

The Republic of Slovenia – Geographical Constants of the New Central- European State

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ABSTRACT: The territory of the youngest European state is crossed by strategically important passes, the lowest in the entire Alps, leading from the Danubian basin to the Mediterranean (Italy). Thus, the Slovenes had been under cultural, civilizational and political domination of centers from these two parts of Europe all until 1918. Because the mountainous land forms, dissected also by valleys and basins, were prone to processes of diffusion rather than fusion, the Slovenians became a national and political subject of their own as late as 19th C. From 1918 to 1990 they were joined with Yugoslavia, a SE European state, and learnt to their cost all the differences between the cultures of W and Central Europe on the one hand, and SE and E Europe and the Near East on the other. Hence the plebiscite decision by the nation for an independent state.

General Data

Republic of Slovenia (in Slovene lang.: Republika Slovenija. abbr. in text RS). Independence proclaimed by the Parliament of RS on June 25, 1991, on the basis of the referendum of December 23, 1990. 20,256 km², 2 million inhabitants (census 1991), density: 99 people/km². 91% Slovenians, other autochthon inhabitants: Hungarians (0.5%) and Italians (0.2%), the rest: immigrants from other Yugoslav republics of various nationalities. Legislative body: Parliament of RS with 240 deputies in three chambers, the members of which were elected by democratic elections in spring 1990. Representatives of 9 parties in the Parliament. Collective presiding body: President and four members. Executive authorities: Executive Council of the Parliament of RS. Capital: Ljubljana (288,000 inhabitants). Social product (1988): 5,463 USD per capita. Borders: Italy (202 km), Austria (324 km), Hungary (88 km), Croatia (546 km), sea coast (Adria): 46 km.

By “geographical constants” those conditions are meant which proceed from physico-geographical

characteristics and position and which influence the development of a society for a longer period of time.

1st Geographical Constant: Tectonic and Relief Dissection of the Land

Most of the land is mountainous; one quarter belongs to high karst plateaus, and ridges rising above them. The average altitude of RS is below the world average (580 m). Only one tenth of the land exceeds the altitude of 1000 m, which is the average limit of settlements, and only 2% exceed 1600 m, which is the approximate upper forest line. Since the territory belongs to the Alpine orogenesis and was intensely dissected by vertical tectonic movement following the Old Pliocene, the average steepness of slopes is above average (over 13 degrees). Plains cover only 1/6 of the land, and are distributed on the bottoms of larger river valleys, basins and karst poljes.

Everywhere in the world, such relief had obstructed communication among peoples before modern

communication system was established, and thus it helped to preserve small old ethnic and religious agglomerations. In our case, it restrained linguistic assimilation of the Slovenians by their more numerous neighbours who ruled over them in the past.

The relief was unsuitable for formation of ethnic communities even in larger river basins, because wider valleys of bigger rivers are interrupted by gorges, so they fall within intermediary basins as for gravitation of people (e. g. along the Sava: the basins of Ljubljana, Litija and Krško). Thus, the 37 dialects of the Slovenian language are not limited to larger river basins of the main rivers, the Drava, Sava and Soča.

After the great migrations of peoples, when in the 6th and 7th C. the territory at the meeting point of the Central, S and SE Europe was inhabited by a group of Slavs – Slovenians, linguistically already articulated, the administrative and political independence in the early Middle Ages was achieved by the largest basin, nowadays called after Klagenfurt. After the then political formation Carantania, all the Slovenians had been called Carantians long afterwards. Because of the pressure by the Hungarians, with whom the Slovenians formerly settled together, Carantania joined with the more powerful Bavarians in the 9th C., and they all merged into Frankish State. Since the German colonists were prevalent, Klagenfurt basin ceased to be the central Slovene region already in the Middle Ages. With the loss of autonomy, a 12 centuries long period began, during which the RS territory was governed by state administration bodies located in centers in larger lowlands and basins outside it, such as Bavaria, Vienna or Pannonian basin resp. (Vienna, Budapest), and Veneto-Friuli lowlands (Venice, ecclesiastical patriarchy in Aquilea). Only once in the whole Middle Ages, the feudal authorities with their center on the present RS territory claimed for leadership in the larger Danubian basin; it was in the time of the Dukes of Celje, named after the town of the same name (1991: 42,155 inhab.), the center of the Celje basin. But the ambitions of these state dukes to gain the rule over the state were abruptly stopped by sudden dying out of this family.

Minor administrative-political formations, originating in the Modern Ages, which comprised the RS territory,

had their centers in larger basins around it: on the German territory in the Graz basin (Styria, with the capital of Graz), in the Klagenfurt basin (Carinthia, with Klagenfurt), in the Italian Gorizia (Gorizia County) on the margin of the Friuli lowland, and in the last few centuries, in the biggest Austrian port, i. e. Italian Trieste (Primorska – Littoral). The whole Littoral region had been under the Venitian rule until the 14th C., while its Istrian part all until the 19th C. The Kranjska (Carniola) Crown Province was the only one that had its center in the largest Slovene basin (790 km²), named upon the Ljubljana town. Like in other basins, tectonic sinking in Neogene and Quaternary in this basin as well had made a confluent river network, and its concentric valleys make possible traffic connections with larger surroundings. This basin became a “Piemont” of uniting of the Slovenians in the past C. With a delay, when compared with other nations in W and Central Europe, a uniform Slovene literary language was formed only in the 19th C., even though the first Slovene written documents originate from around 1000, and the first Slovene books were printed as early as in the period of Reformation, i. e. in the second half of the 16th C. In the 19th C., the name Slovenians, began to predominate over the names like Styrians, Carinthians, Littorals and Istrians, according to the provinces. The present Slovene region N of the Mura was part of the Hungarian Monarchy, and in the period of Austrian and Austro-Hungarian Empire resp., it was governed by Hungarians. After free elections in the second half of the 19th C., Slovene political parties gained majority in provincial Parliament in Carniola only.

In the middle of the 19th C., a movement called “United Slovenia” was born; its striving was directed towards uniting all Slovenian ethnic territory in a single administrative-political unit. Only immediately before the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, its program was extended to the idea of joining with other Yugoslav nations, but still under the Habsburg dynasty.

The prevailing mountainous character of RS dictated the direction of internal migrations of population in the period of capitalism as well as socialism.

Similar to other Central European mountains, the so-called “population erosion” (from hills to valleys) was started in Slovenia a century ago as well (Tab 1).

Simultaneously, population was becoming ever more dense in lower altitudes (Tab 2).

After World War I, Slovenia has become part of the agrarian Yugoslavia, whose NE part offered by far better conditions for agriculture than Slovenia did. Thus, during the deagrarization process, the areas of intense cultivation declined to the benefit of forests (Tab 3).

Statistical Office is delayed in registering the change in land use. According to unofficial data, forests already occupy 52 % of the surface. With such a share. RS in the third most forested European country, following Sweden and Finland. In the mountains of medium height, there were appr. one third of forests two centuries ago, but are two thirds of them nowadays.

Tab 1 Classes according to surface inclination and the share of population in 1880 and 1981 (Perko 1991)

Surface inclination in degrees	Share of population	
	1880	1981
0–1	15.1	28.1
2–5	19.8	21.4
6–11	32.6	25.9
12–19	25.3	14.9
20–30	7.0	4.5
more than 30	0.2	0.1

**2nd Geographical Constant:
Contact of Four European Natural Geographic Regions**

The following four physico-geographical units spread from the neighbouring countries into the RS: (Fig 1)

1. **The Alpine mountains** cover 4/10 of RS. High mountains of the Kamnik-Savinja Alps, Karavanke and Julian Alps occupy 11 % of the RS territory. Similarly to other European Alps, farming as a main economic activity was also substituted in RS in the last half-century by industry and recreation. The latter is based on skiing tourism, lake tourism and mountaineering. Since high mountain groups belong to the South Limestone Alps where limestone prevails, the peaks are pointed and slopes are steep and rocky, in some parts far below the climatic forest line, which increases the appearance of a high-mountainous scenery.

The greater part of the Alpine mountains of medium-height belong to 'ridge-and-valley' land forms, i.e. 28,9 % of RS; there, the peaks do not reach the climatic forest line. In cultural landscape, there is an evident division into two parts. At the bottom of the valleys, cultivated land is uninterrupted and dense settlements are serried, but in the mountains, sporadic and rare settling predominates with the only exception of former miners' settlements. Due to small tectonic dissection, mineral deposits are frequent but small-sized, convenient for minor mining in the past, which has already been abandoned by now (quick silver mine at Idrija, lead-and-zinc mine at Mežica). From among the many coal mines, exploitation of lignite in the Velenje basin has been preserved, as well as exploitation of brown coal in the surroundings of industrial towns of Trbovlje, Hrastnik and Zagorje (1 mil.tons). Coal is mostly burnt in power plants. Their production of electricity exceeds the production of hydro power plants on the Drava, Sava and Soča rivers and the nuclear power plant at Krško (which is a joint property of RS and the Republic of Croatia).

The Slovene Alpine and Subalpine mountains merge with the hilly land and lowlands of Subpannonian Slovenia in the E. Slovene geographers restrict the Alps as to the relief on the S too, where according to past statements (Neumann 1882; Melik 1963; Gams 1987) the transition to the karst plateaus denotes the junction with the Dinaric Mountains.

The greatest concentration of population in the Slovene Alpine region occurs in the Ljubljana basin, the central and most economically developed region in Slovenia (Kranj, 37,109 inhab. in 1991) with prevalent fluvioglacial gravel bottom, and the altitude between 260 and 520 m.

Since there were, in the past centuries, close connections with the N and W parts of the Eastern Alps, from where many colonists came who were settled by feudal masters in the Middle Ages, the cultural importance of the Alps in Slovenia exceeds their share. Stylized peaks of Triglav, which is with its 2864 m the highest mountain in Slovenia and Yugoslavia, make part

Altitude belts-- above sea level	Share of area %	Share of population		
		1880	1981	2001
0-200m	9.0	14.6	14.5	15.6
200-400m	31.2	51.1	59.7	65.6
400-600m	23.0	22.1	17.8	15.5
600-800m	15.6	9.5	4.2	2.7
above 800m	19.8	2.7	1.1	0.6

Note: between 200 and 400 m, fluvioglacial gravel plains are the largest

Tab 2 The share of altitude belts and the share of population in 1880, 1981 and 2001 (according to Perko 1991)

of the new coat of arms of RS, which has also been included into the Slovene flag.

With its 4/10 of the territory lying in the Alps and 44 % of all inhabitants living there, RS ranks, as to the share of the Alps, after Austria and Switzerland and before France, Italy and Germany, where larger shares of territory lie outside of the Alps (Gams 1987).

2. **Subpannonian Slovenia** stretches like a prong towards NE, into the Pannonian basin. Viniferous hills made of Tertiary deposits of Neogene Pannonian sea prevail there, and larger basins are interlayered, where important urban centers are located (Maribor, 105, 431; Celje, 42,155; Novo Mesto, 22,618 inhab.). This is a densely populated macro-region, where one third of the inhabitants of RS live on 21.8 % of the Slovene territory. Even though the climate and soil are the most favourable for agriculture here, the Subpannonian Slovenia is the economically most underdeveloped region.

3. **The Dinaric Karst** of the continental Slovenia is the NW corner of the Dinaric Mountains which extend between the Sava and the Adriatic Sea towards SE as far as Greece. The share of this territory (1/4) by far exceeds the share of population. There are no deeper valleys. The surface is mostly formed of plateaus (400-600 m), and 2/3 of them are covered by forests, which are the source of

Tab 3 Changes in land use in years 1990, 1960 and 1989

Land use category	1900 %	1960 %	1989 %
Fields and gardens	18.1	14.6	12.2
Orchards	-	1.4	1.8
Vineyards	2.0	1.1	1.1
Meadows	15.9	15.2	16.8
Pastures	17.0	13.9	11.0
Forests	41.6	47.3	49.8
Infertile areas, water areas, reeds, marshes	5.4	6.5	7.3

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the RS, and Melik 1963, p. 373.

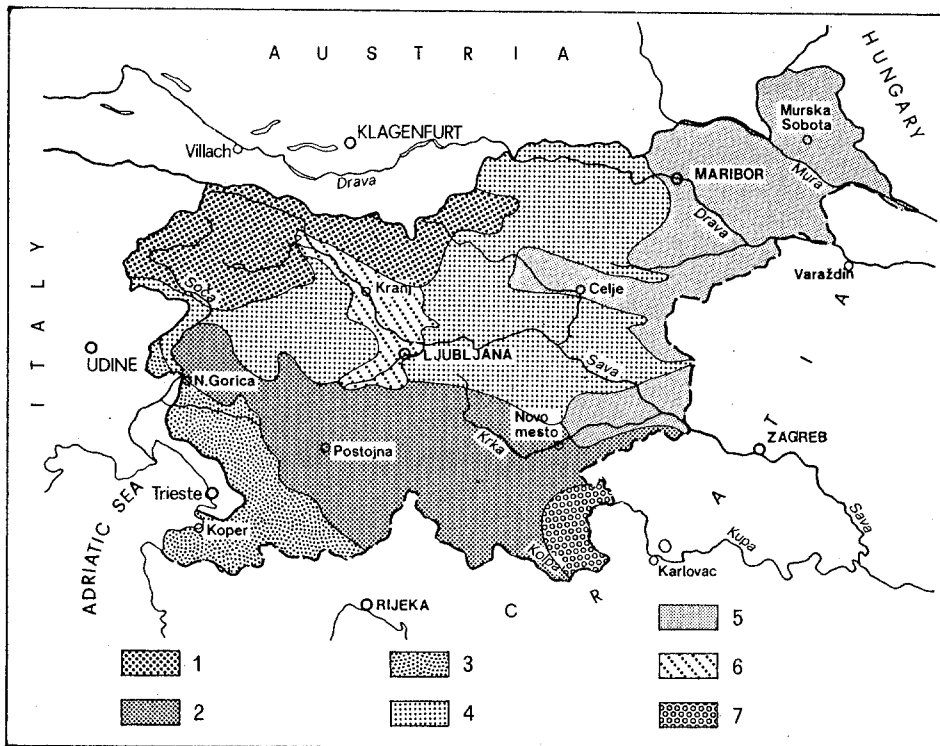


Fig 1

- Physiographic regions of Slovenia
- 1 – Alpine high mountains
 - 2 – Dinaric mountains system
 - 3 – Slovene Littoral
 - 4 – Alpine mountains to 1600 m
 - 5 – Subpannonian Slovenia
 - 6 – Ljubljana basin
 - 7 – Transitional belt from Dinaric to Subpannonian area

the prevailing timber industry. Population is concentrated in karst depressions, dry valleys and blind valleys, uvalas and karst poljes in particular, which do not allow larger economic and settlement centers because of their small size (up to 100 km²).

4. **The Slovene Littoral (Primorska)**, or the Submediterranean Slovenia, is a macroregion lying in the hinterlands of the Trieste bay. It is essentially smaller (7.8% of RS) than former Austro-Hungarian Littoral region (together with Goriška region). As concerns the Mediterranean building style, agrarian cultures (vine in the hills, in the coastal region olive tree also), and cultural history, this region belongs to Submediterranean/Mediterranean/S Europe. Besides the flysch area, it also encloses the Kras plateau, the name of which became an international term at the beginning of the past century. (English – karst, Italian – carso, German – Karst). The NW Littoral is separated from the sea coast by a 2-8 km wide belt, which connects the Italian Friuli region with Trieste. As a substitute for the Trieste port, post-war Yugoslavia built a new one in Koper (Capodistria) (5 mil. tons of cargo) and connected it by railroad with the hinterlands. A shipping company holds appr. half a million GRT of transoceanic liners.

Slovenia is associated through its macroregions as follows:

- through its Alpine region with five countries, which extend their territory to the Alps (France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Italy);

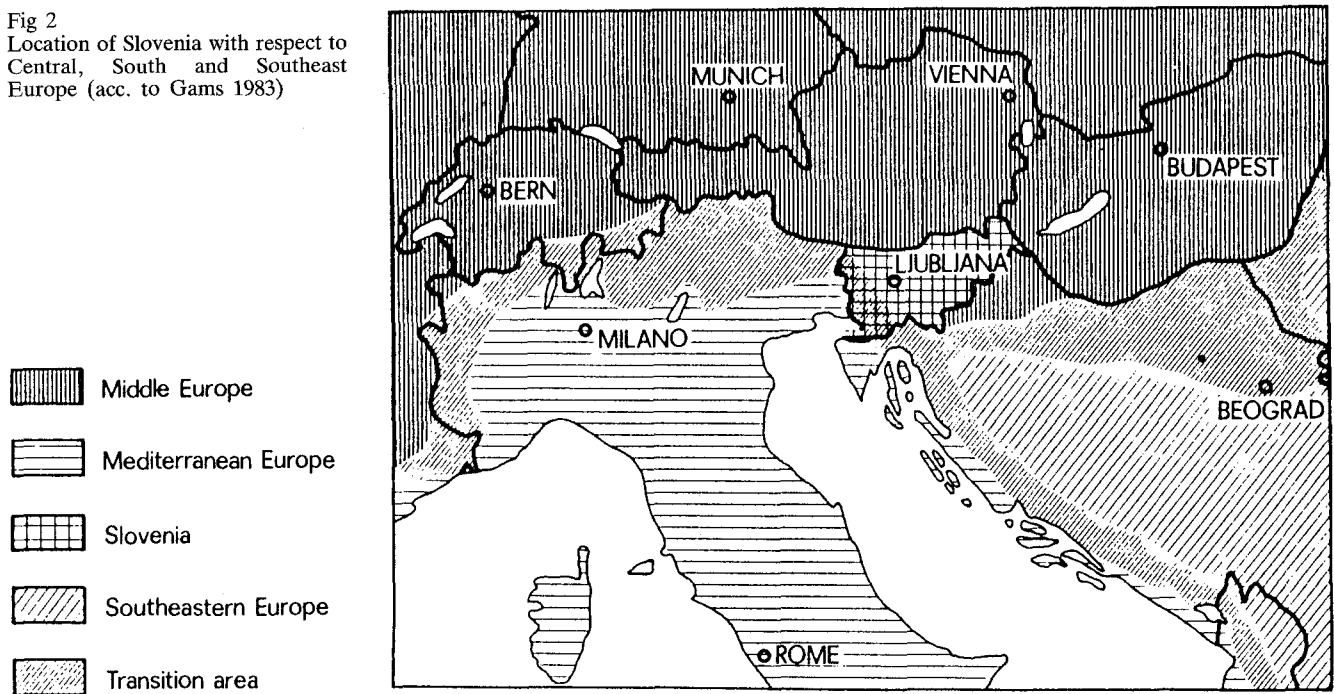
- through its Subpannonian region with five Pannonian countries (Hungary, Czech and Slovak Federation, Rumania, Yugoslavia);
- through its part of the Dinaric Mountains with four countries (Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, and Italy with its small SE part of Trieste Karst);
- through the coast of the Adriatic sea with thirteen countries, which share the Mediterranean coast (without Black Sea and Monaco).

3rd Geographical Constant:

Location on SE Margin of the Alps at the Lowest Alpine Passes, Strategically Important for Traffic between Central and South Europe (Fig 2)

The bow of the Alps and the Dinaric Mountains, which encircles the Mediterranean basin in the N, has its lowest height (600 m) – in the whole distance of 1500 km, between the Ligurian coast and the Morava and Vardar valleys in E Yugoslavia – located at the contact of both mountain ranges in RS, i.e. the Postojna gate. In the present time of tunnel constructions, the importance of Alpine passes, and the Postojna gate as well, is diminished. But it was very important for the history of Slovene nation. In the period of great migrations of peoples “barbaric tribes” from Central and E Europe made inroads into Italy across the territory of RS. Larger state formations in the Middle Ages and Modern Ages

Fig 2
Location of Slovenia with respect to Central, South and Southeast Europe (acc. to Gams 1983)



with their centers located in W or Central Europe and their authority extending to the Alps, comprised also Slovenia, by their E margin (and most of them, neighbouring Croatia as well).

In the long-lasting period of the Holy Roman Empire, or the German Reich respectively, the territory of RS was part of the Eastern Province in the Middle Ages, and later on, part of Austria, which had governed over the Slovenians until 1918. For 12 centuries, the Slovenians experienced the same spiritual currents and equal social order like the rest of Central Europe. Cultural influences from the Mediterranean essentially affected cultural landscape also in the other parts of Slovenia. The Gothic and Baroque styles prevail in numerous (Roman Catholic) churches, which are often located on hilltops. The importance of the Postojna gate for traffic – it is the meeting point of communications from the continental hinterlands towards the Mediterranean basin – grew in the time of mercantilism and in the following time of railways. The so-called “Southern Railway” built in the mid-19th C. and connecting Vienna with Trieste via Graz, Maribor, Ljubljana, and Postojna, and continuing farther to Italy, was one of the most important and the oldest railways in Austro-Hungary. Once the economy of the once socialist countries of Central Europe has recovered, the importance of this arterial railway will certainly be increased again. Since Greece and Turkey got more closely connected with the European Common Market, the arterial traffic line Munich-Salzburg-Villach-Jesenice-Ljubljana-Beograd-

Niš, and farther on: Niš-Istanbul, and Niš-Athens has recently become more important. A third arterial road of international importance is the Phyrn highway Salzburg-Graz, crossing the territory of RS between Maribor and Krapina and continuing towards Zagreb.

In 1990, 101,957,000 travellers crossed the state border of RS, and 9/10 of these by road. One fourth of this number is the result of local frontier traffic.

In the time of national awareness of the nations in the multi-national Austro-Hungary in the mid-19th C., opposition grew among the then Slovene intelligentsia, still few in number, against the Germanization. They felt it as an injustice that already in the Middle Ages the ethnic Slovene territory had shrunken from about 60,000 km² to 24,000 km², due to German colonists who had settled among the scarce Slovene settlements in the Eastern Alps. The northern Slovene lingual frontier continued to move southwards in South Carinthia, where 82,000 Slovenians – officially – live nowadays). When the victorious Allies united the Southern Slavs into a new state in 1918, called until 1929 the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, the head of the Roman Catholic Church and the majority of the intelligentsia in Slovenia welcomed this change, hoping for greater national and lingual rights. And more so, because the victorious Italian army approached Ljubljana in the distance of 20 km after the fall of Austro-Hungary, and then it occupied one third of the SW Slovene territory and kept it all until 1945, as a compensation for its participation in World War I.

4th Geographical Constant: Poor Natural Conditions for Agriculture

On the mountainous land, the steepness of slopes makes ploughing cultivation difficult, and so do marshes on plains, which is the result of humid to perhumid climate. Annual precipitations, which are lesser towards NE, are up to 3,500 mm on the western margin of RS (S border of the Julian Alps), and about 800 mm by the Hungarian border. Annual evapotranspiration is between 450 and 750 mm (when the range of annual temperatures is between 14 °C at the seaside, and -1.8 °C at the altitude of 2,514 m). Specific run off is high, between 15 and 90 l/s, which is favourable for water supply, but unfavourable because of rapid washing off of nutritious substances from the soil. Even the old Pleistocene thick soil is acid and gley. The best soil for growing crops is the brown thin soil (cambisols and fluvisols) on the permeable basis which, however, covers only 1/10 of the territory of RS. Most of the carbonate rocks, which spread over 4/10 of the land, are covered with shallow stony soil (Gams 1983).

All the above factors restrict the extent of arable land and of growing cereals. The country imports appr. 1/5 of the necessary food. Before non-agrarian economy began to develop before the World War I, the surplus inhabitants had been forced to emigrate abroad (the Americas, W Europe) where they had mostly been assimilated already in the second generation. The formation of Yugoslavia in 1918 gave an impulse to intense deagrarianization.

In 1918 the Slovenians were, for the first time, joined to a state with the center in SE Europe, Belgrade (Beograd). In the new, initially completely agrarian state, Slovenia represented the industrially most advanced part (metal, textile, wood industries). All the time, Yugoslavia protected its industry with high import taxes, by which it fostered the industrialization of the country (Vrišer 1990). After 1945, the communist regime put into effect the so-called socialization of the means of production also in Slovenia (this sector was called with different names: state, socialist, or social property, associated or self-managing labour, etc.) ... Due to the mountainous relief, most of the land remained private property (1989: 69% of all land and 89% of arable land). In 1989, 94% of the entire means of production, land not included, were "nationalized", and only 3,7% of working people were in private sector. In the same year, 45,5% of people employed worked in industry and mining. The highest shares of active people were employed in the following branches: production of electric apparatuses and machines, textile products, metal processing, machine-making, etc. Due to older industrial tradition in RS, mostly more complex production was developed here. The industry of RS contributed 44% of all refrigerators and TV sets, 38% of radio sets, 50% of paper etc. to the Yugoslav market in 1988. RS, where 8,4% of Yugoslav population live (1981), had 1/6 of general national income

in 1981, and in 1984, it produced 15,7% of social product, and 18,7% of social product originated from industry and mining. 1/4 of hard currency export from Yugoslavia has been realized by RS in the average of the last few years. Due to a higher degree of employment, including women (who represented 46% of the active population in RS, and 73% of the employees in non-industrial branches in 1987), the living standard in RS has been above the Yugoslav average. (In 1985 the average income was 35,2% higher than the Yugoslav average.) For this reason, during the last four decades Slovenia attracted seasonal workers from other Yugoslav republics, and some of them settled down for good in RS. Thus, the share of the Slovene native population had declined to 90,5% in 1981.

Because of easier sale within the state borders, Slovene industry was oriented mostly towards our home market (appr. 6/10) and Yugoslav market (app. 1/4), while foreign market represented only 1/7 of its sale. In the export, electric apparatuses, chemical and metal products prevail, together with agricultural products like meat (cattle and poultry breeding), wine, hops, etc.

The tertiary sector of economy, however, has remained underdeveloped, for 4/10 of the active people (1990) work in industry, 6,9% in building industry, 5,9% in traffic and communications, 9,5% in trade, 3,3% crafts and services, 4,4% in finances and business services, and 6,4% in education. In 1981, 13,8% of the active population worked in agrarian activities and fishing industry, 37% in industry and mining, 6,1% in building industry, 5% in traffic and communications, 8,3% in trade, 5,5% in crafts and personal services, 5,3% in education, culture and information, 5,3% in health service and social security, etc.

The Place of Slovenia in History and in Regional Geography of Europe

Stagnation of economic development in the 80's, characteristic of the European communist countries, was deepened in Yugoslavia by national conflicts. The Slovenes understood ever greater differences in the standard of living between the bordering neighbour countries, Austria and Italy, and our country as the result of the capitalist system between the Wars and the post-war communist system in Yugoslavia. Ever since 1918, they had been lacking autonomy and had been exposed to attempts of creating one uniform Yugoslav nation. In the 80's conflicts with the Yugoslav bodies of government increased because of the Slovene demands for greater democratization in the whole country, including Kosovo (it is now, according to Mundro, 1990, one of the 29 conflict areas in the world). The discontent led to a referendum in December 1990, when 88,2% of the citizens of RS declared their will for an independent and sovereign Slovenia. The newly elected Parliament of different political parties decided that within 6 months'

Our era (app. scheme)	Appertaining of RS to macro-regions of Europe	Appertaining of the territory of RS to states
0 – 568	S (Mediterranean) Europe	568: fall of the Roman Emona (on the site of the present Ljubljana) caused by inroads of "barbarians"; end of Roman rule
745 – 12th C.	W, Central and partially S Europe	Most of the Slovene territory comprised in Bavaria and thus in the Frankish Empire
12th C. – 1809	Central Europe	Slovenia part of the German Empire; in the Modern Ages part of the ever more autonomous Austria. Border areas of RS under Hungarian, or Venetian rules resp.
1809 – 1813	W and Central Europe	Within the French Illyrian Provinces; the rest in Austria
1813 – 1918	Central Europe	Austria, or Austro-Hungary resp.
1918 – 1941	SE Europe	Yugoslavia
1941 – 1945	Central and S Europe	Slovenia occupied by Italy (S and SW parts) and Germany which annexed the N part
1945 – 1990	SE, E Europe	Communist regime in Yugoslavia
after 1991	Central Europe	

Tab 4 Appertaining of the territory of Slovenia (RS) in our era to macro-regions of Europe, according to the principle of social order, or inclusion into a state considering its center

time the government should prepare the laws for attainment of independence. It was declared by the Republic Parliament on June 25, 1991 – in spite of incomplete adaptation of administration and economy to W European standards, and in spite of the difficulties, common to all ex-communist countries of Central Europe during their transition to market economy and multifunctional political system.

The reproach that the motif of parting off RS from Yugoslavia is a reflection of separatism and nationalism, does not take into account the following facts:

(1) Slovenia is not part of the Balkans (the Balkan Peninsula). Most of Yugoslav geographers will limit the Balkan peninsula by the Danubian lowlands in the N, i. e. the lowlands by the Danube and the Sava, and by the Karlovac basin on the NW. However, the name of the Balkans acquired the quality of a notion rather than a geographical name (Gams 1967). The fact that Slovenia differs from the Balkans, has also been ascertained by foreign authors of geographical monographs on Yugoslavia (Péchoux 1971, p. 215 – citation: "La Slovenie n'a que bien peu des traits balkaniques ...")

(2) From the point of regional geography, RS is not part of SE Europe into which Yugoslavia is included together with Slovenia, particularly by the Central European regional geographers (Detler 1975, and others). RS experienced Turkish invasions but not the Turkish occupation, which left its stamp in cultural landscape, civilization, and the structure of religions (Moslems) in SE Europe.

(3) RS is not part of E Europe.

In spite of the 45 years long rule of the communist regime in Yugoslavia, and Slovenia, less rigid after 1948 because

of the clash with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Slovenians have always looked upon themselves as Central Europeans, regardless of several regional geographies of the world and Europe which separate Europe in two parts: to both sides of the iron curtain, to Western and Eastern Europe (Norris 1990; Pinder 1990; et al.). The text-book on geography for Slovene secondary schools ranked most of the territory of RS as Central Europe, and in view of traditional architecture, the small SW Slovenia as Sub-Mediterranean or border area of S Europe (Gams 1983, reprinted 1991).

Were the states ranked into macro-regions according to social order, RS would belong to many different macro-regions of Europe in our era. It is shown in Tab 4.

After almost seven decades of living in Yugoslavia, public opinion in Slovenia agrees with the characteristics of SE Europe as stated by H. Sundhaussen (1991, No. 5, p. 4) in the introduction to this article: "Presentation of the development in four states, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Albania, since their foundation to the present time explains that they succeeded – neither between the World Wars I and II nor in the four and a half decades of "socialism" – to solve the problems of national tensions, latent border conflicts, and economic retardation. The lack of permanent political culture represents a hindrance for the future of the region."

Most of these characteristics are not true of Slovenia. It has no nationally disputable state borders, and no larger continuous units of other nationalities within its ethnic territory.

The most intense mixing of nations in most parts of Yugoslavia was caused by the half-a-millennium long

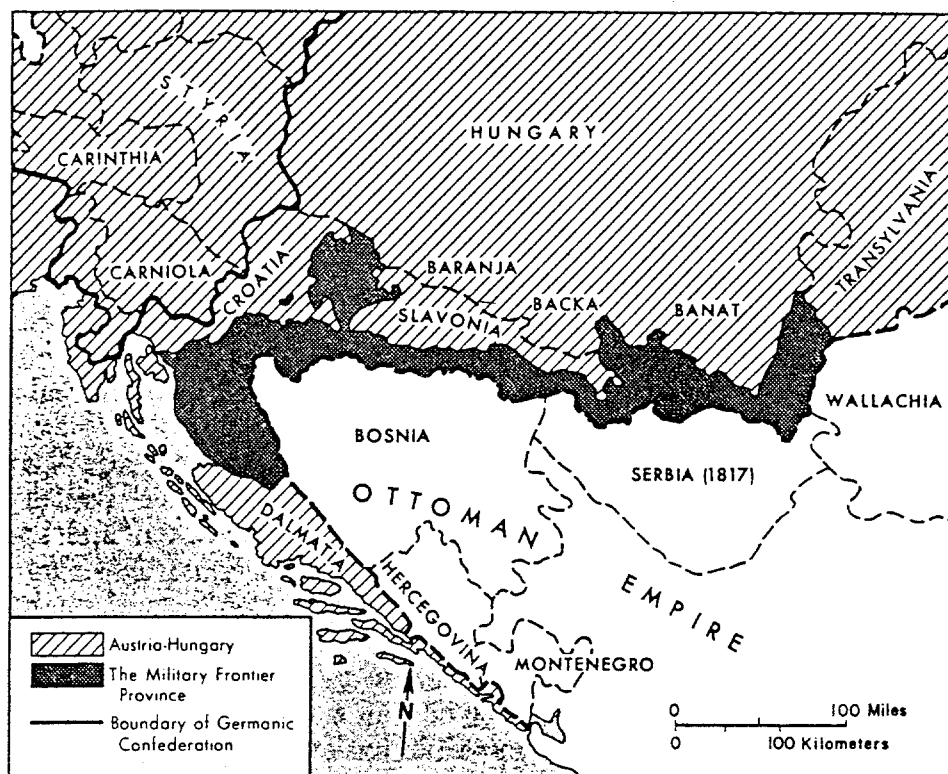


Fig 3
Military Frontier Province between
the Habsburg and Ottoman
Empires, ca. 1600 – 1800 (acc. to
Georgescu 1981)

Turkish occupation (Fig 3, 4). The majority of Serbian refugees from the Ottoman Empire were settled along the border with Turkey by the Austrian (Austro-Hungarian resp.) and Venetian governments; they were armed and helped to maintain the so-called “Military Frontier Province”. Its territory between the Sava and the Adriatic has become in 1990 and 1991 the territory of Serbo-Croatian conflicts for the rule over this land.

In 1981 the picture of national intermingleness in Yugoslav Republics and Autonomous Regions (abb. A.R.) was appr. as follows:

- A.R. Voivodina:
54.4% Serbs, 18.9% Hungarians, 8.2% Yugoslavs;
- R. Serbia (without the two A.R.s):
85.4% Serbs, 2.7% Moslems;
- R. Macedonia:
67% Macedonians, 19.8% Albanians;
- A.R. Kosovo:
77.4% Albanians, 13.2% Serbs, 3.7% Moslems,
1.7% Montenegrins (most Albanians are Moslems,
but they declared themselves according to their
nationality and not religion);
- R. Montenegro:
68.5% Montenegrins, 13.4% Moslems, 3.3% Serbs,
6.5% Albanians, 5.3% Yugoslavs (a lot of
Montenegrins have been lately declaring themselves
as Serbs);

- R. Bosnia and Herzegovina:
39.5% Moslems, 32% Serbs, 18.4% Croats;
- R. Croatia:
75.1% Croats, 11.6% Serbs, 8.2% Yugoslavs
(Berčić 1987).

Note: The census of 1981 offered the possibility of declaring oneself not only according to nationality, but also simply as “citizen” (= Yugoslavs, altogether 5.4%), or according to religion (Moslems) or regional adherence.

Among more than 100,000 of immigrants, Croats (2.9%) and Serbs (2.2%) prevail. They mostly live in industrial and tourist places. Among the non-Slovenes, there are two autochthon nations in RS: Italians in the Littoral region (1981: 2,187) and Hungarians (9,496) along the border with Hungary. In both these areas, bilingual communication is officially guaranteed in offices and schools, as well as representation in the RS Parliament.

Croats have developed equal tendencies for independence in the so-far “cohabitation” in Yugoslavia. Their history has been very similar to Slovene history, except for the fact that they were ruled by the Hungarians in the Modern Ages, or belonged, resp., as a territory to the Hungarian part of Austro-Hungary. Croats also use Latin alphabet and are mostly Roman Catholic by religion, in contrast to the prevailing Cyrillic

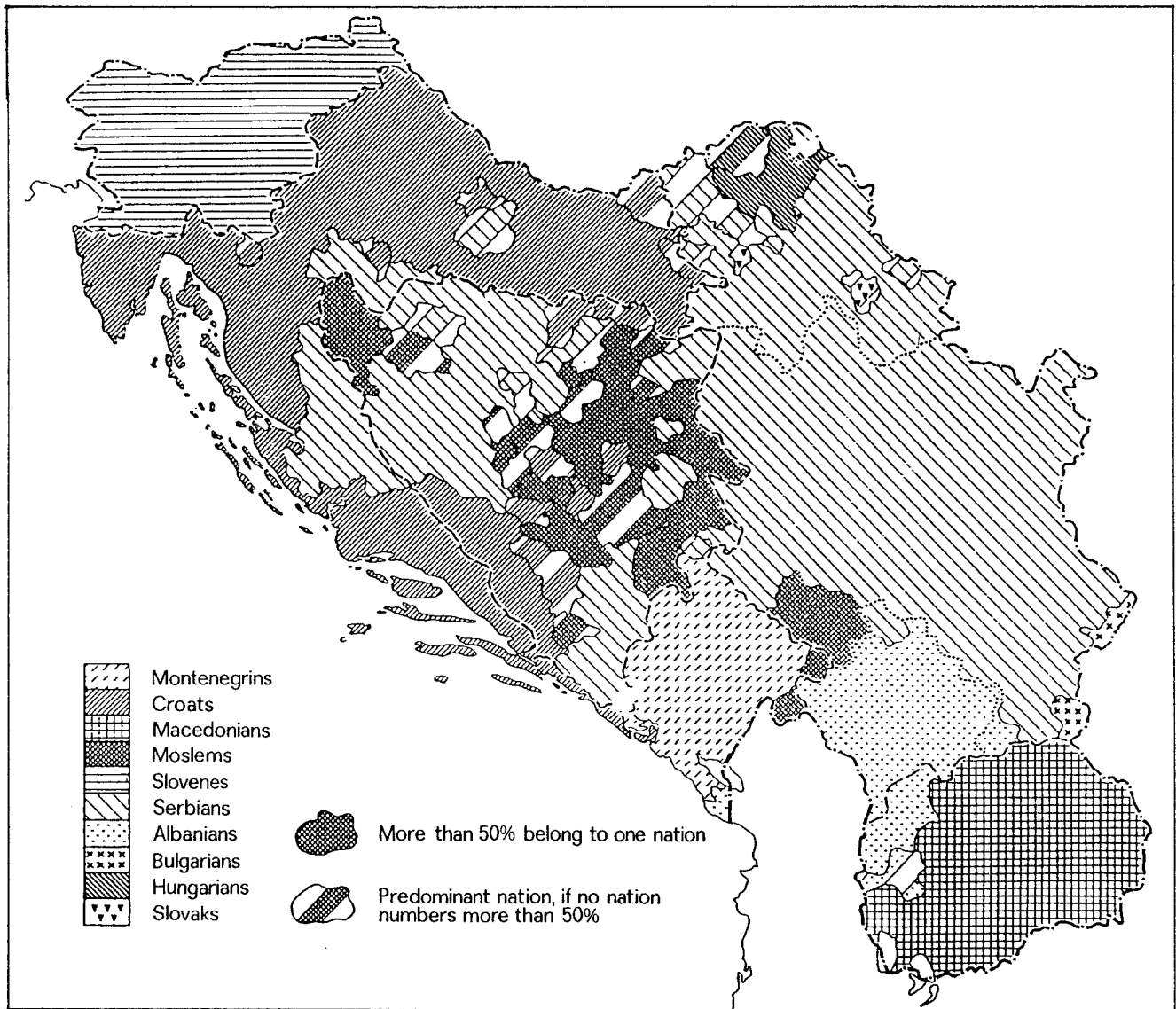


Fig 4 National structure of Yugoslavia (1981, on the basis of communes. Acc. to Žuljić 1989)

alphabet and Orthodox religion with their eastern neighbours, introduced by civilizational influences from SE Europe and beyond. Keeping close connections between the independent Slovenia and Croatia is therefore self-explanatory.

Yugoslavia has been the only European country to join nations who adopted culture and civilization from the West on the one hand, and from the border area of SE and E Europe on the other. The result is evident: ethnic turmoils and general discontent.

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