

## IS THERE A COINCIDENCE OF ETHNIC AND FUNCTIONAL REGIONS IN CROATIA AND BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA?

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### POVZETEK

ALI GRE ZA NAKLJUČNO ETNIČNO HOMOGENA IN FUNKCIONALNA OBMOČJA NA HRVAŠKEM IN V BOSNI IN HERCEGOVINI

Nekatere predele Hrvaške in praktično vso Bosno in Hercegovino karakterizira nacionalna pomešanost. Trenutne razprave, ki obravnavajo bodoče notranje in zunanje razmejitve ozemlja upoštevajo pretežno le etnični aspekt. Kako se bodo ta ozemlja funkcionalno dopolnjevala? Ali se v obeh državah etnična preproga zares prekriva s funkcionalnimi regijami. Ali ne bodo nove, po etničnem principu potegnjene meje bolj sekale kot oblikovale enotne funkcionalne regije?

Prispevek poizkuša primerjati etnično strukturo Hrvaške ter Bosne in Hercegovine kot se je zapisala v popisu leta 1991 z funkcionalnimi makro- in mezoregijami, kot jih dokazuje pogostost javnega avtobusnega prometa. Funkcionalne regije namreč dokaj enostavno izluščimo oziroma opredelimo s pomočjo in analizo javnega prevoza, saj je ta ponavadi usmerjen v središče oziroma osrednjo urbano aglomeracijo v prostoru kamor se vozi na delo večje število delavcev šolarjev in nakupovalcev. Frekvenco avtobusnih prevozov smo zajeli po veljavnem avtobusnem voznem redu, različne stopnje funkcionalnih regij smo zatem kartografsko omejili.

Rezultati raziskave dokazujejo izrazito etnično heterogenost mnogih funkcionalnih regij in opozarjajo na to, da bi potegnitev mejnih črt na osnovi etničnega principa razkosala mnoge dobro utečene funkcionalne regije.

### Introduction

One might share the opinion of Burkhard WEHNER<sup>1</sup> that the universal state in the traditional sense, in the sense of a definite territory governed by an authority responsible practically for all fields of governance, is overcharged and should be replaced by several branch states of varying, overlapping territories and shared responsibilities – one responsible for administration, one functioning as an economic and currency community, responsible for administration, one functioning as an eco-

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<sup>1</sup> WEHNER, B.: Nationalstaat, Solidarstaat, Effizienzstaat. Darmstadt 1992.

conomic and currency community, one as a security community, one as a solidarity community, one as a community defined by common traditions, culture and education a. s. o. When he presented these ideas the European Community are in WEHNER's mind.

Utopian perhaps even for Western Europe a transfer of this model to East-Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe in general and definitely to ex-Yugoslavia seems to be completely impossible at the moment. Political and scientific discussion as well as actual development completely run in the contrary direction. Ethnic distribution is taken as the sole background and justification for the drawing of political and administrative boundaries.

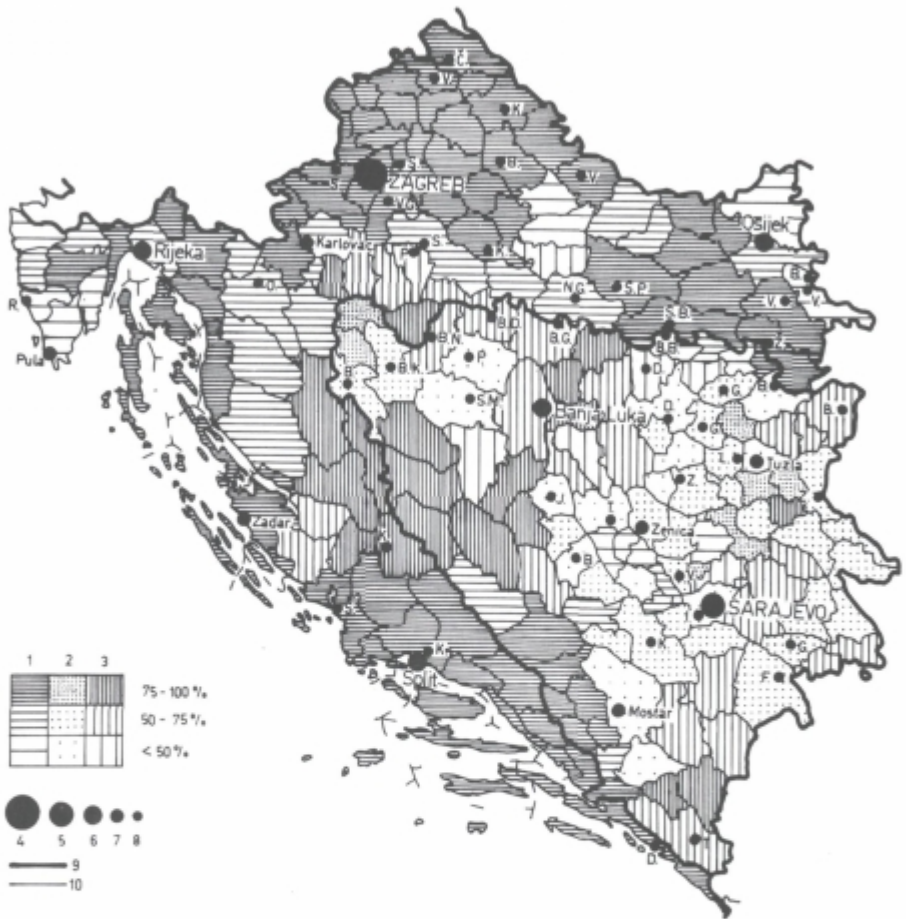
The question arises, whether such an attitude creates a stable political-territorial order. Is the ethnic aspect the only one which has to be taken into account? Or are there geographical essentials too? Certainly, ethnic distribution is a criterion not to be neglected, especially in Central and Southeastern Europe. And confronted with all the cruelties reported from the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina one hardly can imagine that peoples fighting each other in such a way will ever be able to live together peacefully. But on the other hand it is true as much that in spite of all ethnic cleansing this region will never cease to be an ethnic mixture and that in many cases ethnic boundaries do not meet economic and functional relations.

The intention of this paper is to highlight the pattern of functional regions by the example of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, being cases in point, and to examine its coincidence with ethnic structure, present country boundaries as well as recent initiatives of administrative and political subdivision.

### **The Ethnic Structure of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina**

Map 1 representing relative and absolute ethnic majorities according to communes (*općine*, *opštine*) and based on the official population census of 31 March 1991, published by the Federal Statistical Office in Belgrade, indicates that only parts of Croatia are ethnically near to homogeneous: the Northwest, central and southern Dalmatia. All of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the belt of the former Military Frontier in Croatia are extremely intermixed.

It has to be taken into account, of course, that lately certainly more than 100 000 people have died in the wars and that by now more than half of the Bosnians have been forced to leave their homes and to settle elsewhere at least temporarily. But irrespective of moral aspects it is sure that only a small share of them can permanently stay where they are now. Only the "safe part" of Croatia hosts about 650 000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and from those parts of Croatia which are now under the control of the UN.



Map 1: Ethnic Structure of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1991

Source: Stanovništvo 28/29 –3/4, Beograd 1990/91

Legend:

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Croatian majority               | 6 City of 100–300 000 inhabitants     |
| 2 Muslim majority                 | 7 City/town of 50–100 000 inhabitants |
| 3 Serbian majority                | 8 City/town of <50 000 inhabitants    |
| 4 City of >500 000 inhabitants    | 9 Country boundary                    |
| 5 City of 300–500 000 inhabitants | 10 Commune boundary                   |

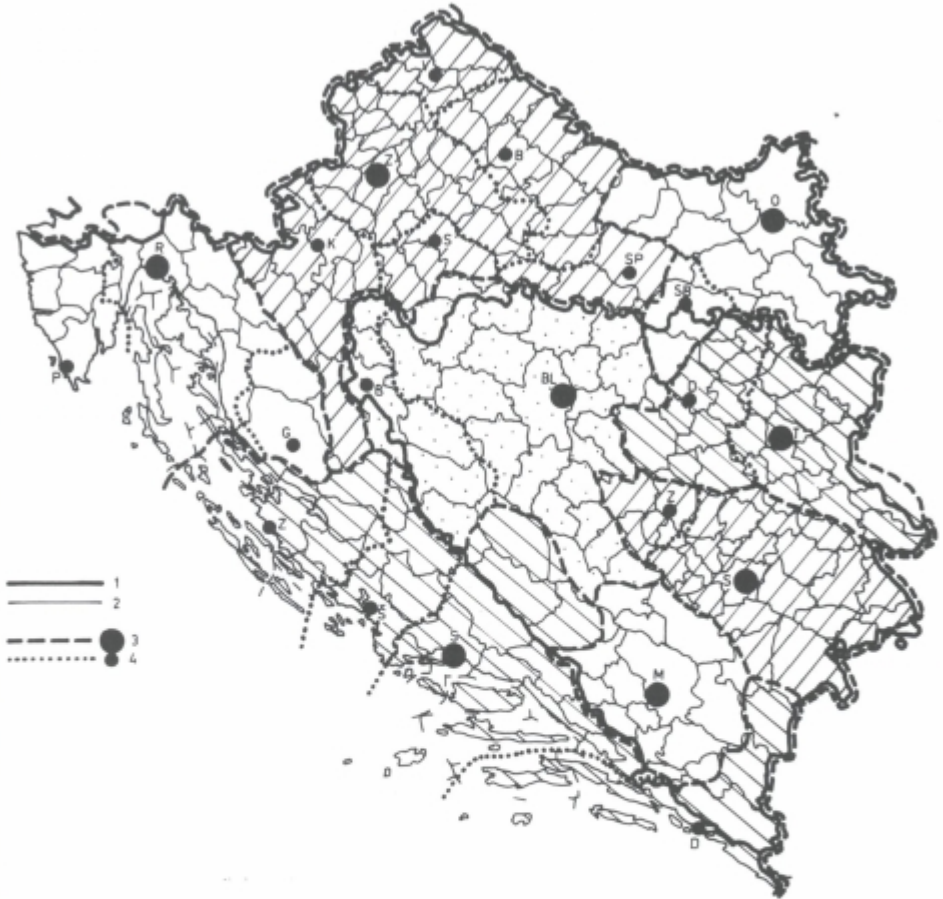
By representing local relative and absolute majorities Map 1 neglects the aspect of minorities, the share of which might exceed 35% of the commune population. A map showing the total distribution of a people by absolute figures would more clearly suggest that any effort of creating political units according to absolute and relative ethnic majorities will result in excluding a large share of the respective ethnic group from its own political unit. Thus, in 1991 in Croatia only 173 000 of the 581 000 Serbs (= 30%) were inhabiting communes with a Serbian majority. 50 000 Serbs were living in Zagreb, 22 000 in Rijeka – cities far from the Serbian territories of Croatia. In Bosnia and Hercegovina 681 000 (= 50%) of the Serbs and 449 000 of the 752 000 Croats (= 60%) were living outside their majority communes. Compared with Bosnian Serbs and Croats Bosnian Muslims were quite concentrated on communes where they had a majority, i.e. 1564 of the 1905 millions (= 82%) were living in Muslim majority communes.

### Functional regions

Under a functional region I understand a region, the internal relations of which are oriented towards a centre or an urban agglomeration. By this orientation the region forms an economic unit and a unit of social interaction. Elaborations by domestic geographers could not be used. Those covering Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina in a compatible manner<sup>2</sup> are based on the assumption that a functional region never crosses any country boundary. Besides, they use the large (former) communes as their basic units. Because they do this they are not suitable for demonstrating possible deviations from national and administrative boundaries.

Our subdivision into functional regions (Map 2) therefore is based on frequency of public bus traffic. Frequency of public bus traffic in general is very useful for delimitating functional regions: it reflects the movements of labour commuting, school attendance as well as daily and periodical supply – the main indicators of functional relations. In former communist countries the frequency of public bus traffic may be regarded as an especially useful means of delimitating functional regions since the bus network was very dense and the frequency of traffic extremely high. Almost every small village had its public bus connection. Frequency gradients in the surroundings of centres were steep due to high peak frequencies near cities and bigger towns allowing a good spatial differentiation. Thus, practically no “blank spots” are left and no longer route sections of stable frequencies occur, which might raise doubts, whether they belong to the one or the other catchment area. Regarding Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina an additional point which favours basing the delimitation of functional regions on public bus network is the insufficiency of railway network due to natural and historical conditions.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. ROGIĆ, V.: Nodalno-funkcionalne regije. In: Veliki geografski atlas Jugoslavije. Zagreb 1987, p. 10. Geografija SR Hrvatske, Zagreb 1975.



Map 2: Functional Regions according to frequency of public bus traffic (drafted by *Peter Jordan*)

Legend:

- |                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Country          | 3 Functional macroregion |
| 2 (former) commune | 4 Functional mesoregion  |

Technically Map 2 was derived from bus time-tables (as of 1980/81) condensed to a 1:2 million scale map showing the weekly frequency of public bus services on every route, subdivided into 14 value classes.<sup>3</sup> In this 1:2 million map the catchment area of a centre was delimited by drawing a connection line between the spots of weakest bus traffic frequency from the centre in question to neighbouring centres.

## Coincidence Functional Regions – Ethnic Regions

### Croatia

Regarding the communes (općine) with a Serbian ethnic majority in 1991 (13 communes) they are split among 4 macroregions (Zagreb, Rijeka, Split, Banja Luka) and 8 mesoregions (Šibenik, Zadar, Gospić, Karlovac, Sisak, Banja Luka, Bjelovar). Neither a macroregional nor a mesoregional centre is situated within these communes. That means, the communes with Serbian majority are not forming one or more functional units and have no centre of their own. Actually they are economically weak peripheries of regions centred on Croatian majority communes (in 10 cases) or (in 3 cases) on Serbian or Muslim majority communes of Bosnia- Hercegovina.

The communes with Serbian majority of the Knin region (Kninska krajina) – Knin, Benkovac and Obrovac – as well as the commune of Gračac and the southern part of the other Lika commune Donji Lapac are gravitating towards Split as their macroregional centre and to Šibenik (Knin, eastern Gračac, southern Donji Lapac) and Zadar (Benkovac, Obrovac, central and western Gračac) as their mesoregional centres.

The western fringe of the Lika commune Titova Korenica belongs to mesoregion of Gospić and to the macroregion of Rijeka.

The major part of Korenica along with the Serbian majority Kordun communes Vojnič and Virginmost are gravitating towards Zagreb as their macroregional centre and to Karlovac as their mesoregional centre.

Two communes with Serbian majority of the Banja region, Glina and Petrinja, gravitate towards the mesoregional centre Sisak and are part of the Zagreb macroregion as well. Pakrac, with Serbian majority in Slavonia belonging to the Zagreb macroregion, is loosely connected with the mesoregion of Bjelovar.

The Bosnian city Banja Luka acts as a macroregional centre for 3 Croatian communes with a Serbian ethnic majority: for the Banija communes of Dvor and Hrvatska Kostajnica it is the mesoregional centre as well; for the northern part of the Lika commune Donji Lapac the Bosnian town of Bihać in the Muslim exclave of the Cazinska krajina functions as a mesoregional centre.

<sup>3</sup> JORDAN; P.: Communications I – Bus Traffic. In: Atlas of the Danubian Countries, ed. by Österreichisches Ost- und Südosteuropa-Institut, red. by Josef BREU; Wien 1984, tab. 351.

## Bosnia and Hercegovina

Bosnia and Hercegovina is subdivided into 6 macroregions: into the regions of the domestic centres Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla and Mostar and into smaller shares of the Croatian centres Split and Osijek. Due to the extremely mixed ethnic structure of Bosnia-Hercegovina none of them is ethnically homogenous.

The Banja Luka macroregion is predominantly Serbian, but includes the Muslim exclave of Cazinska krajina (communes with Muslim majority Velika Kladuša, Cazin, Bihać, Bosanska Krupa) as well as the communes of the Sana valley (Prijedor, Sanski Most) which shows Muslim majority and of the upper Vrbas valley (Jajce, Donji Vakuf, Bugojno, Gornji Vakuf). Also its mesoregions Banja Luka and Bihać still are composed of communes with Serbian and Muslim majority.

The Tuzla macroregion has a Muslim majority, but comprises the Serbian majority region of Semberija in the northeast, the Serbian majority commune of Teslić in the west of the macroregion and the Serbian exclave of Šekovići southeast of Tuzla as well as the Croatian majority communes Odžak, Bosanski Šamac and Orašje in the Sava valley. The mesoregions Tuzla and Doboј display the same ethnic diversity.

The Sarajevo macroregion is a mixture of Muslim, Serbian and Croatian majority communes as well, the mesoregion of Sarajevo reflecting the same diversity. Within the small mesoregion of Zenica the mixture is confined to Muslim and Croatian majorities. The Mostar macroregion is composed of a southwestern Croatian half and a northeastern half with Muslim and Serbian majorities.

The shares of Croatia-centred macroregions in Bosnia-Hercegovina will be referred to under item 5.

## Coincidence Functional Regions-Country Boundaries

The functional macroregions of Bosnia-Hercegovina and Croatia do not deviate too much from present country boundaries, which in general have a long historical tradition.

Along the boundary between Croatia and Slovenia there is only one significant deviation: the macroregion of Rijeka includes the Slovenian commune (občina) of Ilirska Bistrica. The boundary between Croatia and Hungary as well as the boundary between Croatia and Voivodina are completely in line with the macroregions.

Along the boundary between Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina 5 major deviations can be observed:

— one in the Sava valley, where the Croatian macroregion Osijek includes the Bosnian communes (općine/opštine) of Bosanski Brod and Derventa, in 1991 inhabited partly by Croatian (Bosanski Brod), partly by Serbian (Derventa) majorities;

- a second along lower Una river, where the Bosnian Banja Luka macroregion includes most of the Croatian Banja communes Dvor and Hrvatska Kostajnica having Serbian ethnic majorities;
- a third in the east of the Lika, where the northern part of the Croatian commune of Donji Lapac (with a Serbian ethnic majority) belongs to the Bosnian Banja Luka macroregion;
- the fourth in the Bosnian hinterland of Split, where – roughly speaking – the ethnically Serbian commune of Glamoč and the ethnically mainly Croatian communes of Livno and Tomislavgrad (former Duvno) belong to the Croatian Split macroregion; and
- a fifth in the hinterland of Dubrovnik, where the Croatian Split macroregion comprises 4 Bosnian communes (Trebinje, Bileća, Gacko and a larger share of Ljubinje) with Serbian ethnic majorities, although the intensity of this relation is not too high.

Along the boundary between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro the only deviation is the extension of the Bosnian macroregion of Tuzla to the Serbian right bank of river Drina opposite the town of Zvornik thereby including that town's catchment area.

### **Coincidence Functional Regions – New Administrative Subdivision of Croatia**

By the Act on Local Self-Administration and Administration (*Zakon o lokalnoj samoupravi i upravi*) of 1993 Croatia has been subdivided into 20 counties (*županje*) and into the city of Zagreb (*Grad Zagreb*).

Regarding communes with Serbian majority in Croatia this subdivision takes into account that they have no functional centres of their own. It consequently subordinates them to centres outside. But by creating two compact Serbian districts with a special selfadministrative status (*kotar s posebnim samoupravnim položajem*), one including 6, the other 5 of the 13 Croatian communes with a Serbian majority in 1991, and by subordinating each of the two districts to one county functional relations nevertheless were disregarded.

Thus, the total bloc of the Serbian majority communes in the Lika and in the Krajina (Titova Korenica, Donji Lapac, Gračac, Knin, Obrovac, Benkovac) has been subordinated as the district of Knin (*Kninski kotar*) to the county of Zadar (*Zadarsko-Kninska županja*) Croatian majority according to the census 1991: 56.8%), although at least the former commune of Knin was rather gravitating to Šibenik and the former commune of Korenica rather towards Karlovac.



In the same manner the Serbian majority communes of the Kordun (Vojnić and Virgin most) and 3 of the 4 Banja communes with a Serbian majority (Glina, Dvor, Hrvatska Kostajnica)<sup>4</sup> have been subordinated as the district of Glina (Glinski kotar) to the county of Sisak (Sisačko-Moslavačka županja) (Croatian majority according to the census 1991: 56.3%), although Vojnić and Virgin most would functionally rather belong to the county of Karlovac (Karlovačka županja). Additionally to establish Croatian majority in the county of Sisak, this county has been enlarged by three former communes on the left bank of river Sava (Ivanić-Grad, Kutina, Novska), two of them belonging to the mesoregion of Zagreb and one (Novska) to the mesoregion of Slavonska Požega.

Another disfunctional affiliation in relation with the Serbian ethnic minority happened to the former commune of Pakrac, which in 1991 had a relative Serbian majority of 46.4%. Obviously in order not to join it with the former communes of Daruvar and Grubiško Polje – two adjacent communes in western Slavonija with considerable Serbian minorities (33.2%, 32.1%) – Pakrac has been affiliated to the county of Slavonska Požega (Požeško-slavonska županja), where the Serbian minority is weaker.

### **Coincidence Functional Regions – Owen/Stoltenberg Proposal for a Subdivision of Bosnia and Hercegovina**

The proposal of Owen and Stoltenberg submitted on 20 August 1993 to the peace conference on Bosnia and Hercegovina in Geneva and regarding the subdivision of this country into a Serbian, a Muslim and a Croatian state (Map 3) besides the current military situation and strategic considerations mainly is based on the ethnic distribution as of 1991. It was already demonstrated that ethnic regions in Bosnia and Hercegovina do not coincide with functional regions. This is true also for the Owen/Stoltenberg proposal, even to a higher extent. Extremely disfunctional is the creation of exclaves (Muslim exclaves of Srebrenica, Žepa, Goražde, Bihać; two Croatian exclaves in the Sava valley), the separation of central eastern Bosnia from its centre Sarajevo, the separation of Semberija from Tuzla and the cutting of the Mostar macroregion into two halves.

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<sup>4</sup> The former commune Petrinja, which in 1991 had only a relative Serbian majority (44.9%), has not been included into the district with a special status.



Map 3: New Subdivision of Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina

Sources: Republika Hrvatska, Županije, gradovi, općine, ed. by Naklada C, Zagreb 1993.  
Danas, 24.8.1993

Legend:

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1 Country   | 6 Croatian state         |
| 2 Županija  | 7 Muslim state           |
| 3 Kotar   | 8 Serbian state          |
| 4 Country   | 9 Important cities/towns |
| 5 States according to the Owen-Stoltenberg proposal of 20 August 1993 |                          |

### Summary

To summarize briefly it might be stated that

- due to the intensive ethnic mixture any effort to subdivide Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina according to ethnic principles excludes a good share of an ethnic community from its own territory.
- on the territory of the former Croatian Military Frontier and Bosnia-Herzegovina ethnically homogenous regions rarely coincide with functional regions.
- the Serbian majority communes of Croatia are peripheral zones without major urban centres. Their centres are situated in Croatian majority areas or in Bosnia.
- with a few exceptions present country boundaries coincide fairly well with the functional pattern.
- the new administrative subdivision of Croatia into counties is partly disfunctional where Serbian majority communes are concerned.
- the Owen/Stoltenberg proposal for a subdivision of Bosnia and Herzegovina is significantly deviating from the pattern of functional regions.
- to secure the economic functioning and the prosperity of regions in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina it would frequently be necessary to disregard the ethnic pattern and to draw administrative and political boundaries across ethnic lines.

### Literature:

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