

Austria-Hungary

(multinational country)

Among main purposes of censuses, which were carried out in the territory of Austria-Hungary in the second half of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century, were: to find out the up-to-date number of the present population, later also directions of migration, to capture rapid and significant structural changes the society was undergoing at that time as well as to determine the structure of nationalities in individual regions and places. As for biological characteristics, age and sex were surveyed among population. Recorded were eventual physical handicaps (e.g. in 1869 blindness and deafness), later also mental handicaps. As for social characteristics, citizenship, family status, denomination and language used for communication were surveyed; from 1880 also literacy was surveyed by asking census persons about their ability to read and write. By the question about language used for communication, ethnic composition of population was mapped indirectly.

As the twentieth century started to unfold, the greatest problem facing the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary was that it consisted of eleven distinctly different ethnic groupings, of which only two, the Germans and Hungarians (who together accounted for about 44% of the total population) wielded any power or control. The other ten groupings (Czechs, Poles, Ruthenians, Romanians, Croats, Slovaks, Bosniaks, Serbs, Slovenes and Italians) hardly wielded any power at all, only some Croats and Serbs had limited autonomy in the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia.

Austro-Hungarian Empire



Franz Ferdinand had planned to radically redraw the map of Austria-Hungary, creating a number of ethnically and linguistically dominated semi-autonomous "states" which would all be part of a larger confederation renamed the United States of Greater Austria. Under this plan, language and cultural identification was encouraged, and the disproportionate balance of power would be corrected. The idea was set to encounter heavy opposition from the Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy, since a direct result of the reform would have been a significant territorial loss for Hungary.

However, the Archduke was assassinated at Sarajevo in 1914, triggering the outbreak of the First World War, after which Austria-Hungary was dismantled and several new nation states were created, as well as various Austro-Hungarian territories ceded to existing neighbouring countries, by the victorious Entente powers.

Proposed map of the United States of Greater Austria and the major ethnic groups of Austria-Hungary



Proposed map of the United States of Greater Austria, by Popovici



The "United States of Greater Austria" proposed by Aurel Popovici, 1906

- States
- Autonomous enclaves (mostly German)