



This map shows the distribution of the main ethnic groups throughout the different regions of Austria-Hungary in 1914

The great danger for Austria was that Russia might step in to support the demands for independence being made by the different nationalities living under Austrian rule in the Balkans. Austria was a Catholic power ruling many Orthodox peoples in its Balkan territories, and culturally these groups were closer to Russia. These tensions surfaced in the Bosnian Crisis of 1908.

Fact

During the medieval period, the Christian Church split into two distinct forms – Catholic in the west and Orthodox in the east. Russia became Orthodox, while most of Europe became Catholic. However, many groups in the Balkan territories were Orthodox Christians.