ETHNIC GROUPS AND POPULATION CHANGES IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE

History, Data, and Analysis

PIOTR EBERHARDT

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Note on Terminology

Nation, Nationality, and Ethnic Group

These three signifiers are laden with political and emotional meanings in regard to central-eastern Europe. However, in this book they are used interchangeably and without any implied cultural or political evaluations. The basic category of "nation" is commonly understood to denote a community having a separate, well-developed culture (language, literature, folklore, customs and habits, religious traditions, music, and arts) and a common historical heritage. The concept of "nation" is generally but not necessarily associated with statehood. Within and between nations, various smaller, more specific ethnic communities may exist that differ only in some respects, or to a much lesser degree than do nations. This is especially true among the Slavic nations, where groups may not differ much in language but may produce a number of intermediary or overlapping dialects (as is true of groups living in the Polish–Belarusian–Ukrainian ethnic borderland) and folk cultures in which elements of more than one national culture are intermingled.

The notion of "nationality" is not as well defined, although the word is often used with a formal, official meaning (e.g., in documents of personal identification, such as passports); and as shown by events in socialist Yugoslavia, the concept in some contexts may be loaded with political implications. The notion of "ethnic group" is therefore particularly useful for neutrally denoting any community whose ethnic identity is clearly distinguishable from that of its neighbors, whatever the social or political status of that community.

Variants of Geographical Names

Locales in central-eastern Europe tend to have more than one commonly ac-
cepted place-name. This is primarily the result of historical changes in state
borders, as well as the overlap of various linguistic/cultural groups within the
same geographic location. A good illustration is provided by the toponyms in
Ukraine.

1. Some of the Ukrainian place-names originated in the Old Ruthenian
   period (in Kievan Ruthenia) in the tenth through the thirteenth centuries.
2. Many were subsequently changed, and new ones were established in
   connection with the emergence of new towns and new villages during
   the period of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (the fourteenth
   through the eighteenth centuries). During this period the Ukrainian popu-
   lation used the Ukrainian variants of these names, sometimes referring
   to the original names from the period of Kievan statehood, but more
   often using the Ukrainian-language versions of Polish names.
3. After the partitions of the Commonwealth, the Russian administration
   introduced its own variants of names or changed the names completely
   (nineteenth century). In common usage, usually three forms existed at
   that time—Ukrainian, Polish, and Russian, sometimes not only differ-
   ing in pronunciation and spelling but having entirely different meanings
   and/or origins. Polish names persisted in western Ukraine, where they
   had a quasi-official status.
4. After World War I, some Ukrainian names were brought back within
   Soviet Ukraine, but at the same time many of them were changed alto-
   gether for political reasons (mainly to reflect the communist ideas of the
   system). In the part of Ukraine that formerly belonged to Poland, the
   traditional Polish names continued to be used as the official ones.
5. After World War II, the names in the formerly Polish part of Ukraine
   were changed to either Ukrainian or Russian variants, or new, Soviet
   names were assigned.
6. After 1991, the names were consistently "ukrainized," meaning in many
   cases that the colloquial Ukrainian names of the nineteenth century were
   reinstated. Thus, the present Ukrainian names may be grouped in four
   different categories according to origin: (1) Old Ruthenian names (this is
   true only of a few important towns, such as Kiev); (2) Polish names
   reconfigured as Ukrainian ones (typical of the small-to-medium urban
   centers); (3) Ukrainian names that first appeared during the sixteenth
   through the eighteenth centuries in the autonomous areas of Ukraine (e.g.,
   the Zaporozhian Sich); (4) Ukrainian variants of Russian names dating

from the eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries, and of Soviet names
dating from the twentieth century (these are the least common).

When referring to a town or other political-geographic entity at the turn of the
twentieth century, I generally have used the name that was then officially
applied to it. Many such entities (e.g., the czarist governorates) ceased to
exist in subsequent periods. The same applies to the Polish provinces
(voivodships) of the interwar period.

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Preface

This book is about the ethnic history of central and eastern Europe, an area extremely differentiated with respect to nationalities, religious denominations, and languages. Although the complexity of this subject may be daunting even to historians, geographers, political scientists, ethnographers, and demographers who are familiar with the region, perseverance will bring rewards. The statistical tables and analysis presented in this volume will facilitate an understanding of events that have occurred in recent decades in central and eastern Europe—particularly the many conflicts that have been attributed to ethnic animosities. The most dramatic of these conflicts, associated with the disintegration of Yugoslavia, galvanized world public opinion to such an extent that the international community intervened militarily.

The ethnic transformations taking place in the countries that previously were subject to Soviet domination have not been well understood outside the region. Many views popularized through research reports or in the mass media have been oversimplifications based on faulty or incomplete information. In the scholarly community, prior to the demise of the Soviet system, the view had long prevailed that a resurgence of ethnic conflict in central-eastern Europe was improbable. Since the division of Europe carried out at Yalta, these countries had been subject to the influence of internationalist communist ideology. Many outsiders perceived central-eastern Europe as homogeneous in culture and in civilization, part of a vast Soviet bloc stretching from the Elbe river to the Pacific Ocean. Its individual countries and subregions were rarely analyzed separately. However, the sudden political eruptions beginning in 1989 focused the world's attention anew on the territories located between Russia and Germany, and inhabited by close to 200 million people.

This book examines the changing demography of central-eastern Europe over the course of the twentieth century. This subject is closely related to the

ethnic composition of individual countries and the spatial distribution of the ethnic groups that are numerically most significant. It seemed especially important to focus on the ethnically mixed areas, inhabited by people of different origin, language, or religion, because these areas most often became the objects of ethnic confrontations and disputes. With the downfall of the communist system and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, areas of mixed ethnicity were often sites of so-called ethnic cleansing aimed at the homogenization of disputed territories. Many of these ethnic conflicts are traceable to animosities that first flared up during the world wars.

Most of the national territories in this region have at one time or another been penetrated by populations from the outside, and most have responded to such pressures by seeking political supremacy and more advantageous boundaries. The fact that the national borders in this region of Europe have not always conformed to ethnic settlement patterns has contributed to the recurrence of military conflicts. The frequent boundary shifts that have ensued sometimes have resulted in deportations or resettlements of various ethnic groups.

The future of the nations that live between an increasingly integrated western Europe, in which a prominent role is and will continue to be played by Germany, and a recently isolated Russia that since the disintegration of Soviet power has been struggling to define a new strategy in regional and world affairs will not be easy. Their fate will depend to a large extent on their relations with one another. Will they be capable of transcending the past, or will they revert to old rivalries and animosities? These are important questions not only for the region but potentially for all of Europe. Yet because such questions can only be resolved by time, I leave them to the future and to my readers. Instead of predictions, I offer here the factual and statistical foundation for a better-informed understanding of ongoing events in this politically important part of Europe.

ETHNIC GROUPS AND POPULATION CHANGES IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE

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1. The Study of Ethnicity in Central-Eastern Europe

Ethnicity in central-eastern Europe is a subject of great interest to scholars of European geography, demography, and ethnography. Geographers pay special attention to its spatial aspect (i.e., the territorial distribution of individual ethnic groups); demographers attempt to quantify the ethnic characteristics of populations; and ethnographers assess the cultural features, both material and spiritual, that are characteristic of the various ethnic groups.

The focus in this book is on the geographic and demographic questions rather than on ethnology or ethnography. The book therefore contains broad statistical documentation of ethnic structure and ethnic change within the various pertinent national boundaries and administrative subdivisions. It also provides a unique set of maps in which these various spatial units of analysis are clearly delineated. I have chosen to maintain a consistent delimitation of geographical units regardless of historical period, so as to reveal changes over time in the geography of specific ethnic groups. The historical and contextual information necessary for understanding the demographic and ethnic transformations taking place is also provided.

The demography of central-eastern Europe is extremely complex. In many ways the region is a unified geographic entity; but it is also characterized by a diversity of nationalities, languages, religions, cultures, and customs. Nations speaking languages belonging to the Baltic, Slavic, Finno-Ugric, Indo-Aryan, and Italic branches, and subscribing to vastly different religious doctrines, are near neighbors in this region. In some countries, Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, or Protestantism predominates; in others, atheism is prevalent. Until World War II, the region as a whole was home to the largest Jewish population in the world. As a result of frequent border

changes and migrations, the ethnic boundaries in places have been blurred, and the borderlands typically have contained mixed populations. Without a systematic explanation of this ethnic structure, it is hard to understand the past and present of this part of Europe, much less to predict its future.

A preliminary opinion on the ethnic situation in central-eastern Europe had taken shape by the second half of the nineteenth century. Regular population censuses carried out in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the German Empire, by accounting for two specific markers of ethnicity (language and religious denomination), made it possible to identify the ethnic structure of a large part of central Europe. At the very end of the nineteenth century, the first modern population censuses were carried out in Russia, Romania, and Bulgaria. They became the basis for scientific studies and for many ethnic maps that appeared in geographical atlases, showing the reach of the particular nationalities, languages, or denominational groups within central-eastern Europe.

Scholarship devoted to the countries of central-eastern Europe developed haphazardly. The most creative period was that between the world wars, when many narrowly specialized studies were published about particular countries and a number of broader syntheses were carried out surveying the ethnic problems of this part of Europe. One should mention here the work of R. Pearson (1923), S. R. Steinmetz (1927), L. Tesnière (1928), W. Winkler (1931), E. Ammende (1931), L.Wasilewski (1933), and J. Chmelař (1937).

World War II resulted in essential boundary changes connected with the westward shift of the territory of Poland and the significant territorial spoils of the Soviet Union. These border changes triggered enormous migration movements in central-eastern Europe (J. B. Schechtman, 1946), aimed at achieving ethnic homogeneity within the individual countries of this region. This goal was only partly attained. Meanwhile, new geopolitical circumstances had arisen. In the confrontation between the West and the East, ethnic problems receded into the background. The common view emerged that ethnic questions, including those of nationality and religion, were of little significance in this part of Europe and would gradually disappear with time. Scholars in geography, demography, and the other social sciences in the countries taken over by the communists only sporadically addressed such problems. In addition, the existing political conditions were not advantageous for impartial scientific study. At the same time, these problems seemed distant and of little import to scholars in the West. Indeed, it was not scholars or politicians who initially sparked the Western intellectual elite's interest in central-eastern Europe, but the great writers of the region. The writings of Milan Kundera, György Konrád, Czesław Miłosz, Ismail Kadare, Tomas Venclova, and Danilo Kiš reminded the West of the existence of the dozen or so European nations,

each with a unique and varied culture, that had been under the domination of their overbearing neighbor for several decades. The Western community of scholars nevertheless failed for many years to credit (or to understand) the ferment that was gradually undermining the imposed order and opening up new possibilities in central-eastern Europe. For example, Western intellectuals characteristically viewed Andrei Amalrik's *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?* as a work of science fiction.

The breakdown of the communist system exerted an enormous influence on ethnic relations in central-eastern Europe. In the first phase, the satellite countries that had until then been subordinate to Soviet power and had enjoyed only limited sovereignty gained full independence. In the second phase, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia disintegrated and Czechoslovakia was sundered in two, as the formal federations were replaced by nation-states. The disintegration of the previous order into national units initiated a wave of ethnic conflicts of varying intensity, from minor disputes to military bloodbaths. Neither European nor American political scientists had foreseen this new geopolitical situation, due to their lack of consciousness of the importance of ethnic problems. Under the totalitarian system, numerous social needs, including unsatisfied national and religious aspirations, had been hidden and had gone unnoticed. The moment the political system was liberalized and the apparatus of repression disappeared, these needs emerged with great force—a force that had both destructive and creative potential. The drive to secure the rights of groups that had previously been discriminated against soon turned into an effort to impose a new kind of imprisonment and subordination based on nationalist principles.

The new geopolitical situation piqued the interest of Westerners in the problems of central-eastern Europe. At almost all of the major universities, interdisciplinary teams of historians and political scientists joined in an effort to describe and explain the origins and effects of the complex transformations taking place in the postcommunist countries. Attention, though, was mainly focused on Russia rather than on the countries situated between the Baltic, Adriatic, and Black seas. At the same time, studies were launched that focused specifically on demographic and ethnic questions. The results achieved in this particular domain are, however, relatively modest in comparison with those of other scientific disciplines for a number of reasons. A significant role is played here by the lack of competent specialists and of appropriate statistical information. Yet, side by side with analyses focused on individual countries, syntheses have appeared in which the demographic and ethnic problems of the entire region are taken up. One should first of all mention the two large historical-geographical atlases, containing numerous maps and statistical tables as well as a synthesis of the more important changes in ethnic,

linguistic, and religious identities, by P. R. Magocsi (1995) and R. Crampton and B. Crampton (1996).

The most formidable barrier to in-depth analysis in this domain is the difficulty in obtaining reliable statistics and documentation. A great deal of statistical information concerning nationalities in the countries of central-eastern Europe can be found in three relatively recent publications by L. Šatava (1994) S. Tarhov and P. Jordan (1997) and L. Bregantini (1997); but that information is of markedly varying value to scholars. The political aspects of ethnicity in the region have been surveyed by J. Bugajski (1995). A strong center of ethnic studies has been established in Budapest under the leadership of K. Kocsis, which has produced a number of books focused on ethnic issues in the countries located between the Carpathian Mountains, the Adriatic Sea, and the Black Sea (see K. Kocsis and E. Kocsis-Hodosi, 1995 and 1998). Excellent maps showing the ethnic situation in central-eastern Europe have been published by cartographers there (see L. Sebök, 1998; and K. Kocsis, 1997). Another cartographic center of similarly high quality functions under the leadership of P. Jordan in Vienna (see *Atlas 1990*, 1993; and *Atlas 1992*, 1995). The first encyclopedic reference work devoted to ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe also appeared at this time (see B. Szajkowski, ed., 1993). A complete bibliography of ethnic issues in central-eastern Europe is included in the comprehensive two-volume work edited by a team headed by G. Seewann and P. Dippold (1997).

When attempting an analysis of demographic and ethnic questions of central-eastern Europe, one also encounters difficulties with regard to definitions and delimitations. The region has been assigned various descriptors, and its spatial delimitation has shifted, according to historical era and individual scholarly opinion. Yet most scholars today would agree that a separate region of Europe exists, situated between the European Union to the west and the Russian Federation to the east. Among the various descriptors used in English-language publications to refer to this region, one encounters the abbreviation CEE (central-eastern Europe), which presumably corresponds to the German abbreviation MOE (Mittel- und Osteuropa). The delimitation of this region varies widely, depending upon the nature of the issues considered—whether related to history, culture, religion, demography, politics, or economics. It is of paramount importance that the area under study match the purpose of the study. When conducting a comparative analysis, especially across time, it is absolutely necessary to establish in a definitive manner an appropriate, fixed territorial reference unit or units. Otherwise, the conclusions reached can be completely erroneous.

The geographical definition of central-eastern Europe generally has depended upon the time period, the geopolitical situation, and the nationality of

the person defining it. One ought to note, though, that the notion of central-eastern Europe bears not only a geographical meaning; it also reflects a shared history that has shaped a common set of cultural values and features associated with civilizational advancement and economic development. The essential historical entities in this regard are those that created the bonds of regional identity: primarily the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Habsburg monarchy. Although each successor state that has emerged within the historical boundaries of these entities assesses that common past differently, strong mutual interdependencies still exist. The long-term membership of these countries in the so-called socialist bloc forged a common fate, strongly influencing the direction and the nature of their economic ties and leaving a deep imprint on the social fabric.

In this part of Europe, a specific interpretation of the questions of the state and the nation took shape—an interpretation different from that in western Europe. Almost all the nations of central-eastern Europe were for a time deprived of statehood and sovereignty. In the past, the nation and the state rarely coincided here. All the nations of the region were connected by an ethos of resistance and struggle against an occupying force—an ethos differing in its expression but unified in its emphasis on national goals. A direct consequence of this attitude was the postulate that nation-states should be established in the region, each one based on a particular ethnic community unified by language and/or religion. The idea of citizenship in a secular state did not play so important a role here as in western Europe. Central-eastern Europe became the stage for a confrontation between the influences of Western and Eastern Christianity, the Latin and the Greek philosophies, the Roman and the Oriental concepts of the state, the Latin and the Old Church Slavonic languages. In each case this confrontation had a different intensity and different effects. As a result, various configurations emerged, each bearing a different mix of signs from the West and the East.

Boundary changes were continuously taking place in this part of Europe. The lack of stability in spatial delimitations (and often in the governing entity) created an atmosphere of uncertainty, and the nations of central-eastern Europe always felt threatened. In the nineteenth century this territory was divided among the various regional powers—primarily Russia, Germany, and Austria, but also Turkey to some extent, powers that considered it land free for the taking. After the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and of Turkish pretensions, Russia and Germany consolidated their holdings in the eastern and western parts of the region, respectively. Later, as a consequence of World War II, the entire region fell into the Soviet zone of influence.

Well-established resentment has surfaced periodically among the native populations in the region—the result of collective memories of annexation,

occupation, and persecution. The experience of an external German or Russian threat often led to an intensification in nationalist sentiment, a sentiment directed not only against the great powers but also (often primarily) against immediate neighbors on the other side of the border. The existence of numerous ethnic minorities everywhere made the situation even more complex. Relations between the nations inhabiting the region were unfriendly, or even hostile. Constantly recurring border conflicts brought about mistrust and made the formation of a political community impossible.

After World War I, with the downfall of the Russian and German empires and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, central-eastern Europe was divided into a number of sovereign nation-states. Only two nations—the Ukrainians and the Belarusians—remained part of a larger state and did not obtain national sovereignty. On the eastern Adriatic, the new federative state of Yugoslavia was formed around Serbia.

Ten sovereign states existed in central-eastern Europe between the two world wars: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania. The boundaries dividing these countries were the result of a variety of circumstances. Countries that had taken the side of Germany and Austria in World War I (e.g., Hungary) were deprived by the victors of significant parts of their territories. Some boundaries were determined by the outcome of military conflict, and others, by decisions reached at the peace conference in Paris (1919–1920). The boundaries, lacking any unifying principle of logic, did not guarantee a long-lasting peace: many transected ethnic divides and were therefore untenable. The problem of ethnic minorities largely determined the course of events between the wars. The diversity of interests made political unity in central Europe impossible, and all efforts at integration were ineffective. A fear of Hungarian revanchism led to the so-called Little Entente among Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia; but this alliance played only a limited political role. Poland's idea of forming a group of countries located between the Baltic and Black seas (to be called Intermare) never made it off the drawing board. In addition to being haunted by ethnic conflicts, the countries of central-eastern Europe were economically weak. They could continue to exist only in the absence of an external threat. The Versailles system was merely a stopgap. Even the agreements signed at Rapallo and Locarno could not prevent the rupture that eventually had to occur when the pressure of German eastward expansion met the opposing pressure of Soviet expansion to the west. The conflict between these two powers, which climaxed in the victory of the Soviet Union, inaugurated half a century of Soviet domination that turned the region into a military, political, economic, and ideological dependency. Central-eastern Europe was seemingly divided permanently from western Europe.

World War II brought about the demise of the Prussian state (in 1947) and

a westward shift in the Polish border to the line of the Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers, changing the geopolitical balance in the region. The former East Prussia, which had extended to the river Nemunas in the east, not only had presented a military threat to Poland, Lithuania, and Russia; it also had permitted the German cultural and political penetration of the east. The border changes following World War II resulted in the spontaneous flight or forced deportation of most ethnic Germans from East Prussia, Silesia, Pomerania, and the Bohemian borderland. The new political boundaries at that time became ethnic boundaries between the Slavic nations (the Poles and Czechs) and the German-speaking ones (the Germans and Austrians). The inclusion of East Germany (the German Democratic Republic) as a buffer in the political configuration of central-eastern Europe was temporary.

Given the history of the region, it should come as no surprise that German and Russian geographers and political scientists assign it a configuration that differs from that envisioned by central-east European scholars. The central-east Europeans also differ in their delimitation of the region, depending on their country of origin. For instance, Hungarian geographers divide central-eastern Europe into two parts. They classify Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, the former Yugoslavia (except for Slovenia), Hungary, Slovakia, and Transcarpathian Ruthenia as a separate, Carpathian-Balkan region (K. Kocsis, 1992). The countries to the north of this group are classified variously as Central Europe or Baltic Europe.

In the German Empire, the Weimar Republic, and the Third Reich, the term *Mitteleuropa* or *Zentraleuropa* was used to refer collectively to the countries of central-eastern Europe, including Germany—that is, the combined territories subject to actual or potential German domination. This view was implicit in the works of the most prominent German authors of political science texts, F. Ratzel (1897) and K. Haushofer (1927). Russian Pan-Slavic ideology also foresaw the subordination of this part of Europe—not to Germany but to Russia. The current Russian foreign policy formulas for interacting with and controlling the behavior of "close" and "distant" neighbors are signs of the reactivation of these earlier expansionist tendencies.

As previously mentioned, the politicians and scholars living in this part of Europe also have various perceptions of the magnitude and the spatial reach of their region. The president of interwar Czechoslovakia, Tomáš Masaryk, defined it in one instance as "a special zone of small nations stretching from the Nordkapp [North Cape] to Cape Matapan." This zone would therefore encompass Lapps, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Finns, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles, Lusatians, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Romanians, Bulgarians, Albanians, Turks, and Greeks. This sur-

prising definition of central Europeans included the Scandinavians but ex-
cluded Belarusians and Ukrainians.

Oskar Halecki, a Polish scholar and author of historical works who lived
for many years in the United States, popularized a definition of central-east-
ern Europe as inclusive of all the countries that existed between World Wars I
and II to the east of Scandinavia, Germany, and Italy, and to the west of the
Soviet Union. According to Halecki (1950), Poland had played the key role in
this set of countries, as the locus of a multinational federation that for many
centuries dominated the political stage in the region. In Halecki's opinion, the
three Baltic countries—Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia—fully belong to cen-
tral-eastern Europe. He also asserted, long before the disintegration of the
USSR, that the two large countries lying at the interface of the Latin and
Byzantine civilizations, namely Ukraine and Belarus, ought also to be in-
cluded in central-eastern Europe. Halecki's ideas found their continuation in
the work of P. Wandycz (1992), who has advocated a definition of central-
eastern Europe as the land bounded by the Baltic, Adriatic, Aegean, and Black
seas. The core of this area is Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, consid-
ered within their historical boundaries. He also emphasizes the geopolitical
significance of this region whose possession has proved crucial for those wish-
ing to dominate all of Europe.

In the eyes of English-speaking geographers and political scientists, this
area was generally identified with far-off and exotic eastern Europe, although
some American scholars use central-eastern Europe to designate a separate
region to the west of eastern Europe proper.

Good illustrations of the different territorial definitions of central-eastern
Europe are the books by A. Palmer (1970), J. Rothschild (1974), A. Palonsky
(1975), and E. Mendelsohn (1983). The wide diversity of definitions adopted
by these various authors proves that the size and shape of the area of study
can change dramatically, depending upon the historical period analyzed, the
subject addressed, and the delimitation criteria adopted.

Those who have the most vital interest in the subject—that is, the inhabit-
ants of the region, who feel an economic and cultural affinity for the West and
the Mediterranean world—have taken umbrage at their countries' ongoing
inclusion in the eastern bloc. In addition to the traditionally Roman Catholic
and Protestant countries, those such as Ukraine have shown themselves un-
willing to be identified with the East, preferring to emphasize their location at
the cultural crossroads of eastern and western Europe.

Side by side with views putting forward the unity of central-eastern Eu-
rope, there are concepts according to which this region is divided into two
separate parts (P. Behar, 1992; S. P. Huntington, 1996). A lively discussion
was stirred up in the literature on the subject by the so-called Huntington

line, dividing the European continent into two parts on the basis of religious denominations. According to Huntington, the western part includes the areas to which Christianity came from Rome (Western civilization) via the Italic, Celtic, and Germanic peoples, whereas the eastern part includes the areas to which Christianity came from Constantinople (Byzantium, corresponding to Eastern civilization). The line thus defined divides into two parts Belarus, Ukraine, Romania, and the former Yugoslavia. The splitting of central Europe according to this criterion is to some extent justified. The boundary referred to always had an essential cultural and civilizational significance. Yet Huntington's black-and-white schema gave rise to serious doubts. Contrary to the opinion frequently expressed, this dividing line—particularly the segment between the Dvina river and the Carpathian Mountains—was by no means stable over the centuries. The vast area stretching between the Bug and Dneper rivers was subject by turns to the influence both of Catholic Poland (western European civilization) and of Orthodox Russia (eastern European civilization).

It is certainly true that the line from the Barents Sea to the Adriatic separates nations in which relations between the state and the citizenry followed two different paths of evolution. Recent events indicate, though, that these differences do not have a permanent, deterministic character. One should not forget that the different nations on either side of the line are united by deep cultural referents to Christianity.

The inclusion of central-eastern Europe in the Soviet Empire was not predetermined either by geography or by cultural ideology. Immediately after their liberation from subordination to Soviet Russia, a number of countries of central-eastern Europe moved to strengthen their ties with the West and to gain membership in west European regional organizations. However, given the very pronounced divergence between the levels of economic development in the east and the west, the divide between central-eastern Europe and western Europe will not be bridged in the short term. Consequently, the ties formed earlier among these diverse nations of central-eastern Europe have been preserved for the near term and continue to provide a logical basis for the region's separate definition.

Regional constructs developed for the purposes of scholarly analysis and commentary often have served as the intellectual bases for ideologically motivated geopolitical theories. This fact gives rise to criticism and to the (mostly unfounded) suspicion that particular scholars are advocating particular supranational political entities. The construct used in this book and the selection of specific countries for inclusion were driven by the need to define the area of empirical investigation in a logical manner. Arguments can be made for many different delimitations of central-eastern Europe, many of which seem

arbitrary. The particular delimitation chosen can be logically justified only by pragmatic considerations—by the overall appropriateness of the delimitation, given the specific research objective. My objective in this book was to systematically assess the region's changing ethnic configuration over time.

In the aftermath of World War I, from lands previously belonging to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and to the Russian Empire, seven independent states were created in central-eastern Europe: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Hungary. Adding to this number the countries that existed in the region before 1914 (Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania), there were ten independent states in the region in the interwar period. The political settlement worked out after World War II changed this configuration. During the period of communist rule (roughly, from 1945 to 1990), eight countries belonged to the central-east European socialist bloc: Poland; East Germany (i.e., the German Democratic Republic, or GDR); Czechoslovakia (after 1990, known as the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic); Hungary; Romania; Bulgaria; Yugoslavia; and Albania. The two latter countries were only partly in the Soviet zone of influence. Peacetime policy changes initiated in the Soviet Union in the 1980s—the so-called *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost'* (openness)—and the ensuing downfall of the communist system resulted in the 1990s in the progressive division and subdivision of state entities in the region. After 1990, when the GDR was incorporated into the Federal Republic of Germany, only seven formally independent states remained in the eastern bloc, and one after another they achieved full sovereignty. In addition, thirteen new central-east European states soon emerged from the rubble of the three federations (the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia): Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova; Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (consisting only of Serbia and Montenegro), and the united Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the Czech Republic and Slovakia. These events had enormous geopolitical consequences, including dramatic shifts in ethnic and social relations. I believe that the systemic changes that took place throughout this strictly delimited area of modern Europe justify my inclusion of all these countries in the abstract definition of central-eastern Europe.

Central-eastern Europe is sometimes more narrowly defined. The western republics of the Soviet Union until recently were treated as part of eastern Europe proper. My adoption of a definition including all the countries located between the European Union and Russia is motivated by the fact that these countries all currently have similar economic structures and similar social conditions. They all desire greater integration with western Europe, and face similar obstacles to such integration.

The territory under consideration nevertheless is diverse. To achieve a more

organized and cohesive analysis, I have subdivided it into smaller supranational units on the basis of shared national geographic and political features, distinguishing five such subsets: first, the three Baltic states and the Kaliningrad *oblast'* (district) of Russia, on the basis of common geography; and second, the easternmost states of Ukraine and Belarus, which were subject to sovietization and russification longer than the other states in the region, and which faced similar problems and threats upon gaining sovereignty.

Appropriate classification of the remaining countries, which were never incorporated into the Soviet Union, is more difficult. Several combinations are possible. From the ethnic and geographical point of view, Poland, Bohemia, and Slovakia can be distinguished as a group. The nations inhabiting these three countries belong to the same ethnic and linguistic group (Western Slavs), and they share a similar civilizational model. Although the Czech Republic is ranked higher in level of economic development than Poland and Slovakia, the differences are not very significant. All three countries face the same political and economic threats, and on that basis they can indeed be treated jointly.

These three countries have much in common also with Hungary. All four are signatories of the Visegrad agreement. They form a unified cultural community with a thousand-year-old connection to Rome. They have chosen similar solutions to their economic problems. Still, Hungary's geopolitical situation clearly differs from that of its northern neighbors. Although Slovakia was for centuries closely linked with Budapest politically, Hungary was much more integrated with the group of countries located along the Danube river, and it gravitated more strongly toward the Black Sea and the Adriatic than toward the Baltic Sea. Another factor separating Hungarians from their northern neighbors is language: they speak a Finno-Ugric language that has nothing in common with the Slavic languages.

With regard to geography, Hungary is much more closely linked to Romania. The region of Transylvania (Romanian: Transilvania; Hungarian: Erdély; German: Siebenbürgen), which is now part of Romania, was for centuries a Hungarian province. In addition, Hungary and Romania distinctly differ in ethnicity and language from their Slavic neighbors to the south and north. Despite the numerous border conflicts and the cultural differences that separate the Catholic or Protestant Hungarians from the Eastern Orthodox Romanians, it would be justifiable to treat these two countries as a single unit in an analysis of ethnic problems. The Hungarian-Romanian boundary historically has been unstable, having shifted several times during the twentieth century, and a number of areas have belonged by turns to both countries.

Eastern Moldavia (historical Bessarabia, today Moldova) was alternately under Romanian or Russian control for much of the twentieth century. In the 1990s the Moldavian SSR gained its independence when the Soviet Union was dis-

solved. Although Moldova is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States organized by Russia, its language and culture link it more closely with Romania. Any analytic construct based on ethnicity and separating Moldova from Romania would be artificial. All of these factors point to the conclusion that Hungary, Romania, and Moldova should receive joint treatment in an analysis of ethnic issues, as they have here.

Next we turn to the southern part of central-eastern Europe, consisting of Bulgaria, Albania, and the states emerging from the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. All these countries are situated on the Balkan Peninsula. Except for Albania, they are inhabited mainly by southern Slavs and speak languages belonging to the same family. Over the centuries, distinct religious and cultural differences have appeared, leading to the emergence of separate nations. Yet these states form a separate territorial entity, requiring joint treatment.

Thus, by adopting a sequence of geographical, demographic, ethnic, and economic criteria, we have divided central-eastern Europe into five distinct regions:

1. the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) and the Kaliningrad district;[1]
2. Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia;
3. Belarus and Ukraine;
4. Hungary, Romania, and Moldova;
5. the Balkan states (Slovenia, Croatia, Yugoslavia [Serbia and Montenegro], Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Albania).

In keeping with the goals of my analysis, I have chosen in this book to present the dynamically evolving ethnic structure of central-eastern Europe in accordance with the political boundaries existing today. I have included assessments of ethnic relations in three different spatial settings: individual countries; the five multicountry regions defined above; and—as a summary—the entire territory of central-eastern Europe.

The chapters are organized chronologically, beginning with an analysis of the ethnic situation at the turn of the twentieth century and proceeding through similar analyses of the interwar period, the 1960s, and the 1990s, based on population censuses and estimates. This historical perspective anchors a subsequent assessment of the ethnic transformations that took place over the course of the twentieth century. The analyses of the period between the two world wars and of the 1960s reveal the immediate and long-term effects of World War II—especially of the border shifts resulting from the decisions made at Yalta and Potsdam—on ethnic structure.

In the proper consideration of political changes, one of two methods can be

adopted. First, the present territorial shape of the respective countries may be construed as a constant factor. In this case, the statistical information refers always to the same territory, regardless of the variability of state boundaries. This method is justified insofar as it ensures the spatial comparability of data. Yet one must be aware of the resultant deformation: the data do not represent actually existing states at different times. In order to preserve historicity, one could present the statistical data conforming to the actual political divisions at particular times. However, the more distant the time period, the less geographically relevant the statistical data will be.

Each approach has its advantages and drawbacks. The nature of the primary goal of the study therefore should decide the choice of approach. In the present case, because the historical data on ethnic structure are very general and are used as an introduction to the analysis of the current situation, I decided that it was not necessary to consistently apply only one of the methods. Thus, I chose to present the most important information illustrating ethnic changes according to the contemporary political division of space—that is, the state boundaries existing in the year 2000; but for purposes of comparison, I also included some data pertaining to other political entities at other times. The roles played by the variables of time and space in the evolution of demographic problems are intertwined. One must pay attention to both in order to assess accurately the rate and scale of ethnic transformations.

Precise data on the numbers of populations of particular nationalities and their spatial distribution allow us to assess their relative geopolitical significance. Alas, it has always been and still is very difficult to arrive at precise statistical data concerning ethnicity in central-eastern Europe. The twentieth century brought the rise of many nationalist movements and struggles for national sovereignty; and national statistics on ethnicity were an instrument of these struggles. Each nation, confronting its neighbors, sought to demonstrate numerical superiority. Through the manipulation of data, the demographical potential of individual nations was overestimated, while that of their neighbors was minimized. This was not only a question of numbers. Even more significant were deformations in the depiction of the spatial diffusion of particular nationalities, which were usually associated with border conflicts. Claims on a given territory were defended by showing that the claimant ethnic group predominated in the particular territory. Areas inhabited by a population of mixed or indeterminate nationality often were subject to such manipulations. In these areas it was especially easy for the group in power to falsify the census data toward its political goals. Although the reliability of census data is therefore questionable, they are in many cases the only source of demographic information. Alternative sources are few, making it difficult to supplement or to verify the census data.

Scholars today who analyze statistics on ethnicity from past periods may inadvertently slip into anachronistic interpretations, superimposing current prejudices on historical situations. It is very difficult to reconstruct the ethnic map existing in a bygone era. Most scholars assume that the results of the population censuses conducted in the countries of central-eastern Europe are tendentious in their depiction of ethnicity—a well-founded assumption, in most cases. However, the critics of historical data often present an image of ethnic structure that is similarly far from reality. We should bear in mind that these censuses, and the resultant statistics on ethnicity, were usually prepared by teams of competent people, but these people were acting on the basis of a definite political conception of the state—a conception that inevitably biased the census results in a certain direction. In addition to deliberate distortions and abuses, of course, some accidental errors were made. For these reasons, official statistics on ethnicity must be interpreted with care.

And the problem involves more than just statistics: the very concepts of the nation and of nationality have changed over time and according to their interpreter. Even today, in fact, the word *nation* has no single, clear, indisputable definition. In official statistics, however, nationality (or ethnicity) usually has been equated with language or dialect. Population censuses conducted in the first half of the twentieth century in central-eastern Europe generally treated language as the determinant of nationality; however, in many cases data also were collected on religion (another potential identifier of nationality). In the presence of political conflict and instability, the common historical origins of a given group of people, as signaled by a shared language and sometimes a shared religion, seemed most significant. Individual choice played little or no role in national identity in this case; the principle of common origin was paramount. This traditional definition of the nation—as a community united by ethnicity and culture—collides with the modern concept of citizenship that defines many nations today. In France, for example, the nation is legally constituted by all its citizens (regardless of their ethnicity).

With time and with increasing educational levels, the principle of individual self-determination has gradually gained acceptance in central-east European societies; however, that principle has not often found practical application, either in the present or in the past. Political conditions in the region have encouraged opportunistic behavior. In situations where a person's declaration of nationality could be expected to result in harassment or persecution, the person might well have decided against such a declaration. In such a case, the census data cannot be expected to reflect reality. Matters may be further complicated by the gradual shifts that take place in the ethnic identity of entire population groups over time.

Due to such fluctuations and to the general fuzziness of ethnic boundaries

in the region, arbitrary decisions often must be made in the conduct of statistical analyses. The diverse ethnic criteria applied yield a diversity of results. Population censuses in particular countries were carried out in different years and at different intervals. It is difficult (and in some cases impossible) to adjust the data so that they are fully comparable. The difficulty is compounded by the variability of the spatial units of reference on which the statistical data are based. By altering the configuration of census precincts, their size and shape, objective reality often has been distorted.

In sum, any analysis of ethnicity in central-eastern Europe is fraught with difficulties. The events of recent years have shown the importance of ethnic identity not only as a determinant of individual cognition but also as a political force. Age-old ethnic conflicts have erupted anew in areas previously considered ethnically homogeneous. Only a retrospective analysis—an analysis that shows the transformations that have taken place over the long term—can explain the existing situation and provide a reliable basis for outlining the future prospects of relations among the central-east European nations.

Note

1. When considering the prewar demographic and ethnic situation in the present Kaliningrad district (a Russian exclave between Poland and Lithuania), I have referred to this area as the "northern part of East Prussia"—an appropriate description, given the configuration of political power at that time. The phrase should be understood as referring to the part of East Prussia situated north of the present-day northern boundary of Poland.

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2. The Ethnic Structure of the Baltic States

2.1. The Ethnic Situation at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

The area located on the eastern side of the Baltic Sea, now contained within the political boundaries of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Russian *oblast'* (district) of Kaliningrad, has a complicated history.[1] The native populations inhabiting this coastal region between the mouth of the Neman river to the south and the mouth of the Narva to the north did not enjoy full sovereignty. They lived in the shadow of their stronger neighbors: Russia, Poland, Sweden, and Germany.

Latvia and Estonia were politically subordinate to their neighbors from their founding until World War I. Swedish influence prevailed until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when it was replaced by Russian domination. Meanwhile, top positions in the state institutions were occupied by German officers from local landowning families. For centuries German was the official language; not until the nineteenth century did Russian gain currency and importance. The native languages—Estonian in the north and Latvian in the central part of the region—were used solely by peasants. The situation was different in Lithuania. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania, encompassing not only the Lithuanian but also the Belarusian lands, was an equal partner with Poland in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. As a consequence of this partnership with Poland, the upper classes of society were gradually polonized, and the Lithuanian language was preserved only in the rural, western part of the country. The modern national identities of Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians did not begin to take shape until the end of the nineteenth century.

The present Russian district of Kaliningrad (centered around the former

German city of Königsberg) was seized by the Teutonic Order in the late thirteenth century. The native Old Prussian population was wiped out, and the territory by and large became ethnically German as it was integrated with the lands owned by the Teutonic Order. Later it became a fief of Poland, as part of the duchy of East Prussia created under Polish rule. A few decades after East Prussia passed into the hands of the elector of Brandenburg as an inheritance (1618), that territory gained its independence from Poland. Königsberg and the surrounding territory remained part of East Prussia until the end of World War II, when it passed to the Soviet Union.

The ethnic makeup of the Baltic countries at the end of the nineteenth century was highly differentiated. The native populations included, in addition to the three Baltic nations (Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians), many Germans, Poles, Belarusians, and Jews who had lived there for centuries. Russians, Swedes, and Finns migrated to the area at various times, as did more exotic groups, such as Tatars, Karaims, and Gypsies. Social class divides often paralleled ethnic and religious ones. The vast majority of Estonians and Germans were Protestants, as were most Latvians. Lithuanians and Poles were mostly Roman Catholics. Russians and Belarusians were Orthodox. The result was a true ethnic and cultural mosaic.

2.1.1. The Ethnic Structure of Estonia

The Estonians are descendants of various Finno-Ugric tribes that settled the land in prehistoric times; of Baltic peoples (Lithuanians and Latvians) that moved in from the south; and of Germanic tribes that sailed to the Estonian coast from the nearby Scandinavian peninsula. None of the states that now exist in the region had yet been established. Beginning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as the Teutonic Order of Knights of the Sword expanded its reach, the Estonian lands came under the domination of Germans and Danes. Later, military and economic inroads were made by Swedish invaders.

In the centuries that followed, the Estonian lands became the object of rivalry between Sweden, Russia, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. At first the Swedes gained the upper hand, eventually conquering all of what is today Estonia. But as a consequence of the Northern War (1700–1721), Estonia passed to Russia and remained under czarist rule until the end of World War I. This had disadvantageous repercussions for Estonian culture and civilization: contacts with the West were severed, and Estonia became part of a despotically ruled and economically backward state.

The ethnic structure of Estonia was shaped by a long historical process. The upper classes of society, initially the knightly orders (later the nobility), were of German extraction and spoke German, while the peasantry spoke various local dialects of Estonian. After serfdom was abolished in 1816, the emancipation of the Estonian people began with a social movement directed against German domination and russification. By the end of the nineteenth century, the ethnic identity of the Estonian people had crystallized around a common language, religion (Lutheranism), and culture. Their distinctive culture, though impregnated with German, Swedish, Russian, and Danish influences, had unique qualities that were evident initially in their music and material folk art, and later in literature. The development of Estonian national aspirations was hampered by Russian policies, which made it difficult to articulate claims of independence. The Russian state was an absolute monarchy; it recognized no legally warranted freedoms of speech, association, or assembly. In addition, ethnic Germans oversaw the local administration and the courts, and presided over the local Lutheran church. The German language dominated in towns. It was the official language of Estonia until 1881, when it was replaced by Russian. The language of instruction at the renowned university in Dorpat (now Tartu) until 1893 was German (and thereafter Russian).

In spite of these adverse conditions, by the turn of the twentieth century the modern Estonian nation was fully formed. Although not very numerous, Estonians dominated demographically throughout their national territory, especially in the rural areas. This was demonstrated by the first modern population census, which was carried out by czarist authorities in 1897.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the territory now known as Estonia encompassed what were the province of Estonia (German: Estland) and the five northern districts *(uezdy)* of Livonia (i.e., the districts of Võru or Werro in German; Pärnu or Parnau; Tartu or Dorpat; Viljandi, or Fellin; and Saare, or Arsenburg). It was inhabited in 1897 by about 993,000 people, whose nationalities are shown in Table 2.1.

The population of Estonian nationality was highly differentiated in culture and folklore. The culture of those who lived on the islands bore distinctive signs of Swedish influence. In southeastern Estonia lived a group called the Setu, who differed from most Estonians in that they were Orthodox instead of Lutheran. Less numerous were another Orthodox group, the Ingrians (Isuri), who lived on the other side of the Narva river.[2]

The Estonian lands preserved their isolated, native character, largely due to economic conditions. The areas inhabited by Estonians were poor, and life was hard there. Limited possibilities for migration preserved the existing eth-

Table 2.1

Ethnic Structure of the Estonian Territories in 1897

Ethnic group	Population	
	N	%
Estonians	888,100	89.4
Russians	45,700	4.6
Germans	34,100	3.4
Latvians	8,500	0.9
Swedes	6,100	0.6
Jews	5,000	0.5
Poles	2,300	0.2
Finns	500	0.1
Others	2,700	0.3
Total	993,000	100.0

Source: Kazmina (1991, pp. 80–81), based on census data. The census forms contained a question concerning native language, considered equivalent to ethnicity.

nic structures. The people followed a traditional way of life within the confines of their Lutheran parishes, cultivating their own language and folklore.

2.1.2. The Ethnic Structure of Latvia

Latvia is remarkable among the three Baltic countries for its very clear geographic, sociodemographic, and economic specificity. The Latvian nation's historical development also was more differentiated in linguistic, religious, and cultural terms than that of its southern and northern neighbors. Latvia is divided into four historical provinces: Kurzeme (Courland; German: Kurland), Vidzeme (Livonia; German: Livland), Zemgale (Semigallia), and Latgale (Latgallia).

The Latvian lands were initially inhabited by Finno-Ugric tribes (Ests, Kurs, and Livs), but pre-Latvian tribes migrated in from the south and gradually came to dominate the territory. None of these groups established states. A turning point in the region's development occurred when the Teutonic Order of Knights of the Sword was founded in 1202, with the goal of establishing economic control over the entire Baltic coastline and Christianizing the local population. Over time, the Germanic order evolved into a local caste of wealthy landowners whose civilization and culture played an increasingly important role in local and regional developments.

After the secularization of the Order in 1561, the Latvian lands were incorporated into the Polish-Lithuanian state, the Commonwealth of Two Nations. Under the Polish-Swedish Treaty of Oliwa of 1660, the provinces of Zemgale and Vidzeme were ceded to Sweden. The Commonwealth retained the right to Kurzeme and Latgale, and to the town of Daugavpils (Dyneburg). After the

Table 2.2

Ethnic Structure of the Latvian Lands in 1897

Ethnic group	Population	
	N	%
Latvians	1,318,100	68.3
Russians	154,700	8.0
Germans	137,000	7.1
Jews	122,600	6.4
Belarusians	79,700	4.1
Poles	65,200	3.4
Lithuanians	24,400	1.3
Estonians	18,000	0.9
Others	9,100	0.5
Total	1,929,300	100.0

Source: Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis' . . . (1905).

Northern War (in 1721), the Swedish provinces were incorporated into Russia. After the partitions of Poland, Latgale (in 1772) and Kurzeme (in 1795) became part of the Russian Empire. Throughout the nineteenth century the Latvian lands remained an integral part of Russia. This fact brought important socioeconomic consequences. Development of the country was slow, with the relics of feudalism weighing heavily. Ethnic Latvians were disadvantaged by Russia's political domination, which privileged the local German nobility, and on the territory of Latgale, the Polish nobility.

Until the mid-nineteenth century the Latvian community consisted of peasants and farmhands. The second half of the nineteenth century brought greater development of industry and trade, and the Latvian population started to move into the towns. The ethnic character of the towns, which had been German, slowly changed. Education in the Latvian language expanded, and Latvian associations were formed. The formation and emancipation of the modern Latvian nation took place in the course of struggle against German domination. The postulates of autonomy in the spheres of culture and education began to be formulated with respect to Russian authorities as well.

The territory that today belongs to the independent Latvian state was contained in three provinces (governorates) of the Russian Empire: Livland (Livonia), Kurland (Courland), and Vitebsk. The four districts *(uezdy)* of Livland province—Riga, Valmiera (German: Wolmar), Valka (Walk), and Cēsis (Wenden)—now belong mostly to Latvia, as do all nine districts of Courland, and the three ethnically Latvian districts of Vitebsk (Daugavpils, or Dyneburg; Ludza, or Ludsen; and Rēzekne, or Rositten).

As shown in Table 2.2, ethnic Latvians constituted more than two thirds of

the population of the Latvian lands in 1897. Except for small areas adjacent to the eastern border, which had a Russian majority, and southern Latgale, where ethnic Poles and Belarusians were concentrated, the entire country was ethnically Latvian. Jewish and German populations lived mainly in Riga and other large towns. Livs—the descendants of a Finno-Ugric tribe that settled in the region during the early Middle Ages—were concentrated along the Baltic coast, in fishing villages. At the turn of the twentieth century some 3,000 people still spoke the Liv language, but the Livs overall were rapidly assimilating to Latvian culture.

With regard to religion, the population of Latvia was equally diverse. Lutherans—mainly Latvians and Germans—predominated (1,148,600 people, or 59.5 percent of the population). There were also numerous Roman Catholics (389,900, or 20.2 percent), who included Latvians inhabiting Latgale, as well as Poles and some Belarusians. About 166,300 were Orthodox (8.6 percent of the total population), primarily Russians. Judaism was the declared religion of 142,100 (7.4 percent). Other religions were marginal.

2.1.3. The Ethnic Structure of Lithuania

In the prehistoric period the Lithuanian lands were settled by Indo-European tribes of Balts. Colonization of this area by the pre-Lithuanian peoples was probably a gradual process. We do not know when this process ended, but the present-day Lithuanian nation had taken shape by about the ninth century, by which time the Lithuanian tribes migrating from the east had come to dominate the local population of Finno-Ugric origin. Subsequent in-migrations of Nordic and Germanic populations played only a minor role.

The ancient Lithuanian lands consisted of the two provinces Žemaičiai and Aukštaičiai, which united in the thirteenth century to form the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The newly established state initiated a campaign of eastward expansion toward the Ruthenian lands. Within a relatively short time (between the thirteenth and the middle of the fifteenth centuries), Lithuania had conquered vast territories stretching to the Black Sea. The scale of these conquests is best illustrated by the data on the total area of the country: 200,000 sq km in the year 1263; 350,000 sq km in 1341; and 930,000 sq km in 1430 (Vaitekūnas, 1998, p.14).

Simultaneously, a threat to the Lithuanian state emerged from the west, with the growing power of the Teutonic Order. In order to defend its territory, Lithuania concluded a political alliance with neighboring Poland. Through this alliance, Lithuania eventually adopted Latin Christianity and thus came under the influence of west European civilization and the Roman Catholic church. The union of the Polish and Lithuanian ruling fami-

lies by marriage bound the two countries ever more closely together, and in 1569 they established a jointly ruled state, the Commonwealth of Two Nations. This had important consequences for language and ethnicity, resulting in the gradual polonization of the upper classes of Lithuanian society. By decision of the Commonwealth's Diet in 1696, Polish became the official language of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Strong centers of Polish culture developed throughout Lithuania, primarily in towns and around large noble estates. Another turning point came with the downfall of the Commonwealth and the partition of its lands among Russia, Prussia, and Austria. At the end of the eighteenth century, Lithuania was incorporated into the Russian Empire.

The Lithuanian national movement started in the second half of the nineteenth century. It began as a movement to restore Lithuanian linguistic and cultural autonomy, but was slow in gathering force because the Lithuanian language had been preserved only among peasants. There were virtually no ethnic Lithuanians living at that time in the historical capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Vilna (Vilnius in Lithuanian; Wilno in Polish), which had a strong Polish and Jewish ethnic character. Vilna was referred to by Jews of that time as the "Jerusalem of the North."

In spite of these obstacles, the first generation of educated ethnic Lithuanians had emerged by the end of the nineteenth century. The Lithuanian national revival was directed initially against Polish language and culture. Gradual polonization was seen as the greatest danger for the development of a Lithuanian identity. The numerous and wealthy Poles in Lithuania saw the movement as a threat to the Polish position, showing a lack of Lithuanian loyalty to their joint struggle against intolerant Russian czarist authorities. At the same time, Lithuanians had begun to think of Poles living in Lithuania as denationalized Lithuanians who ought to be brought back to the Lithuanian nation. These perceptions became a source of conflict between ethnic Poles and ethnic Lithuanians, to the advantage of the Russian administration and its policy of russification.

Before undertaking a critical analysis of the source materials contained in the Russian population census of 1897, we must define the area under analysis. At the turn of the twentieth century, there was no Lithuanian state. The elite, reared in Polish culture and living in the Belarusian and Lithuanian provinces of the Russian Empire, consciously cultivated the traditions of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of 1772. Yet reconstruction of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was out of the question, not only for political reasons related to the military power of the Russian Empire but also because the evolution of the popular consciousness tended toward the creation of national states and not to the reconstruction of multiethnic ones on the basis of

historical precedent. The Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Polish national move-
ments, all of which were gaining in importance within the territory of the
former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, were gradually diverging, forming dif-
ferent political goals. The Lithuanian national movement functioned only
within a limited area, in the western part of the Grand Duchy, where
Lithuanian-speakers formed a spatially compact community. In view of the
complex demographic processes taking place in the Lithuanian-Belarusian
borderland, precise delimitation of the ethnically Lithuanian territory is dif-
ficult. The most appropriate assumption is the one adopted in this book—
that the spatial unit of reference should be the area of the present-day
Lithuanian state.

A complete demographic—or, more precisely, ethnological—analysis with
respect to the territory of the Lithuanian state within its current boundaries,
for the turn of the twentieth century and the interwar period, faces a number
of obstacles. These obstacles result from the successive changes in state bound-
aries during the twentieth century, which divided the areas now forming
Lithuania among various political entities. Complicating matters further are
the changes that took place in the internal administrative divisions and subdi-
visions of the country.

Until World War I the territory of present-day Lithuania, except for the
area of Klaipėda (the famous fortress of Memel), which belonged to East
Prussia, was contained within the boundaries of the Russian Empire. Part of
the present southwestern Lithuania (what was then northern Suwałki prov-
ince) belonged to the so-called Polish Kingdom, an area enjoying limited
autonomy within the Russian Empire. The remaining Lithuanian territories
had not even a vestige of autonomy, being part of two provinces of the Rus-
sian Empire, the provinces of Kovno (Lithuanian: Kaunas) and Vilna
(Lithuanian: Vilnius).

Because the national boundaries of today's Lithuania do not conform to
the administrative divisions existing in 1897, one must made certain adjust-
ments in defining the set of appropriate data. For example, my definition of
the Lithuanian lands for the purposes of this analysis of ethnicity includes all
eight counties of Kaunas province. The resulting degree of imprecision is
insignificant (only the northeastern part of Zarasai county does not belong to
contemporary Lithuania). The statistical complexities are somewhat greater
in the case of Vilnius province, which was composed of seven counties: Dysna,
Vileika, Švenčionys, Ašmena, Vilnius, Trakai, and Lyda. Based on calcula-
tions of population balances, my decision was to include three counties of
this province in the Lithuanian territory: Vilnius, Trakai, and Švenčionys. Al-
together, eleven counties belonging to two provinces of the Russian Empire
were included in the analysis.

Table 2.3

Ethnic Structure of Kaunas Province and Western Vilnius Province in 1897, by Declared Language

Ethnic group (language)	Population	
	N	%
Lithuanian	1,272,100	55.7
Jewish (Yiddish/Hebrew)	320,700	14.1
Polish	245,700	10.7
Belarusian	245,200	10.7
Russian	129,400	5.7
Latvian	35,000	1.3
German	30,000	1.3
Tatar	3,500	0.2
Others	6,900	0.3
Total	2,283,500	100.0

Source: Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis' . . . (1905).

The population census of 1897 reported 2,283,500 inhabitants in this area (including military forces). The overall ethnic structure (as defined by language) was as shown in Table 2.3.

The official data from the census gave rise to controversy and accusations of bias. The first such accusation, put forward by Polish demographers, held that the Russian census was biased against Poles in that it had concealed the fact that the people speaking Belarusian, professing Catholicism, and living in the region of Vilnius were ethnic Poles. Lithuanian scholars maintained that this same group was of Lithuanian and not Polish origin, although it had adopted the Slavic language as its own. In contrast, Belarusian and Russian demographers considered the results of the 1897 census reliable. The subsequent course of events proved the merits of the Polish case. In all the population censuses that followed, as well as in a number of other political events, the Slavic-speaking people living around Vilnius opted for Polish nationality. I have accordingly amended the data from the 1897 census on the basis of the work by W. Wakar (1917b). The results are shown in Table 2.4.

According to Wakar's calculations, the Polish population in this area totaled 461,600, and not 245,700. The Russian population census had reported 25,300 Polish-speaking persons and 87,300 Belarusian-speakers residing in the county of Vilnius. In Wakar's estimate there were 107,900 Poles and only 4,400 Belarusians living in this county at that time.[3]

The northern part of what was then Suwałki province, which belonged until World War I to the so-called Polish Kingdom, a part of the Russian Empire, was an ethnically Lithuanian area, and it now belongs to the Lithuanian state. In 1897, it encompassed four counties: Kalvarija, Vilkaviškis,