believers remained a category in the 1897 census, but the formulation of this category name was pronouncedly discriminating: 'the Old Believers and the deviant Orthodox' (*старообрядцы и уклоняющиеся от православия*). Old Believers who came under the influence of the official church were called the Coreligionists and fell within the category of 'Orthodox and Coreligionists' (*православные и единоверцы*) in 1897.¹⁶

The census of 1923 contained almost the same list of religions as the one of 1897, but classified in a different way. Analogously to ethnicities, the multiplicity of the group proved crucial. Logically, 'Roman Catholics' were listed first. However, all the other religions were listed alphabetically (e.g. categories such as Baptists, Greek Catholics, Lutherans, Evangelical Reformed etc.) The only exception was made against the category of 'Muslims' (labelled as 'Mohammedans' in those times), which was pulled down to the last position.

The Russians fell within two religious categories of the 1923 census. The category of 'Orthodox and Coreligionists' was replaced by 'Orthodox'. The rate of Coreligionists was not taken down in the census, as this odd group of believers did not survive the new political situation. They became free from the Orthodox Church's pressure and gradually found their place either among the Orthodox or the Old Believers (the last Coreligionist priest Yakov Ankudinov died in 1926). Alongside other reasons, the level of the religious

¹⁵ These plans collapsed after the political shocks of the 20th century (e.g. the Russian-Japanese war, the revolution of 1905). Legalisation by the Tsar and the Government of religious tolerance followed (originally by the temporary decree of 17 April 1905 by Nicholas II, later on by the decree of 17 October 1906). The Russian state-controlled Orthodox Church viewed the tolerance edict as a blow to their dominance. They feared the fair competition with other churches (Поспеловский 2005: 25).

¹⁶ The Coreligionism (Edinoverie) appeared at the beginning of the 19th century as a political instrument of the Russian Government to retrieve patronage upon the Old Believers. The attempt was to overcome the schism within the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) lasting since patriarch Nikon's reforms. The coreligionists were given some concessions in return for their subordination to the Holy Synod of the ROC; they were allowed to stick to their old devotions and religious traditions (Laukaitytė 2005: 379–398).

tolerance was a factor behind the differences in constructing the denomination categories in 1897 and 1923. Higher tolerance by Lithuanian authorities determined that the categories ignored by the Russian Empire also appeared on the list (the best examples being 'Uniats' or 'Greek Catholics').

Therefore, the variety of the religions on the list of the 1897 census was affected by the Russian Imperial Government's policy in the Western provinces. The reinforcement of the role of Russians and Orthodox was a part of this policy. The 1923 census in Lithuania suggested a more unbiased picture of the religious spectrum traditional for this place. This data was to stress the predominant role of Western Christians, first of all Catholics. The Lithuanian authorities, who were strongly influenced by Catholic priests before the *coup d'état* in 1926, used this image in the construction of political priorities regarding both the religious majority and the minorities (including Orthodox and Old Believers). The distribution of state aid to religious communities could serve as an illustration as it was proportional to the 1923 census record. The proportional principle gave Lithuanian power institutions a good reason to reject extra aid requests by religious minorities, as over-proportional funds would have given a privileged position to a church.

The criterion of the citizenship

Since the turn of the 19th century the state has been seeking to calculate the number of people living in their territories. As a result, 'citizens' and 'non-citizens' became the two fundamental categories. This was the difference between the censuses of 1923 and 1897, as the latter did not contain a question about citizenship. The whole population was considered subordinate to the Russian Emperor without any extra legitimisation needed. The basic cleavage of the national and cultural identity was represented by categories of 'Orthodox' and 'non-native'.

The 1923 census divided all residents of Lithuania into either 'citizens' or 'foreigners' (non-citizens). Analysis of the data proves some inconsistency, deliberately or not, related to the ethnic composition of the population. Only 'citizens' underwent categorisation according to their ethnic background, while 'foreigners' were only asked about their nationality (citizenship). The explanation was that foreigners were not numerous and that "the ethnic origin of the foreigners was irrelevant since they rarely distinguished between their nationality and ethnicity" (*Lietuvos gyventojai* 1923: XXXVI). Therefore, the 1923 census reflected only the ethnic composition and territorial distribution of Lithuanian nationals (citizens of the Republic of Lithuania).

One can be nearly confident that, for example, a Swedish national who fell within the category of ‘foreigners’ was actually an ethnic Swede, but the case of the immigrants from Soviet Russia (Soviet Union since 1922) must have been more complicated. This aspect is relevant for the rate of Russians. Ignoring the ethnicity of ‘foreigners’ was an obstacle to establish an approximate rate of post-revolution migrants who resided in Lithuania. They were non-Lithuanian nationals, usually with Nansen refugee passports and with firm beliefs about their ethnic origin. Out of 7 179 foreigners living in the country in 1923, 2 535 were named the citizens of Soviet Russia (Soviet Union). 1 244 (49.1 percent) of them being Orthodox and 60 (2.4 percent) Old Believers (*Lietuvos gyventojai* 1923: 31–32). The majority of them are likely to be Russians (possibly partially Belarusian or Ukrainian), but as mentioned above, post-revolution migrants frequently did not have Soviet citizenship. Calculating Soviet migrants was even more problematic because many of them did not stay in Lithuania for long and moved to other states of Europe.

The Lithuanian historiography on the 1897 and 1923 census results

Brief analysis of the reflections on the 1897 and 1923 censuses confirms that many contemporary researchers did pay attention to the political construction of the results, still leaving this phenomenon beyond systematic research. As early as the end of World War I some Lithuanian public figures questioned the outcomes of the 1897 census. They had their own reasons to reveal demographic contradictions in the Lithuanian gubernias and to criticise the census bitterly. The prominent Lithuanian economist and public figure Albinas Rimka wrote that “the Russian authorities-made statistics of 1897 cannot be considered faultless” (Rimka 1918: 19). In his opinion, Lithuanians were discriminated: “In the researches conducted in Lithuania by the aliens the maximum rates of Lithuanians should be most likely considered the average, while the official statistics of 1897 could be viewed as the minimum rate of Lithuanians. On the contrary, the data for the Poles, Belarusians and Russians should be cross-corrected, because it corresponds to their averages and maximums” (Rimka 1918: 33).

The shortcomings of the Russian Empire’s census were also recognised in one of the publications by the Central Statistics Bureau (1931), but that same publication referred to the censuses as an important source of information: “The official statistics by Russians and Germans were not exhaustive, but they are important for us, as we do not dispose alternative data to cover the development of the anthropologic and the economic situation in Lithuania” (*Lietuvos statistika 1920–1930 metais* 1931: 8).

The historian Vytautas Merkys who represents Soviet Lithuanian historiography noted that “the common disadvantage of the Russian Empire’s statistical sources was the politically biased identification of ethnicity” (Merkys 1958: 86). Rimantas Vėbra emphasised that the figures he charted in his research “could not be accurate about the ethnicities or estates or occupational groups, since the statistics itself was very unreliable (both due to the census officials’ misconduct and the respondents’ wrong answers)”. The author believed the data on ethnic composition was the least accurate since “the Tsar administration sought to justify the colonial policy of the denationalisation and assimilation by the means of statistics, including even falsification” (Vėbra 1990: 15).

Vladas Sirutavičius, who studied the perception of ethnicity in Lithuania in the 19th century, stresses that “the information on the ethnic composition of a multiethnic province population is a necessary tool to effectively administer the province. Clearly the official censuses sometimes were tendentious, as they were subject to ethnic policy and eventually the measure of shaping this policy” (Sirutavičius 2004: 5).

Vytautas Merkys concluded in one of his works that when declaring native language and religion in 1897 “not all the adult population were able to perceive their language, leave alone the ethnicity. Some of the Catholic population of the Vilnius region did not identify themselves with any mature ethnic nation, called their language “common” (not Belarusian) and considered themselves “locals” (tuteishy) till as long as after the World War II. Still, they fell within the category of Belarusians during the 1897 census” (Merkys 2006: 88). Petras Kalnius added that the 1897 census produced a deformed picture on ethnic statistics “merely for the reason of pointing out the ethnicity of respondents by their language. Nobody went into trouble of identifying their self-consciousness or self-determination of who they were. We are well aware that a language can be shared by different ethnicities, and vice versa, one ethnic nation can include speakers of different languages” (Kalnius 2002: 477).

The Lithuanian historiography has never been as critical about the census of 1923. Logically, the census executors refrained from public discussion on various procedural episodes. They only summarised the main ethno-demographic trends characteristic of the post-war Lithuania in personal mail, official publication of census materials, and contemporary press. In other words, the authorities of the Republic of Lithuania had no natural feeling that the 1923 census results could have been questionable, especially because the results were obviously favourable to the vision of the nation-state.

Intuitively, the Russians began to increasingly perceive themselves as a quantitative minority of Lithuania. Before 1923 they still were arguing that

their share in society was larger than one could speculate. The Russians were also trying to deny an assumption that most of them had left Lithuania during the World War I. In 1920, the Democratic union of the ethnic Russian citizens of Lithuania declared in the press that “the wide-spread belief of the society and even of the official institutions in the scantiness of the Russian community in Kaunas appears to be wrong. The total amount of the Orthodox Russians in Kaunas and suburbia reaches up to 1½ thousand (1 500 individuals – A/N), there are also Catholic, Lutheran etc. groups of Russians”. The lack of the self-organisation and avoidance of political and societal activities were named as reasons for the misrepresentation of Russians in the public sphere.¹⁷

Alexandr Tyminsky, a figure of the Russian community, came out with a somewhat ambiguous opinion about the 1923 census results. He stressed that “the close analysis of the census data made him confident that the results were reliable, although half of the population were illiterate and vaguely aware of the census goals”. Still he re-established the data was right “providing there were no pro-majority straining or statistical errors” (Тыминский 1928: 5). Therefore, Tyminsky did not rule out the likelihood of the census data falsification, but he could hardly elaborate on the issue under the conditions of press-censorship.¹⁸ Polish and German minorities were more active in questioning the 1923 census results in parliament (*Seimas*), operating with alternative data etc.¹⁹

¹⁷ Русская колония в Ковно // Эхо. 27 октября 1920 г. № 2.

¹⁸ A. Sokolsky was more critical on the passport policy of the Lithuanian authorities, not at that time but in 1985 memoirs published in the USA. He noted specifically about Russians: “there were actually much more of them, but the Lithuanian institutions often declared them Lithuanians of the Orthodox religion in passports” (Сокольский 1985).

¹⁹ The 1923 census revealed there were 65.5 thousand ethnic Poles (3.23 percent of population) in Lithuania. But Krzysztof Buchowski noted that “during the same year’s parliamentary election the Polish minority list received 63.5 thousand (7.1 percent) votes. The election results enabled an assumption that the census data on the Polish ethnic minority could have been unreliable”. According to the alternative estimations conducted by the Polish central electoral committee, the share of Poles in the country’s society was 9.99 percent (Lithuanians amounting to the share of 76.37 percent, Jews 8.98 percent, Germans 2.2 percent, and Russians 2.1 percent). The minorities felt discriminated against by official statistics. As a result, minority parliamentary groups in the *Seimas* checked some parts of the 1923 census data. On 15 April 1924, they initiated interpellation with more than 700 violations listed. The Prime Minister rejected the proof of falsifications as ungrounded and did not find any reason to correct the census data. The reaction of the ethnic Russian MP Jevtichijus Jerinas (Yerin) to this discussion is not known. Krzysztof Buchowski concluded that Lithuanian authorities were shielding the census to the prejudice of the ethnic minorities’ rights (Buchowski 2003: 50–51). The German historian Arthur Hermann claimed that the Lithuanian Interior Ministry had first declared 23 973 as the primary rate of Germans during the 1923 census. Following protests and accusations of fraud, the Interior Ministry corrected the figure to 29 231 (Hermann 2000: 224).

Saulius Kaubrys noted that the representatives of Belarusians lodged a complaint with Lithuanian authorities against the census-takers categorising some of the Belarusian population as Poles or Russians. Still, the same author found the census procedures transparent and the difficulties “minor and irrelevant for the final results”. This conclusion corresponds to the argument of the census-takers that any inaccuracy must have been caused by a lack of census agents, negative attitudes of some citizens or technical problems (Kaubrys 2002: 41–42). Lithuanian historiography contains no more in-depth research on the issue of census reliability.

The rates and the factors of distribution of Russians in the Republic of Lithuania

Lithuanian historiography usually sticks to the rate of 50 460 Russians (2.5 percent of the population) living in the Republic of Lithuania according to the 1923 census. Russians turn out the fourth largest ethnic group (after Lithuanians, Jews, and Poles), but in the period of 1923–1939 it would be more accurate to place them fifth, after Klaipėda (Memel) region was incorporated into Lithuania²⁰ and increased the rate of Germans from 1.4 percent to 4.1 percent (see Chart 2). Few researchers and encyclopaedists stress the fact that the above-mentioned rate encompassed only the naturalised population in 1923. The rest of the Russian minority dominated by the post-revolution emigrants from Soviet Russia (Soviet Union) is usually ignored since they were labelled ‘foreigners’. Therefore, the actual number of Russians residing in the state was doubtlessly larger, but one would need more reliable data to establish it precisely.

The comparison of the census results of 1897 and 1923 would be helpful for the estimation of Russians’ rates of multiplicity and territorial distribution, but technically it is problematic. Even the contemporaries of those events failed to arrive at unanimous conclusions since they opted for different calculation strategies. The ethnic Russian public representative of the Republic of Lithuania, Tyminsky, estimated that the share of Lithuanians increased in Lithuania up from 66.7 percent to 83.9 percent between 1897 and 1923, with rates of all the other ethnic groups decreasing. The reduc-

²⁰ The summation of the 1923 census data in the Great Lithuania and the 1925 census data in Klaipėda region gives no significant increase of the ethnically Russian citizens of Lithuania (up to 50 727 only). Their share shrank to 2.35 percent in the whole population of citizens. This was clearly enough, since there was a gap of two years among the two censuses, the mathematical addition of data is not an accurate method, but the trend still is likely to be correct (*Lietuvos statistikos metraštis 1924–1926 m.* 1927: 22).

tion of the proportion of Russians was less sharp than that of Jews (down from 12.2 percent to 7.6 percent), Poles (from 8.5 percent to 3.2 percent) or Belarusians (from 3.4 percent to 0.2 percent), but more articulated than that of Germans (from 2.3 percent to 1.4 percent) (ТЪМИНСКИЙ 1928: 6).²¹ The Director of the Central Statistics Bureau Gustavas Feterauskas in his primary preview of the census materials has pointed out a sharper decrease of the Russian share between 1897 and 1923 (down from 6.5 percent to 2.5 percent).²² The reason is Tyminsky picked only the 1897 category of ‘Great Russians’ for comparison, while Gustavas Feterauskas opted for the summation of ‘Great Russians’ and ‘White Russians’.

Establishing or comparing different rates is not enough if one seeks for an exhaustive picture of the territorial distribution of Russians in the Republic of Lithuania. Factors behind the rates must be taken into consideration. The multiplicity and distribution rates of Russians were more sensitive to historical troubles in the international arena of those times than other ethnic groups. It was international rather than local processes determining the migration of Russians from the Russian Empire to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (from the second half of the 17th century to the turn of the 18th century), and later on – from core gubernias of the Empire to the Lithuanian gubernias (19th–early 20th century). The events of World War I, the 1917 October coup and the Russian Civil War were the primary factors that determined radical transformations in the political development of Russia, and therefore large-scale migration processes (such as the ‘White emigration’). The comprehensive analysis of the multiplicity and distribution rates of Russians, as well as factors standing behind these figures, enables us to recognise and assess this problem more precisely. The Russians were demographically heterogeneous with different layers of immigration.

According to the 1923 census data, the distribution of Russians by place of residence (cities verses periphery) was quite close to the country’s average of respectively 14.9 percent verses 76.8 percent (including foreigners). Just as among most other ethnic groups of Lithuania, the relative share of the urban population among Russians was low (14.8 percent), though higher than that of Lithuanians (10.2 percent) and Poles (13.6 percent). For reference, Jews (63.5 percent) and Germans (34.7 percent) were the leaders of the urban population share. The share of Russians living in

²¹ This author based his calculations upon the data of the 1897 census in all of the Kaunas gubernia districts, four of Suwalki and one district of Vilnius gubernia of the Russian Empire.

²² The report of 9 November 1923 by the Director of the Central Statistics Bureau Gustavas Feterauskas, considering the primary census results (the addressee not mentioned, the most likely being the Prime Minister or the Government) // LCVA, f. 923, ap. 1, b. 313, l. 267.

rural areas (82 percent) was similar to that of Lithuanians (83.3 percent) and Poles (82.5 percent). All three groups mentioned were more strongly represented in rural areas than the Germans (58.2 percent) and Jews (5.2 percent). Towns of less than 2 000 people were counted in a separate category. These town residents amounted to 3.2 percent among Russians – it was the smallest share among the ethnic groups of Lithuania. For reference, 6.5 percent of Lithuanians lived in towns, as did 31.3 percent of Jews, 7.2 percent of Germans, and 4 percent of Poles (*Lietuvos gyventojai* 1923: XXXV; See also: Chart 3).

The 1897 census data on the distribution of the ethnic groups by the place of residence was less exhaustive than in 1923. Still, the data is enough to claim that the rate of Russians and their relative share in Lithuanian cities went down dramatically after the World War I. This decrease can be considered significant only if the military and their families are included in the general rate of Russians in 1897. In such a case the share of Russians amounts to 17.9 percent in Kaunas, 5.8 percent in Panevėžys, 4.7 percent in Šiauliai and 8.6 percent in Vilkmėrgė (Ukmergė) (see Chart 4). In Kaunas gubernia with the military and their families included the urban population was 35.8 percent and the rural population was a 64.2 percent share amongst Russians, but when excluding the military and their families the shares were respectively 19.8 percent and 80.2 percent (calculated from: *Первая всеобщая перепись...* (Т. 17) 1904: 2–4).

The evacuation of the populations from the Lithuanian gubernias to the core regions of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the World War I (1915) proved to be the crucial factor for the change of Russians' rates in urban and rural areas. A. Tyminsky saw this factor as a demographic loss for Russians. He noted that “the Russian officialdom, house owners, landowners, craftsmen, the free-lancers, everybody who belonged to the intelligentsia left Lithuania and in general never came back due to the revolution and the new political situation” (Тыминский 1931: 117–120). This author called the evacuation coercive though this interpretation is questionable. The considerable segment of the Russians who withdrew far inland were part of the state administrative apparatus rather than just ‘refugees’. Logically, they could not come back after the October coup in 1917 and the reestablishment of the Lithuanian independence.

Rapolas Skipitis, who was the Interior Minister in 1920–1922, found the evacuation-related losses of Russians natural. In his opinion, “it is not difficult to understand why so many Russians have left Lithuania. It is well-known that the total majority of the Russian officials in Lithuania were from the core Russia originally. Logically, they did not have a legal ground to return to Lithuania”. (Skipitis 1961: 265–266) This author used the term of “deportees” for the evacuated constant residents of Lithuania, and

the term “refugees” for the rest (Russians including). Lithuanian historiography has never stuck to this classification; only the term of “refugees” is used.²³

Some evacuated Russians came back to independent Lithuania with the wave of the reinstated refugees. Alongside with their personal decision, the terms of their return were determined by the priorities of the official immigration policy. Tomas Balkelis, who researched the specific features of this policy, noticed that at the spontaneous stage of the return (1918–summer 1920) refugees were free to travel back practically under no official supervision. However, at the stage of the organised reinstatement (summer 1920–1924) the notion of the nation-state prevailed over that of the civil-state; as a result, ethnically non-Lithuanian refugees faced the alienation as a potential threat to the state and the social stability. By the end of 1921, refugees who had lost their documents or had no relatives in Lithuania were actually kept out of the country. 25 percent of applications were rejected for this reason in May 1921, and 61 percent in November 1921 (Balkelis 2006: 57, 59). Even those who were let in were not guaranteed the right to stay in Lithuania. Every refugee had to obtain a “deportee returning home from Russia” certificate issued by the Unit for the Reinstatement of Deportees and Captives of the Ministry of Interior.²⁴

Importantly, not all the Russians who wished to return to Lithuania from their evacuation places actually did. The lack of data makes it difficult to grasp the scale of this factor, yet, even several hundreds or a thousand missing members could feel like a serious loss for a group which found itself unexpectedly in the minority position.

In the absence of alternative data on the ethno-demographic transformations of Lithuanian society during the evacuation of 1915, we have no choice but the approximate calculations by Rapolas Skipitis. They suggest that 365 000 out of 550 000 or 66.4 percent of refugees returned to Lithuania in 1918–1921. 35 000 or 9.6 percent of the returnees were Russian. The rate of the Russian refugees at the beginning of World War I was 90 000 (the Lithuanian refugees amounting to 250 000, Jewish to 160 000, Polish and other ethnicities to 50 000). Out of the above-mentioned 35 000

²³ Rapolas Skipitis gave the following explanations of these concepts: “All former ethnically Russian officials of Lithuania must fall within the category of the refugees, not deportees. Having predominantly Russian origin, they have just repatriated and almost all of them gained employment there. The ethnically Russian landowners and farmers who were settled in Lithuania in an effort of Russification should also be considered refugees. When living in Lithuania, they were under the patronage of Russia, and they fled to their patron with the beginning of the war and German occupation. I do not attach the counts Zubovs and several more Lithuanian-friendly Russian landlord families to this category” (Skipitis 196: 256).

²⁴ The testimony of M. Vedenskienė // LCVA, f. 394, ap. 4, b. 43, l. 826.

Russian returnees, 30 000 came back to Lithuania in 1918 or 1919, only 5 000 did in 1920 or 1921. If this data is at least approximately correct, the Jews outnumbered the Russians by the rates of the unreturned in absolute numbers (80 000 and 55 000 respectively), but Russians outnumber all the other ethnic groups by the share of those unreturned as Russians (61.1 percent as compared to 14 percent of Lithuanians, 50 percent of Jews, 42.9 percent of Poles and other ethnicities) (Skipitis 1961: 265).

The distribution by the cities

2 914 out of 7 458 or 39.1 percent of all the ethnically Russian urban residents of the Republic of Lithuania in 1923 lived in Kaunas, 633 (or 8.5 percent) in Panevėžys, 551 (7.4 percent) in Ukmergė, and 304 (4.1 percent) in Šiauliai. These four biggest cities were home to 59.1 percent of the urban Russians. Ukmergė had the biggest share of Russian population among them (5.2 percent), followed by Panevėžys (3.3 percent), Kaunas (3.2 percent) and Šiauliai (1.4 percent). Russians were outnumbered by Lithuanians and Jews in these cities, also by Poles in Panevėžys and by both Poles and Germans in Kaunas. In smaller cities the percentage of Russians were even lower (e.g. 1.8 percent in Mažeikiai, 1.7 percent in Tauragė, 1.6 percent in Alytus, Kalvarija and Rokiškis, 1.5 percent in Kėdainiai and Kupiškis, 1.4 percent in Telšiai etc.), Zarasai being the only obvious exception with 18.9 percent of the Russian population in 1923 (also 3.7 percent in Jonava, 2.5 percent in Raseiniai, and 2.5 percent in Jurbarkas) (*Lietuvos gyventojai* 1923: 41).

Zarasai (the former Novoaleksandrovsk) was the only city in Lithuania where the share of Russians increased compared to 1897 (up from 16.2 percent to 18.9 percent). The share of Russians (including the military) in Novoaleksandrovsk lagged behind that in Kaunas (25.8 percent) and Kalvarija (20.9 percent) during the 1897 census, but was higher than in Vilkmėrgė (Ukmergė) (15.4 percent), Marijampolė (14.4 percent), Panevėžys (12.7 percent), Šiauliai (9.6 percent), Wladyslawow (Kudirkos Naumiestis) (8.8 percent), Raseiniai (6.4 percent), Telšiai (4.9 percent), Šakiai (1.3 percent) and Prienai (0.9 percent). However, Novoaleksandrovsk was the leading city of Kaunas gubernia according to the share of Russians excluding the military and their families (16 percent), followed by Kaunas (7.9 percent), Panevėžys (6.9 percent), Vilkmėrgė (Ukmergė) (6.6 percent), Raseiniai (6.4 percent), Šiauliai (4.9 percent) and other cities (see Chart 4 and Table 5).

The evacuation of bureaucratic personnel of Lithuanian gubernias was a significant factor behind the demographic changes of the Russian group

after the World War I. The bureaucracy of Lithuanian provinces took shape in the 19th century as an outcome of the colonial policy of the Russian Empire in the region. Colonisation as a policy device aimed at more than the assimilation of the population of the province, the aspiration being the eventual unification of administration in the core and peripheral regions (read more on the peripheral colonisation in the section ‘The distribution at the periphery’). The principal cities of provinces and districts became the main centres of bureaucratic concentration, as they were the places where the highest local authorities, the branches of Russian central ministries and various lower-ranked political, judicial, economic, and social institutions functioned. The cities and towns of lower administrative authority were also subject to expanding bureaucracy, including local authorities and judicial institutions, police and stations, specific social establishments (e.g. border customs, post and telegraph branches, official schooling network etc.).²⁵ The development of the infrastructure and the demand for more skilled specialists can be considered an additional momentum for the growth. However, an assumption that the layer of bureaucracy was entirely Russian in ethnic terms would not be a precise one. Saying that the Russian influence for the formation of this layer before World War I was crucial is more accurate. The Russian Empire consistently filled the highest-ranked political institutions with its own personnel, but institutions of lower rank were open to local collaborators.²⁶ Russian native-speakers in 1897 constituted 56.1 percent of the “administration, judicial and police” personnel and 63.4 percent percent of the “post, telegraph and telephone” personnel in Kaunas gubernia (calculated according to: *Первая всеобщая перепись...* (Т. 17) 1904: 150–152).

The expanding networks of state-run schools and Orthodox parishes also encouraged the growth rate of Russians in the Lithuanian gubernias cities. As a rule, these networks were served by the newly-arrived staff of pedagogues and priests. Workers, craftsmen, merchants etc. immigrated from

²⁵ Mykolas Krupavičius (1885–1970) remembers that such a town as Papilė “was a place of residence to many intellectuals because there were the whole range of various institutions like the railway station, the court, the investigator, the doctor, the chemist’s, the parish with two priests etc. The absolute majority of them were Russians” (Krupavičius 1972: 81).

²⁶ Kazys Grinius expressed his astonishment in the memoirs: “The Russian authorities were so strange! They kept preparing for the war with Germans, but as late as at the beginning of the war in summer 1914, the bureau of military leadership in Marijampolė was full of exceptionally German officials. The military boss colonel Radkevich was the only Russian (or maybe Belarusian?) in the bureau, all others being local Germans nicknamed Prussians or sometimes half-Prussians or cross-Prussians as a joke [...]. Local Germans could be found almost at all the official institutions” (Grinius 1962: 101).

other imperial regions, which also had some impact. However, these categories gravitated more towards Riga or Reval (Tallinn), as the Lithuanian gubernias were industrially underdeveloped. Either way, the social and political status of Russians in the local society was disproportional to their official statistical population rate.²⁷

The dislocation of military subdivisions was one more important determinant of the multiplicity of Russians in the Lithuanian cities. Military servicemen constituted 24.2 percent of all Russians of Kaunas gubernia in 1897, but this percentage was much higher in the biggest cities (64.9 percent in Kaunas, 53.3 percent in Vilkmėrgė (Ukmergė), 45.0 percent in Šiauliai, 43.5 percent in Panevėžys). City size was just one factor of the military share, another one being the strategic situation. It explains the officially low concentration level of the Russian soldiery in some cities of Kaunas gubernia (1.1 percent in Zarasai, 0.4 percent in Raseiniai, 0.3 percent in Telšiai), while the cities of similar or smaller size in Suwalki gubernia were much more militarised (18.1 percent in Kalvarija, 10.1 percent in Marijampolė, 6.5 percent in Wladyslawow (Naumiestis), 3.9 percent in Vilkaviškis, 3.3 percent in Virbalis) (calculated according to: *Первая всеобщая перепись...* (Т. 17) 1904: 118). This data is certainly the least reliable in the 1897 census because secrecy concerns regarding actual numbers of soldiers may have been an important factor that may have affected publicly released information about the aspects of the military.

Besides, the October *coup d'état* of 1917 and the Civil War of 1918–1920 in Russia encouraged the mass emigration from the Soviet Union to various European states (so in a smaller degree did Lenin's decision to deport intellectuals). The Baltic States were not an attractive destination for Russian emigrants; still, those of them who believed there would be a swift collapse of the Bolshevik regime sometimes opted for these countries. With the disappearance of these delusions many emigrants left Lithuania for larger Russian emigration centres in Europe (e.g. Paris, Prague, Berlin etc.). Kaunas was the gravitation centre of the emigrants in Lithuania, as it seemed to be more attractive than other cities in terms of the political status, economic and cultural significance. Meanwhile the peripheral cities were dominated

²⁷ Aleksandras Stulginskis in the memoirs on his job search in youth claimed that “there was no hope to find a municipal clerk's job, as these jobs were virtually reserved for Russians” (Stulginskis 1980: 46). Kazys Grinius noted that police officers in the villages of Suwalki region were commonly recruited among Russian Orthodox military reservists. According to this author, a Lithuanian serving in imperial police was a rare example of a rather collaborative nature: “The locals having occasionally crept to their ranks were usually cross-Prussians or Prussians, or rarely a traitor Lithuanian Catholic” (Grinius 1962: 123–125).

by the older populations living there since the earlier waves of the migration to Lithuania. The official immigration policy as a factor of migrant multiplicity was in principle unfavourable to the foreigners.²⁸

Lithuania was not up to the intentions of the then-existing international organisations to set quotas for Russian migrants in different states of Europe. There is no evidence that the state government distinguished Russians from other migrants in any way (although the recent historical background would have suggested the opposite). The Head of the Citizen Defence Department of the Ministry of Interior (MI) of Lithuania in his note of 9 February 1924 informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) that “the MI disposes no special statistics on the ethnic Russian refugees from Russia and no possibility to provide precise numbers, but in general the number of such Russians compared to other foreigners in Lithuania is very small”.²⁹ Later on, the Department informed the MFA after a special investigation that by 31 January 1924 there were 827 residents “originating from the Great Russia” in the country, 180 Ukrainians, 1 420 Jews (total 2 427 individuals).³⁰

The information prepared urgently on demand from abroad is doubtful, especially because the same document contained the stipulation that the Russian migrants usually entered Lithuania illegally. A reliable account in this category was hardly possible under the conditions of the illegal migration and lack of interest in these people’s fate by the authorities. The quantitative rates of Russians in cities would have been more precise if during the 1923 census, had the post-revolution migrants temporarily residing in Lithuania been included alongside those naturalised. As it was not done, the census rate of Russians in Kaunas and all the country did not correspond to the real situation. The Russian emigrant historiography has

²⁸ Rapolas Skipitis stated in his memoirs: “Although the number of the foreigners was all the time around 10 and never reached 20 thousand, Lithuanian society vigilantly sought to keep down their multiplicity in our self-establishing state. We had a feeling that the foreigners who where almost all non-Lithuanians by origin constituted a danger to our state security. On the other hand, during the first years we had no enough food for ourselves, let alone alien mouths. I felt this sensitivity of the society and was rather stingy with resident permits for foreigners. And still, some public figures time and again used to place blames on me for letting too many foreigners in” (Skipitis 1961: 229).

²⁹ The note No. 1036 of 9 February 1924 by the Head of the Citizen Defence Department of the Ministry of Interior to the Head of the Department on the League of Nations and Polish Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs // LCVA, f. 394, ap. 3, b. 568, l. 1.

³⁰ The note No. 1036 of 18 February 1924 by the Head of the Citizen Defence Department of the Ministry of Interior to the Head of the Department on the League of Nations and Polish Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs // LCVA, f. 394, ap. 3, b. 568, l. 5.

recorded much higher rates of Russians living in the Republic of Lithuania.³¹ The discrepancy of these rates with those recorded in independent Lithuania should be an argument for the revision of the quantitative rates of Russians established by the 1923 census.

The distribution at the periphery

According to the 1897 census, Russians made up 3.3 percent of the population in Kaunas gubernia and 2.6 percent in Suwalki gubernia. The districts of Zarasai, Kaunas and Ukmergė had the biggest shares of Russians (9.1, 3.6 and 3.2 percent respectively), while in the rest of the districts this percentage was between 1.1 and 1.8 (calculated according to: *Первая всеобщая перепись...* (Т. 17) 1904: 3).

In Suwalki gubernia, the district of Marijampolė had the biggest share (3.1 percent), while in the others Russians' percentage was below 1.5 (besides the districts of Seinai and Suwalki, but they did not become a part of independent Lithuania). In Vilnius gubernia, which became a part of Poland after the World War I, the share of Russians was just 3.1 percent in 1897 (find more in Tables 1, 2 and 3).

According to the 1923 census, the share of Russians among the peripheral population of the Republic of Lithuania was 2.6 percent. Districts of the North-Eastern Lithuania had a somewhat more significant percentage of Russians: 15.4 percent in Zarasai district, 6.6 percent in Rokiškis district, 4.5 percent in Utena district and 2.4 percent in Ukmergė district (*Lietuvos gyventojai 1923*: 41) (see Table 4). These four districts were home to 40.2 percent of all the registered Lithuanian citizens of Russian ethnicity (81.8 percent of them being Old Believers). Russians remained a visible part of the population after the World War I in the districts of Kaunas (5.8 percent) and Šiauliai (2.6 percent). The share of the Russian population in the rest of the districts was below 2 percent (the lowest being 0.3 percent in districts of Kretinga and Marijampolė, and 0.8 percent in districts of Tauragė and Vilkaviškis). Comparing the rates of Russians in 1897 and 1923 district by district would be imprecise, because the administrative division borders in the Lithuanian gubernias of Russia were different from those in independent Lithuania.

³¹ The Russian historian Mark Raeff who used the sources of different international organisations pointed out that the rate of Russian emigrants in the Republic of Lithuania in 1922–1937 fluctuated between 5,000 and 8,000 individuals (Paev 1994: 261–262).

One of the newest publications on Russian migration in Russia claims that the rate of Russian emigrants in Lithuania amounted to around 50 000–70 000 before 1920, 50 000 in the middle of 1921, 5 000 in 1923, and 10 000 in 1925 (Поляков 2000: 141).

The 1923 statistics by the municipal units (*valsčius*) suggests the clearest picture of Russian concentration at the Lithuanian periphery. The Russians constituted up to one third or one fifth of population in some municipalities. Their share was 34.8 percent in Turžėnų municipality of Kaunas district, 30.8 percent in Degučių mun. of Zarasai district, 29.5 percent in Paupinės mun. (Zarasai), 26.8 percent in Smalvų mun. (Zarasai), 21.1 percent in Viešintų mun. (Panevėžys), 18.4 percent in Obelių mun. (Rokiškis), 17.8 percent in Vaiguvo mun. (Šiauliai) etc. Russians constituted above 10 percent of the population in 15 municipal units (see Table 6), and between 4–10 percent in 33 municipal units (out of total of 365). As mentioned above, the 1897 census-takers did not register the population and ethnicities rates by municipalities.

The migration of Old Believers to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was probably a significant factor for the distribution of Russians at the Lithuanian periphery both at the times of the Russian Empire and independent Lithuania. According to the historian Grigorij Potashenko, the first members of this religious group settled in the territory of the Great Duchy of Lithuania during the second half of the 17th century, while at the beginning of the 18th century mass migration started. The Old Believers leaving for Lithuania was a consequence of the schism within the Russian Orthodox Church after reforms initiated by patriarch Nikon. Religious prosecution and social discrimination of Old Believers followed. Some fled for economic reasons (unbearable duties, taxes etc.) and they expected a better life in the Great Duchy of Lithuania, where Polish and Lithuanian landowners readily accepted them to occupy the territories devastated by wars, bad harvest and epidemics. The Russian landowners considered Old Believers ‘traitors’ and ‘deserters’, the Church called them ‘Raskolniks’ or ‘heretics’. The relatively high religious tolerance in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and economic interests of local landlords enabled Old Believers to make up numerous communities, especially in North-Western territories of the Great Duchy of Lithuania (with populations between 25 000 and 30 000 in 1795). With the start of Russian occupation of the Duchy since the middle of 18th century, Old Believers moved further West. Firstly they concentrated at the provinces neighbouring Russia (Livonian, Courland, Polatsk and Vitsebsk). Later on, especially after 1772, they transmigrated to the core of the state, including the Northern part of Vilnius province (in the surroundings of Rokiškis, Kupiškis, Zarasai) (Поташенко 2006: 7, 143, 162, 271). Old Believers constituted the dominant part of the Russian population in Lithuanian gubernias before 1795 (the Orthodox being basically absent in the religious mosaic of the ethnic Lithuanian territories of the Duchy, except in Vilnius).

The places around Zarasai, Utena, Ukmergė and Kaunas proved to be major centres of Russian communities both before and after the World War I according to the 1897 and 1923 censuses. It appears as though the evacu-

ation of 1915 affected the urban Russian communities but not the settlements of Old Believers. Some of them withdrew to some more remote regions of the Russian Empire at the beginning of World War I, but the majority returned later on to live in independent Lithuania.

The government-organised colonisation of Lithuanian gubernias of the Russian Empire in the 19th century was an equally important factor of the multiplicity of Russians at the periphery. It reduced the share of Old Believers among Russians in favour of the Orthodox. The Russian imperial institutions used the migrants of this wave for two goals: (1) reinforcement of Old Believers' centres in the Great Duchy of Lithuania, and (2) creation of a new network of colonists. These processes must be kept in mind when interpreting the change of the rates of Russians between 1897 and 1923.

The migration of Old Believers to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (until the end of the 18th century) was more targeted to some specific localities. As for state-run colonisation (since around 1863), efforts of the imperial Government was more significant. As a result, the 1897 and 1923 censuses found out considerable shares of Russians both in their traditional places of concentration and in districts much further to the West away from Vilnius and Kaunas. Lithuanian historiography on the colonisation processes is quite well-developed (studies by Rimantas Vėbra, Pranas Čepėnas, Egidijus Aleksandravičius, Antanas Kulakauskas etc.); therefore suffice it to say here that colonisation did influence the ethnic composition of the Lithuanian periphery, but just fragmentally and in a way different from the initiators' expectations.³² The colonists dispersed among localities dominated by Lithuanian farmers, leaving Russian compact settlements (Old Believers' centres) unemployed for the goal of the new network development.³³

³² Some contemporary authors found that only the governors-general Mikhail Muravyov and Constantine Kaufmann were successful at colonisation, as these two managed to use new waves of Russian migrants for the expansion of the existing network of the Old Believers. The later governors-general were blamed for "ignoring the 730 settlements of the Russian Old Believers existing in Kaunas gubernia by 1862. They could have used this firm basis for the colonisation measures by merging the founded Russian settlements into bigger centres and reinforcing their influence. Instead, they compromised the idea of Muravyov, because they relied only on the Russian new-comers selected by personal trust" (Станкевич 1909: LXIV).

³³ Kazys Grinius noted in his memoirs on the colonisation of Kaunas and Suwalki regions: "In my days there still were some settlements like Vandžiogala once allotted to Old Believers near Kačėrginė, Kaunas region. By 1934 it was still populated by 8 Old Believers, and one Lithuanian. Once around 1935 I found a village with 30 Russian farmers and maybe three Lithuanians admixed, not far from Lapės, in Ibėnai. [...] Under Stolypin's rule, an estate was allotted to Russians in Paprūsė, district of Vilkaviškis. According to the newspapers, Stolypin intended a targeted colonisation of Lithuanian territories bordering Prussia. Should Bagrov have not assassinated Stolypin, he would have ruled Russia for more than four years and probably bred even more Muscovites in Lithuania" (Grinius 1962: 209).

The historian Rimantas Vėbra calculated that, by 1867, 165 settlements with 1 206 colonist families had been founded in Kaunas gubernia. 2 113 families were settled between 1876 and 1880 on 34 000 *dessiatinas*³⁴ (37 060 hectares) of land distributed among them. The total rate of colonists settled in Kaunas gubernia (mostly in Kaunas, Šiauliai and Ukmergė districts) in this period was about 11 000. Another historian Pranas Čepėnas claims there were 2 987 new Russian families (mostly Old Believers) brought to Kaunas gubernia between 1863 and 1891; according to the card index of the colonists, by 1907 Russian settlements in the gubernia numbered 999 (754 Old Believers' and 245 Orthodox). 479 more Russian families (208 Orthodox and 271 Old Believers) were settled in 1908 via the Land-bank (Čepėnas 1992: 113, 122).

In spite of these efforts, Russian imperial authorities failed to change the peripheral distribution of Russian concentrations at the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. The traditional Old Believers' regions remained dominant: Novoaleksandrovsk district (surroundings of Braslau, Vidzy, Salakas, Smalvos, Tauragnai, Antalieptė, Dusetų, Anatazavės, Obeliai, Rokiškis etc.) and to a lesser extent the districts of Kaunas (surroundings of Jonava, Aleksandrovskaya Sloboda, Babtai and Raudondvaris) and Ukmergė (Anykščiai, Raguva, Utena, Užpaliai, Debeikiai, Vyžuonos). Interestingly, the colonisation strategy of the Russian Empire was not favourable for the integration of Russians into the unfamiliar environment. The colonists differed from other groups by their physical type, conduct or personality, not to mention the religion and bad farming skills under local conditions. As a result, most of them failed to find their place in society (though enjoyed numerous privileges). The colonist-unfriendly economy of the province must also have been a factor.

In Petras Kalnius' opinion, poor urbanisation and industrialisation was one more reason behind the failure of the colonists to considerably change the ethno-demography of society (Kalnius 2002: 477). The economic system of the province required good farming experience under local conditions. The inexperienced colonists failed to farm effectively and became figures of fun for the locals. With many alternative destinations available throughout the Empire, a common choice for colonists was conceding a land lot and moving to Siberia or other gubernias.³⁵ The political reasons en-

³⁴ 1 *dessiatina* ~1.09 ha.

³⁵ The second Lithuanian President Aleksandras Stulginskis who was an agronomist noted in his memoirs that "the Russian authorities wasted money for colonisation in vain, as the contingent of colonists lacked culture, and secondly, it was not so easy to farm here, one needed experience and hard work, something in general Russians are not very good in" (Stulginskis 1980: 91).

couraged the distrust of new-comers by society. The land immigrants settled in amongst locals could have once belonged to the former insurgents of 1863 or other politically prosecuted Lithuanians who had been deported to Russia. The negative image of a typical Russian colonist (heavy drinker, thief, brawler etc.) among Lithuanians grew to be a collective rather than personal perception and one more obstacle to the integration.³⁶

For these reasons, a part of the colonists sold out state-donated property and left the Lithuanian gubernias even before World War I, and another part followed suit during the evacuation of the population to core regions of Russia. Besides the Old Believers' areas in North-Eastern districts, only some isolated incompact settlements of colonists (e.g. Vickšniai and other 'fermas' – settlement of agricultural colonists – in Telšiai district, Gegobrasa (*Nikolskoye*) and Lebeniškiai in Panevėžys district, Ibėnai and Užusaliai in Kaunas district etc.) remained in independent Lithuania.

Concluding remarks

As a conclusion of the analysis of the 1897 and 1923 census data, it may be claimed that reservations must be kept in mind when using this data for generalisations or comparisons. Remaining an exclusively important source of information on the rate of Russians and their distribution by the place of residence in the Lithuanian gubernias or the Republic of Lithuania, the census suggests a schematic (static) image of society. Alongside the goal of becoming acquainted with the population and its characteristics (such as place of residence, ethnic composition, religion etc.), the political interests and ideology of the Government stand behind this picture. The *a priori* considerations of the census-takers determine the criteria of constructing the population categories. Logically, the categorisation appears to be pregnant

³⁶ The bishop Justinas Staugaitis shared his childhood memories in 1921: "People of Zavanvykai land were not fond of Muscovites. Their image was clear since childhood, thanks to fairy-tales and games. A Muscovite was always furious, cruel, rude, quite a terrible human being. People were even angrier with the Muscovites because they always had something to eat without working. A saying went that a "Muscovite is a worker of eating and sleeping". Jews stood even lower in the eyes of Zavanvykai people". (Staugaitis 1921: 98–99)

Adolfas Šapoka described a typical colonist as follows: "As Lithuanians were growing more self-educated and conscious, Russians as the most backward element of the society had no impact on them. Moreover, they were people of a different ethnicity and religion, and backed by the authorities – so Lithuanians did not like them. What was the most unattractive for the Lithuanians was Russians' ignorance and immorality, proved by heavy drinking, scuffles, or thefts. Lithuanians considered every Russian a dishonest person. Logically, such a contingent could not assist Russification: nobody trusted them, everyone avoided them" (Šapoka 1936: 493–494).

with the data desired by the census-initiators. The census results turn into a forcible argument for the government when prioritising among social, economic or cultural policies, therefore the primary expectation is to have convenient results.

The structural differences of the 1897 and 1923 censuses prove that the strategies of constructing the ethnic and religious composition of society are different in the case of an empire and nation-state. An empire seems to prefer the image of a more heterogeneous society; this is why the 1897 census in Russia was scrupulous in ethnographically revising the population. Highlighting the rates of the dominant group was a priority of this revision. Still, the rates of this group in the ethnic provinces were mostly determined by the influences stemming from the political centres of the state rather than outcomes of group development at local level. Therefore, the arguments and claims about a group's presence in a certain territory (and whatever significance attributed by the state or society expressing the claims) are usually trivial and unsound.

However, a nation-state's usual aspiration when holding a census is to make sure that the newly-built state construction is well-grounded. The rise of a secondary or more ethnic groups is potentially a large problem a nation-state can face. The state governments focus on backing the ethnic majority – this effort (especially in the domestic policy) is legitimised by favourable census data. The experience of the 1923 census in the Republic of Lithuania can serve as evidence that participation of the ethnic minorities in census-taking is viewed as undesirable in terms of obtaining pro-majority results. Some parts of the society, e.g. Russian emigrants, may be kept invisible when left beyond the construction of the ethnic categories.

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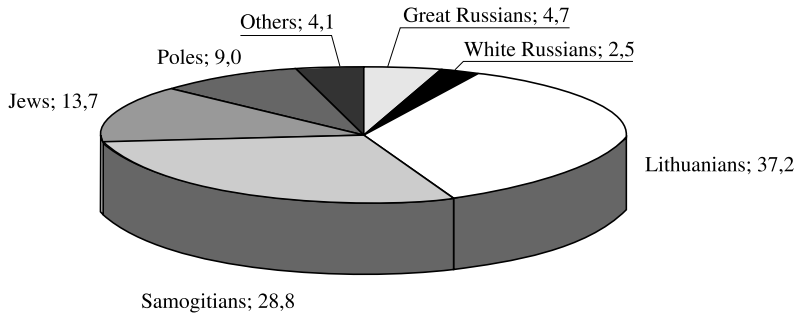
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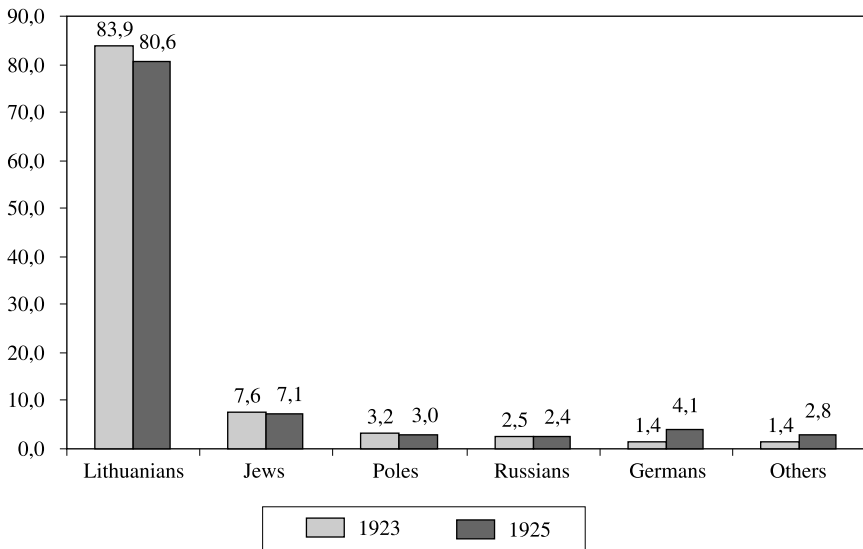
Appendix

CHART 1. The distribution of population in Kaunas gubernia by native language, 1897 (percent):



ACCORDING TO: *Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г.* Т. 17. С. 2–3.

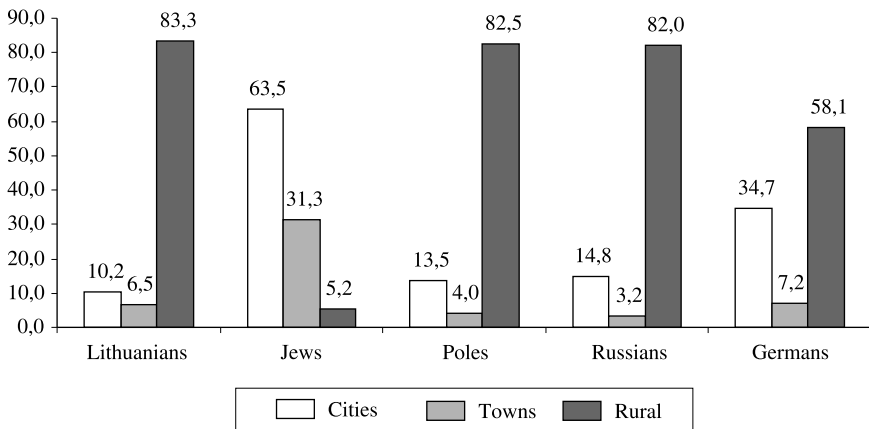
CHART 2. Ethnic composition of population of Republic of Lithuania, 1923 (Klaipėda region excluded) and 1925 (Klaipėda region included) (percent):



ACCORDING TO: Lietuvos gyventojai, p. XXXVI; Lietuvos statistikos metraštis 1932 m. (1933). Kaunas. P. 9.

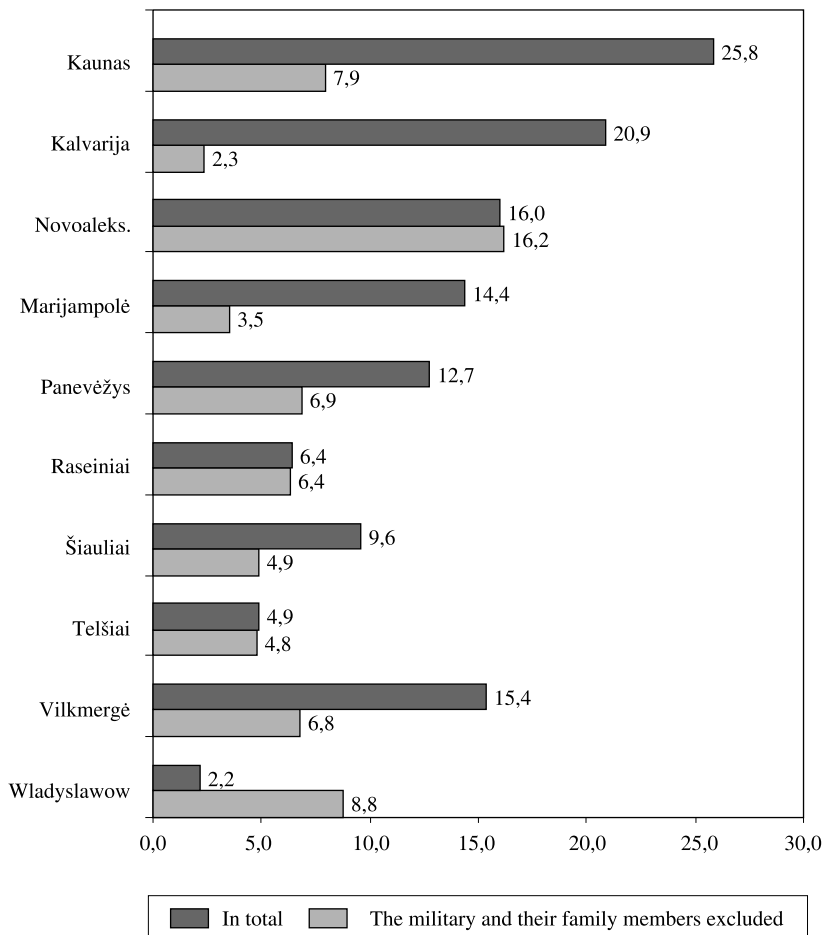
NOTE: The category “others” (total 40 075) included respondents of ethnicities not mentioned here and 34,337 respondents, who called themselves ‘Klaipėdians’ (residents of Klaipėda) (1925).

CHART 3. Distribution of Lithuanians, Jews, Poles, Russians and Germans by place of residence in Republic of Lithuania, 1923 (percent):



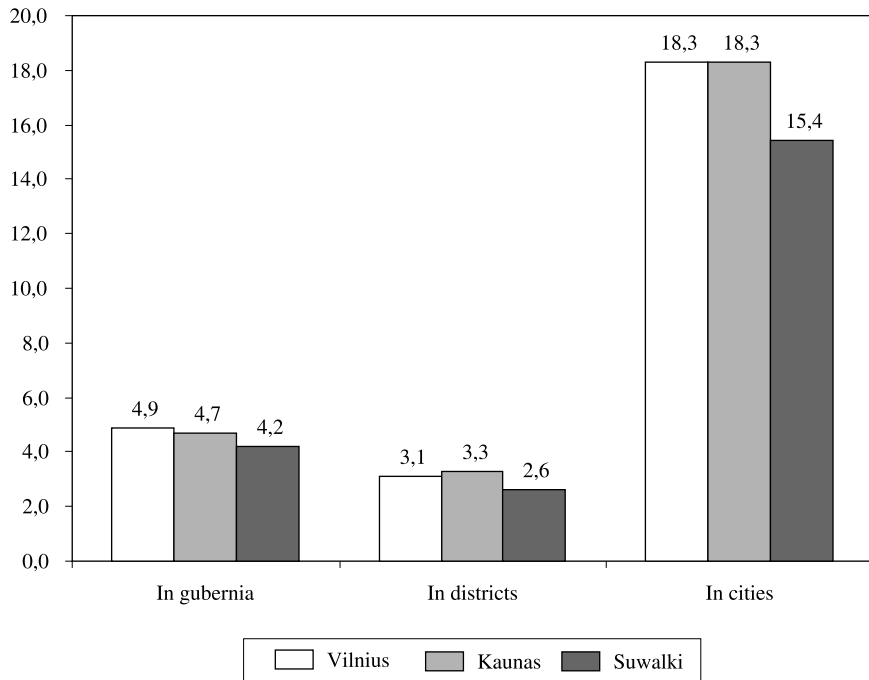
ACCORDING TO: Lietuvos gyventojai, p. XXXVII.

CHART 4. Share of Russians (Great Russians) in cities Kaunas and Suwalki gubernias (percent):



ACCORDING TO: *Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г.* Т. 17. С. 170, 174, 178, 184, 188, 192, 196; Т. 59. С. 138–140, 142–144, 148–150.

CHART 5. Distribution of Russians (Great Russians) by place of residence in gubernias of Vilnius, Kaunas and Suwalki, 1897 (percent):



ACCORDING TO: *Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г.* Т. 4. С. IX; Т. 17. С. IX-X; Т. 59. С. IX.

TABLE 1. Distribution of Great Russians, Little Russians (Ukrainians) and White Russians (Belarusians) in districts and cities of Kaunas gubernia, 1897:

| District / city | Great Russians | | Little Russians | | White Russians | |
|----------------------|----------------|---------|-----------------|---------|----------------|---------|
| | Rate | Percent | Rate | Percent | Rate | Percent |
| Kaunas d. | 8170 | 3.6 | 10 | 0.0 | 55 | 0.0 |
| Kaunas c. | 18308 | 25.8 | 236 | 0.3 | 957 | 1.3 |
| Vilkmergė d. | 7334 | 3.2 | 14 | 0.0 | 85 | 0.0 |
| Vilkmergė c. | 2078 | 15.4 | 111 | 0.8 | 77 | 0.6 |
| Novoaleksandrovsk d. | 18897 | 9.1 | 3 | 0.0 | 34540 | 16.6 |
| Novoaleksandrovsk c. | 1033 | 16.2 | 5 | 0.1 | 88 | 1.4 |
| Vidzy c. | 661 | 13.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 408 | 8.0 |
| Panevėžys d. | 2522 | 1.1 | 25 | 0.0 | 112 | 0.1 |
| Panevėžys c. | 1652 | 12.7 | 2 | 0.0 | 128 | 1.0 |
| Raseiniai d. | 4164 | 1.8 | 747 | 0.3 | 305 | 0.1 |
| Raseiniai c. | 477 | 6.4 | 7 | 0.1 | 3 | 0.0 |

TABLE 1 (continued)

| District / city | Great Russians | | Little Russians | | White Russians | |
|------------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| | Rate | Percent | Rate | Percent | Rate | Percent |
| Telšiai d. | 2020 | 1.1 | 468 | 0.3 | 119 | 0.1 |
| Telšiai c. | 303 | 4.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Šiauliai d. | 3643 | 1.5 | 32 | 0.0 | 823 | 0.3 |
| Šiauliai c. | 1540 | 9.5 | 22 | 0.1 | 94 | 0.6 |
| Šeduva c. | 68 | 1.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 0.1 |
| Gubernia total | 72872 | 4.7 | 1682 | 0.1 | 37798 | 2.4 |
| Districts total | 46750 | 3.3 | 1299 | 0.1 | 36039 | 2.6 |
| Cities total | 26122 | 18.2 | 383 | 0.3 | 1759 | 1.2 |

ACCORDING TO: *Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г.* Т. 17. С. 168, 170, 172, 174, 176, 178, 182, 184, 186, 188, 190, 192, 194, 196.

TABLE 2. Distribution of Great Russians, Little Russians (Ukrainians) and White Russians (Belarusians) in districts and cities of Suwalki gubernia, 1897:

| District / city | Great Russians | | Little Russians | | White Russians | |
|------------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| | Rate | Percent | Rate | Percent | Rate | Percent |
| Suwalki d. | 2415 | 2.6 | 406 | 0.4 | 5 | 0.0 |
| Suwalki c. | 4894 | 21.6 | 147 | 0.6 | 221 | 1.0 |
| Augustow d. | 1870 | 2.4 | 212 | 0.3 | 25355 | 32.0 |
| Augustow c. | 2381 | 18.7 | 9 | 0.1 | 357 | 2.8 |
| Wladyslawow d. | 175 | 0.3 | 21 | 0.0 | 5 | 0.0 |
| Wladyslawow c. | 403 | 8.8 | 276 | 6.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Šakiai c. | 28 | 1.3 | 3 | 0.1 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Vilkaviškis d. | 1043 | 1.4 | 450 | 0.6 | 4 | 0.0 |
| Vilkaviškis c. | 440 | 7.6 | 84 | 1.5 | 6 | 0.1 |
| Virbalis c. | 123 | 3.7 | 13 | 0.4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Kalvarija d. | 618 | 0.9 | 51 | 0.1 | 3 | 0.0 |
| Kalvarija c. | 1960 | 20.9 | 223 | 2.4 | 84 | 0.9 |
| Marijampolė d. | 3554 | 3.1 | 164 | 0.1 | 482 | 0.4 |
| Marijampolė c. | 969 | 14.4 | 7 | 0.1 | 7 | 0.1 |
| Prienai c. | 22 | 0.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Sejny d. | 3470 | 4.2 | 16 | 0.0 | 37 | 0.0 |
| Sejny c. | 95 | 2.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.0 |
| Gubernia total | 24460 | 4.2 | 2082 | 0.4 | 26567 | 4.6 |
| Districts total | 13145 | 2.6 | 1320 | 0.3 | 25891 | 5.1 |
| Cities total | 11315 | 15.4 | 762 | 1.0 | 676 | 0.9 |

ACCORDING TO: *Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г.* Т. 59. С. 130, 132, 134, 136, 140, 142, 144, 146, 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158.

TABLE 3. Distribution of Great Russians, Little Russians (Ukrainians) and White Russians (Belarusians) in districts and cities of Vilnius gubernia, 1897:

| District / city | Great Russians | | Little Russians | | White Russians | |
|------------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|-------------|
| | Rate | Percent | Rate | Percent | Rate | Percent |
| Vilnius d. | 78623 | 21.6 | 557 | 0.2 | 93896 | 25.8 |
| Vilnius c. | 30967 | 20.0 | 517 | 0.3 | 6514 | 4.2 |
| Vileika d. | 1932 | 0.9 | 11 | 0.0 | 180709 | 86.9 |
| Vileika c. | 217 | 6.1 | 2 | 0.1 | 1871 | 52.6 |
| Radashkovichy c. | 76 | 2.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 500 | 19.1 |
| Dziszna d. | 12129 | 5.9 | 23 | 0.0 | 166151 | 81.1 |
| Dziszna c. | 396 | 5.9 | 2 | 0.0 | 1567 | 23.2 |
| Druya c. | 377 | 8.0 | 12 | 0.3 | 1157 | 24.4 |
| Lida d. | 2560 | 1.2 | 134 | 0.1 | 150535 | 73.2 |
| Lida c. | 1485 | 15.9 | 120 | 1.3 | 855 | 9.2 |
| Ashmiany d. | 5474 | 2.3 | 31 | 0.0 | 186752 | 80.0 |
| Ashmiany c. | 812 | 11.3 | 8 | 0.1 | 1981 | 27.5 |
| Švenčionys d. | 9038 | 5.2 | 9 | 0.0 | 81845 | 47.5 |
| Švenčionys c. | 988 | 16.4 | 7 | 0.1 | 351 | 5.8 |
| Trakai d. | 9314 | 4.6 | 154 | 0.1 | 32015 | 15.7 |
| Trakai c. | 860 | 26.5 | 2 | 0.1 | 261 | 8.1 |
| Gubernia total | 78623 | 4.9 | 919 | 0.1 | 891903 | 56.1 |
| Cities total | 36178 | 18.3 | 670 | 0.3 | 15057 | 7.6 |
| Districts total | 42445 | 3.0 | 249 | 0.0 | 876846 | 62.9 |

ACCORDING TO: *Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г.* T. 4. С. 112, 114, 116, 118, 120, 122, 124, 126, 128, 130, 132, 134.

TABLE 4. Ethnic composition of population in cities, towns and rural areas of the Republic of Lithuania, 1923 (percent):

| Ethnicity | Cities | | Towns | | Population total | |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| | Rural areas | Percent | Rural areas | Percent | Rural areas | Percent |
| Lithuanians | 172803 | 57.1 | 111374 | 66.4 | 1417686 | 91.0 |
| Jews | 97618 | 32.2 | 48087 | 28.7 | 8038 | 0.5 |
| Poles | 8883 | 2.9 | 2596 | 1.6 | 54120 | 3.5 |
| Russians | 7458 | 2.5 | 1623 | 1.0 | 41379 | 2.6 |
| Germans | 10132 | 3.4 | 2104 | 1.1 | 16995 | 1.1 |
| Latvians | 1594 | 0.5 | 732 | 0.5 | 12557 | 0.8 |
| Belarusians | 430 | 0.1 | 184 | 0.1 | 3807 | 0.2 |
| Others | 322 | 0.1 | 351 | 0.2 | 919 | 0.1 |
| Foreigners | 3694 | 1.2 | 598 | 0.4 | 2887 | 0.2 |
| Total: | 302934 | 100 | 167649 | 100 | 1558388 | 100 |
| Total (percent): | 14.9 | - | 8.3 | - | 76.8 | - |

ACCORDING TO: *Lietuvos gyventojai*, p. XXXVII.

TABLE 5. Rate and the share of Russians (Great Russians) in cities according to 1897 and 1923 census data*:

| City | 1897 total | | 1897, with the military and their families excluded | | 1923 | |
|---|------------|---------|---|---------|------|---------|
| | Rate | Percent | Rate | Percent | Rate | Percent |
| Kaunas | 18308 | 25.8 | 5609 | 7.9 | 2914 | 3.2 |
| Kalvarija | 1960 | 20.9 | 217 | 2.3 | 70 | 1.6 |
| Kudirkos Naumiestis (<i>Wladyslawow</i>) | 403 | 8.8 | 102 | 2.2 | 27 | 0.9 |
| Marijampolė | 969 | 14.4 | 235 | 3.5 | 103 | 1.1 |
| Prienai | 22 | 0.9 | 22 | 0.9 | 3 | 0.1 |
| Panevėžys | 1652 | 12.7 | 890 | 6.9 | 633 | 3.3 |
| Raseiniai | 477 | 6.4 | 474 | 6.4 | 132 | 2.5 |
| Šakiai | 28 | 1.3 | 28 | 1.3 | 3 | 0.2 |
| Šiauliai | 1540 | 9.6 | 793 | 4.9 | 304 | 1.4 |
| Telšiai | 303 | 4.9 | 298 | 4.8 | 67 | 1.4 |
| Ukmergė (<i>Vilkmergė</i>) | 2078 | 15.4 | 914 | 6.6 | 551 | 5.2 |
| Zarasai (<i>Novoaleksandrovsk</i>) | 1033 | 16.2 | 1016 | 16.0 | 717 | 18.9 |

* The cities covered by both censuses are included. The cities of Vilnius gubernia were not a part of the Republic of Lithuania in 1923.

ACCORDING TO: *Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г.* Т. 17. С. 170, 174, 178, 184, 188, 192, 196; Т. 59. С. 136, 140, 148–150, 152–154; *Lietuvos gyventojai*, p. XXXVIII–XXXIX.

TABLE 6. Municipal units (*valsčiai*) of the Republic of Lithuania with share of Russian population of 4 percent and more in 1923:

| District | Municipal units | In the municipal units Share of Russians | In the district | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------------------|---|--|
| | | | Share of Russians | Share of Old Believers among the Russians | Share of the Orthodox among the Russians |
| Biržai–Pasvalys | Žeimelio | 4.8 | 1.1 | 37.3 | 61.3 |
| Kaunas | Turžėnų | 34.8 | 5.8 | 78.7 | 20.5 |
| | Jonavos | 18.0 | | | |
| | Vandžiogalos | 14.5 | | | |
| Kėdainiai | Pašušvio | 5.9 | 1.9 | 59.7 | 36.7 |
| | Žemių | 4.7 | | | |
| Mažeikiai | Vėgerių | 12.5 | 1.9 | 62.4 | 37.1 |
| | Mažeikių | 5.2 | | | |

TABLE 6 (continued)

| District | Municipal units | In the municipal units Share of Russians | In the district | | |
|-----------|-----------------|---|-------------------|---|--|
| | | | Share of Russians | Share of Old Believers among the Russians | Share of the Orthodox among the Russians |
| Panevėžys | Viešintų | 21.1 | 2 | 73.4 | 25.8 |
| | Meškų | 8.7 | | | |
| | Raguvos | 4.2 | | | |
| Rokiškis | Obelių | 18.4 | 6.6 | 93.7 | 5.7 |
| | Kriaunų | 10.6 | | | |
| | Rokiškio | 10.1 | | | |
| | Juodupio | 8.5 | | | |
| | Skapiškio | 5.9 | | | |
| Sejny | Lazdijų | 5.1 | 1.8 | 73.2 | 25.9 |
| | Kučinų | 5.0 | | | |
| Šiauliai | Vaiguvos | 17.8 | 2.6 | 62.7 | 36.8 |
| | Užvenčio | 10.3 | | | |
| | Šaukėnų | 8.6 | | | |
| | Raudėnų | 7.4 | | | |
| | Šiaulėnų | 5.9 | | | |
| Telšiai | Luokės | 6.6 | 1.8 | 33.2 | 65.4 |
| | Nevarėnų | 6.2 | | | |
| Trakai | Kruonio | 6.8 | 3.3 | 30.7 | 67.5 |
| | Žiežmarių | 6.5 | | | |
| Ukmergė | Deltuvos | 5.4 | 2.4 | 62.3 | 36.8 |
| | Giedraičių | 4.7 | | | |
| | Balnininkų | 4.5 | | | |
| Utena | Tauragnų | 15 | 4.5 | 62 | 37.6 |
| | Leliūnų | 8.3 | | | |
| | Vyžuonų | 5.5 | | | |
| | Molėtų | 5.3 | | | |
| | Skiemonių | 5.2 | | | |
| | Joniškio | 5.1 | | | |
| | Aluntos | 4.8 | | | |
| | Užpalių | 4.8 | | | |

TABLE 6 (continued)

| District | Municipal units | In the municipal units Share of Russians | In the district | | |
|----------|-----------------|---|-------------------|---|--|
| | | | Share of Russians | Share of Old Believers among the Russians | Share of the Orthodox among the Russians |
| Zarasai | Degučių | 30.8 | 15.4 | 94.1 | 5.8 |
| | Paupinės | 29.5 | | | |
| | Smalvų | 26.8 | | | |
| | Imbrado | 12.1 | | | |
| | Antalieptės | 9.7 | | | |
| | Antazavės | 8.2 | | | |
| | Dusetų | 6.4 | | | |

NOTE: Only the ethnic Russians naturalised as citizens of the Republic of Lithuania are counted. Data on foreign citizens was not registered in 1923.

ACCORDING TO: *Lietuvos gyventojai*, p. 19–26.

Rusai Lietuvoje 1897 ir 1923 m. gyventojų surašymų duomenimis: lyginamoji analizė

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SOCIALINIŲ TYRIMŲ INSTITUTAS, ETNINIŲ TYRIMŲ CENTRAS, LIETUVA

SANTRAUKA. Straipsnyje, remiantis autorių atliktos statistikos šaltinių – 1897 m. pirmojo visuotinio Rusijos imperijos gyventojų surašymo ir 1923 m. pirmojo visuotinio Lietuvos Respublikos gyventojų surašymo – duomenų lyginamosios analizės rezultatais, nagrinėjami esminiai rusų skaičiaus ir pasiskirstymo pagal gyvenamąją vietą nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje 1918–1940 m. veiksniai. Šio tyrimo prioritetas slypi ne siekyje konstatuoti ir apibendrinti surašymuose fiksuotas svarbiausias statistines reikšmes, bet išsamiau atskleisti, kokio pobūdžio priežastys lėmė būtent tokių reikšmių atsiradimą. Neatsitiktinai į autorių pateikiamos analizės akiratį pateko istoriškai visuotiniams gyventojų surašymams būdingos politinio konstravimo tendencijos. Kokie išskyla surašymų procese valdžios institucijų interesai? Atsižvelgiant į pastarąjį veiksnių, straipsnyje taip pat nagrinėjama, kokie kriterijai nulėmė etninių (iš dalies ir konfesinių) kategorijų sąrašo konstravimą daugianacionalinėje, tačiau vienai politinei ideologijai pakančioje Rusijos imperijoje ir kokiais bruožais minėtas sąrašas išsiskyrė lietuvių dominuojamoje tautinėje Lietuvos valstybėje. Kokia buvo „rusų“ kategorijos pozicija etninių kategorijų sąrašo 1897 iki 1923 m. surašymuose? Tyrime atskleidžiamos sąsajos, siejančios surašymų rezultatus su valstybės institucijų lūkesčiais.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: GYVENTOJŲ SURAŠYMAI, KATEGORIJŲ KONSTRAVIMAS, RUSAI, RUSŲ TERRORINIS PASISKIRSTYMAS.