

The Problems of Finding a Stable Political-Territorial Structure for Hitherto Yugoslavia

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One might share the opinion of Burkhard WEHNER¹ 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, 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 presents these ideas in WEHNER's mind are the European Community and an alternative to its aimed-at Maastricht system. And it might not be utopian to have these ideas realized within a region of developed democratic structures.

But I do not see opportunities to realize them in East-Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe in general and definitely not in ex-Yugoslavia, where right at the moment classic-type nation-states are emerging very much resembling the type of universal nation-states aimed-at in the late 19th century. In some cases - as with the Serbs in Bosnia - nation-building is even based on the conception of ethnically "clean" territories.

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 other essentials too?

Well, ethnic distribution is a criterion not to be neglected, especially in Central and Southeastern Europe. And confronted with all the cruelties reported from this dirty war in Bosnia 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 ethnical cleansing this region will never cease to be an ethnic mixture and that in many

¹ WEHNER, B.: Nationalstaat, Solidarstaat, Effizienzstaat. Darmstadt 1992.

cases ethnic boundaries do not meet economic and functional regions.

Therefore I should like to draw your attention to some additional criteria, which might be called "geographical":

- the physio-geographical structure of the region, its geopolitical position and meaning,
- the main traffic lines and flows, the pattern of economic interaction,
- the pattern of functional regions.

Discussing these criteria on the background of official boundaries and current proposals of new boundaries I should like to focus on Croatia and Bosnia, because time is limited and because these are the regions in question today.

But first of all we should nevertheless have a glance at the ethnic map of former Yugoslavia. It is the starting point of all quarrels and of all proposals for new political delimitations.

1 Ethnic structure

Map 1 representing relative and absolute ethnic majorities according to communes is based on the official population census of 31 March 1991, published by the Federal Statistical Office in Belgrade. Although the Albanians refused to take part in this census it may be regarded as fairly reliable.

The map clearly indicates that only Slovenia is an ethnically homogeneous country. Of the other countries now independent only parts are ethnically "clean": in Croatia the Northwest and central and southern Dalmatia; in the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" large parts of Serbia proper and the west-central part of Montenegro; of Macedonia the southeastern half.

All of Bosnia and Hercegovina as well as the former autonomous province of Voivodina and the belt of the former Military Frontier in Croatia are extremely intermixed.

Compared with that map none of the proposals for a new political subdivision will create ethnically homogenous territories: not the Vance-Owen plan subdividing Bosnia and Hercegovina into 10 autonomous provinces (overhead); not the claims of Serbian autonomists in Croatia (overhead); and of course not the line of separation between

Croats and Serbs drawn by Branko COLAKOVIC last year in San Diego² -which is not so untypical for Serbian claims in general, but moderate in comparison to "Greater Serbia" claims expressed in 1991 (overhead)

It has to be taken into account, of course, that after this population census of 1991 certainly more than 100,000 people have died in the war and that by now about 3 millions of the Bosnian population (about 70 %) 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 Hercegovina and from those parts of Croatia which are now under the control of the UN).

The aspect of local ethnic minorities is stressed by the following 3 maps (Maps 2,3,4) representing the distribution of Serbs, Croats and Muslims by absolute figures. They indicate 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 ethnic territory.

In Croatia, e.g., only 173,000 of the 581,000 Serbs (=30 %) are inhabiting communes with a Serbian majority (Map 2). 50,000 Serbs are living in Zagreb, 22,000 in Rijeka - cities far from the Serbian territories of Croatia. Even the extreme variant of Serbian autonomy claims in Croatia does not include more than 331,000 Serbs (=57 %), but at the same time 622,000 Croats, i.e. about two times the number of Serbs.

The Serbs in Bosnia and Hercegovina are somewhat more concentrated. Nevertheless, 681,000 (=50 %) of them are living outside Serbian majority communes, even 53 % would live outside the provinces defined as Serbian by the Vance-Owen plan.

449,000 of the 752,000 Croats (= 60%) in Bosnia and Hercegovina are living outside Croatian majority communes (Map 3). According to the Vance-Owen plan still 298,000 Croats (=40 %) would remain outside "Croatian" provinces, although the plan favours the Croats.

The Bosnian Muslims are quite concentrated on communes where they have a majority, i.e. 1.564 of the 1.905 million (=82 %) are living in Muslim majority communes, only 18 % outside (Map 4). The Vance-Owen plan in its recent version excludes 892 000 (= 47 %) from "Muslim" provinces.

² COLAKOVIC, B.: Drawing the Serbo-Croatian Boundary in Yugoslavia. Paper, presented to the 1992 AAG meeting in San Diego.

2 The geopolitical position in general

Hitherto Yugoslavia has a mountainous axis of several chains extending in northwestern-southeastern direction (Map 5). To the Northeast the mountains pass into the lowlands of the Pannonian Basin. In the Southwest they fall in steep slopes to the Adriatic coast. The narrowest section and the most convenient passage of the mountain axis is the Gorski kotar between Karlovac and Rijeka. A still favourable passage runs along the valley of the Una river to the town of Knin in Central Dalmatia. To the Southeast a passage becomes more and more difficult, not so much because of the altitude of the mountains, but because of several parallel steep chains, deeply engraved valleys and a lot of gorges.

The mountainous core, especially its central section, besides being a strong **traffic barrier** between the Pannonian Basin and the Adriatic Coast, since ever functioned as a **region of retreat** and as a **fortress** either in the defensive or the offensive sense: Thus, up to the early 16th century it enjoyed relative independence from external centres (Byzantium, Hungary, Venice, Vienna) and, e.g., offered a retreat to the religious community of the Bogomiles. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Turks during their offensive period used it as a military base for war raids to the Adriatic coast, into the Pannonian lowlands and to the Eastern Alps threatening and impoverishing the nearer vicinity up to depopulation and devastation. After having been beaten and driven out of the Pannonian Basin the Turks, despite of their political and economic weakness, succeeded in maintaining large parts of the mountain core as their remotest outpost in Europe up to 1878 and 1912 respectively. And finally, it was Bosnia, where TITO resisted the German and Italian occupation in World War II.

On the other hand the mountain core needs **co-operation and economic interaction** with the adjacent lowlands and with the coast in order to prosper economically. Not fertile and rich by nature it will remain a poor and backward region if such co-operation does not exist. From the earliest times transhumant herdsmen shifted between summer pastures in the mountains and winter pastures in the Pannonian lowlands or in the Dalmatian hinterland. Merchants from Dalmatia, especially from Dubrovnik, were so essential for the supply of the mountains throughout medieval and modern times that their activities did not cease even under Turkish occupation. The Dalmatian coast is Bosnia's natural outlet to the sea.

When in the early 16th century Turkish forces had occupied most of present Bosnia and Hercegovina and the region was to remain under Turkish rule for almost 4 centuries the

antagonism between the Ottoman Empire and the powers in Central Europe emphasized Bosnia's peripheral role. The same happened to the adjacent belt on the Croatian and Dalmatian side of the Bosnian border, by Austrian and Venetian authorities mainly settled with Serbs to form the Austrian and Venetian Military Frontier. This backwardness has been reduced, but not really overcome by the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878, by the final dissolution of the Military Frontier in 1882 and by the incorporation of the whole region into Yugoslavia after World War I. And it is still present today. Two indicators may demonstrate this: Map 6 shows the low per capita national income in 1981, map 7 a lack of urban centres especially in western Bosnia and in the area of the former Military Frontier.

It may be concluded that a prosperous development of the whole region will be possible only under the conditions of peaceful co-operation between the mountain axis and its forelands and that prosperity certainly will not be achieved as long as the mountains on the one hand and the Pannonian lowlands and the coast on the other are occupied by antagonistic powers.

3 Main traffic flows and economic relations (Map 8)

Among the cross-mountain passages the route from the central Sava valley along river Kupa and across Gorski kotar to the Kvarner Bay is the most important. In the 18th and 19th centuries it was the main export route for grain from the southeastern lowlands of the Pannonian Basin. The grain was shipped by a combined system of river and road transport to the seaports of the Kvarner Bay. In the course of the second half of the 19th century Rijeka [Fiume] became the main seaport of the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Rijeka's hinterland comprised practically the total Pannonian Basin. After the wars Rijeka continued to play this role. In the late 1980s it attracted about 53 % of the turnover of all Yugoslavian ports and about 58 % of all transit turnover.³

Rijeka always has been and still is of special importance for Hungary. Thus, Hungary currently supports plans to improve Rijeka's insufficient hinterland traffic lines to Zagreb and Budapest. The fact that the oil pipeline from Omišalj near Rijeka via Sisak (near Zagreb) to Budapest is not in operation at the moment means essential economic losses

³ STRAŽIČIĆ, N.: Pomorska geografija Jugoslavije. Zagreb 1989.

for Hungary. Besides, the interrupted branch of this pipeline from Sisak to Pančevo (near Belgrade) was important also for the oil supply of Serbia.

All these hinterland connections of Rijeka to central Croatia and the farther Pannonian Basin pass the bottleneck of Croatia between Slovenia and western Bosnia. They would have to cross an autonomous Serbian territory if the intentions of the Serbs in Croatia would come true in their maximum variant (include the commune of Karlovac, overhead). "Greater Serbia" aspirations leave that connection in Croatian hands, although they are near to closing this bottleneck (overhead).

A route of less international but utmost internal importance for Croatia is the one between central Croatia around Zagreb and Dalmatia. It practically was not in operation during the period of Turkish rule in Bosnia. At that time Dalmatia was politically separated from Croatia, first under the dominance of Venice, later of Austria. Dalmatia suffered from this isolation economically and turned into an extremely backward region with high emigration rates. In the decades before World War I Austria tried but never succeeded to improve Dalmatia's economic situation by the construction of a railway line connecting Dalmatia with the interior. But only the completion of the Lika railway line in 1925 under the auspices of the first Yugoslavian state and the construction of the Una railway line in 1948 under the auspices of the second was able to reinforce this route. Later also a highway was constructed. All these traffic lines cross areas not settled by Croats and converge to the Gate of Knin [Kninska vrata], the centre of Serbs in Croatia. The Una line - the most effective among them - even crosses western Bosnia. Alternatives to this route bypassing Serbian or Bosnian areas - like plans to construct a railway line passing the Velebit range by a tunnel or the present traffic deviation via Rijeka and along the coast - will not be able to replace the above mentioned routes in the long run without harmful effects on the coherence of today's Croatia.

Transit across the centre of Bosnia and Hercegovina, following the rivers Bosna and Neretva, practically was blocked under Turkish rule up to 1878. Then it gained limited importance by the construction of the Bosna (1882) and Neretva (1891) railway lines. These, however, were narrow gauge lines passing an extremely difficult relief. But also the modernization of those railways in the 1950s and 1960s and the development of the seaport of Ploče (former Kardeljevo), situated in Croatia, did not convert the Bosna-Neretva line into a major transit route and increase its importance for the Dalmatian coast. According to the recent version of the Vance-Owen plan this route would have to cross Croatian and Muslim provinces as well as the province of Sarajevo with a special status.

A difficult case is also the Belgrade-Bar route, completed as a railway line in 1976 to facilitate seabound traffic from the centre of Serbia to the Adriatic. Due to the line's length and the relief difficulties the Montenegrin port of Bar, however, never succeeded in gaining more than 2 % of all ex-Yugoslavian seaports' turnover. Serbia continued to ship most of her commodities via the ports of Rijeka and Salonica. Because of autonomistic aspirations of the Sandshak Muslims this line faces additional complications.

In the northwestern-southeastern direction the so-called Sava corridor gained importance as the backbone of new Yugoslavia after the First World War. Later, especially after the Second World War, and due to Europe's proceeding economic integration, it also became the main international transit route between Western and Central Europe and the Southeast. Its technical conditions are the best within former Yugoslavia (mainly motorway and railway of high performance), frequency of traffic was the highest. The importance of this route was increased by the Sisak-Slavonski Brod-Pančevo branch of the oil pipeline from the coast. Since the outbreak of hostilities in Slavonia the Sava corridor is interrupted near Okučani, international transit bypasses Croatia via Hungary. Besides its importance for international traffic the Sava corridor also is the main link between central Croatia around Zagreb and Slavonia, thus of similar importance for internal Croatian coherence as the Una corridor as the link to Dalmatia. If Serbian autonomists in Croatia obtain their goals the Slavonian section of the Sava corridor would come under the control of a Serbian political unit.

The Danube as a route of river transport had some meaning in the past (transport of grain). Since industrial production in Europe is proceeding towards sophisticated and highly manufactured commodities asking for fast transport the prospects of the Danube as a main transportation route must be considered moderate despite of the recent inauguration of the Rhine-Main-Danube canal. By all variants of Serbian claims to Eastern Slavonia Croatia would lose her access to the Danube.

A crossing of Bosnia and Hercegovina in the northwestern-southeastern direction was of some importance only during short periods of history, when the relations between Austria and the Ottoman Empire were fairly well and when the two had the desire to bypass Hungary and Serbia using the route Zagreb-Sarajevo-Sandshak-Kosovo-Macedonia. This was, e.g., the intention of the Orient Railway Line planned in the 1870s, but never completed. The route offers a certain opportunity to bypass Serbia if she would remain a destructive power in the Balkans.

The route along the Adriatic coast mainly is of touristic value. Its internal function of connecting the northern and southern sections of the coast is of minor importance, since economic ties between them are rather weak. But insofar as tourism was and could again be the main economic branch of the Coast and one of Croatia's most important economic branches in general an interruption of this route (as by the maximum variant of Serbian autonomy claims or the Serbo-Croat boundary suggested by Branko COLAKOVIC, overhead) is threatening the country as a whole.

4 Functional regions

To me comparing the present and the proposed boundaries with the functional regions as well was interesting. I understand functional regions in the sense of regions, the internal relations of which are oriented towards a centre or an urban agglomeration. These are the regions of economic interaction, the real spheres of daily intercourse! [A large share of the Slovene ethnic minority in Carinthia, e.g. in 1920 voted for staying within this functional region despite of ethnic discrimination. Only more or less self-supplying small farmers voted for separation, whereas bigger farmers depending on the market and workers having their jobs in the urban centres of the region voted in favour of the maintainance of the functional unit.⁴]

In order to outline the functional regions of former Yugoslavia for this purpose the elaborations by Yugoslavian geographers could not be used. Those covering the whole territory in a comparable manner⁵ are based on the assumption that a functional region never crosses the boundary of a republic. Besides, they use the large communes as their basic units. They are therefore not suitable for demonstrating possible deviations from republic boundaries.

The subdivision of former Yugoslavia into functional regions as represented in map 8 is based on frequency of public bus traffic (This, in turn was derived from bus time tables). Frequency of 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

⁴ MORITSCH, A.: Der nationale Differenzierungsprozeß am Beispiel ländlicher Gemeinden Südkärntens. In: MORITSCH, A. (ed.): Vom Ethnos zur Nationalität, Wien-München 1991, pp. 44-92.

⁵ e.g. ROGIC, V.: Nodalno-funkcionalne regije. In: Veliki geografski atlas Jugoslavije. Zagreb 1987, p. 10. Geografija SR Hrvatske, Zagreb 1975.

periodical supply. It is of special use in a country like former Yugoslavia, where the rate of private motorization was comparatively low and the density of railway network insufficient to meet the tasks of passenger traffic within the catchment areas of medium and low rank centres. The bus network, however, in general was dense enough.

As we see on the map functional macroregions do not deviate too much from the present country boundaries.

Along the Slovenian-Croatian boundary there is only one significant deviation: the macroregion of Rijeka includes the Slovene commune of Ilirska Bistrica.

Along the boundary between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 4 major deviations can be observed: one in the Sava valley, where the macroregion Osijek includes some Bosnian communes, inhabited partly by Croatian, partly by Serbian majorities; a second in the eastern part of the Lika, where the Serbian commune of Donji Lapac forms a part of the Banja Luka macroregion; the third in the hinterland of Split, where the Serbian commune of Glamoč and the Croatian communes of Livno and Tomislavgrad (former Duvno) belong to the Split macroregion; and a fourth in the hinterland of Dubrovnik, where the Split macroregion extends to 4 Bosnian communes with a Serbian ethnic majority, although the functional relation between Dubrovnik and these communes is not too strong.

The boundary between Croatia and Voivodina is completely in line with the macroregions.

Along the Drina boundary between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia proper the Bosnian macroregion of Tuzla also extends to the Serbian right bank of Drina river opposite the town of Zvornik thereby including that town's catchment area.

There is a full coincidence between the republic of Montenegro and the Podgorica macroregion.

Within Serbia the boundaries of macroregions deviate to some extent from the boundaries of the formerly autonomous provinces Voivodina and Kosovo, very much to the expense of the macroregions of their capital cities.

As an intermediate summary one might say that with some significant exceptions the macroregions are coinciding fairly well with the former republic, now international boundaries.

Now let us have a look at the coincidence between functional regions and ethnically defined regions as well as suggested boundaries.

As regards the communes with a Serbian majority in Croatia (13 communes) they are split among 4 macroregions (Zagreb, Rijeka, Split, Banja Luka) and 8 mesoregions (Šibenik, Zadar, Rijeka, Karlovac, Sisak, Banja Luka, Bjelovar). Neither a macroregional nor a mesoregional centre is situated within these communes. That means, the Serbian communes are by no means forming a functional unit and have no real centre. Actually they are economically weak peripheral units.

Naturally enough, the functional orientation becomes even more diversified, if one takes into account the extreme variant of Serbian autonomy claims in Croatia. These 23 communes are spread over 5 macroregions (plus Osijek) and 12 mesoregions (plus Zagreb, Slavenska Požega, Slavonski Brod, Osijek). They comprise 1 macroregional (Osijek) and 3 mesoregional (Osijek, Slavonski Brod, Karlovac) centres, but these are only the centres of 11 out of 23 communes.

The Serbo-Croatian boundary suggested by Branko COLAKOVIC (overhead) cuts the macroregional centre of Osijek off its northeastern and eastern catchment areas (Baranja, eastern part of the Osijek commune, commune of Vukovar), cuts the Serbian communes in Croatia off their mesoregional centres Sisak, Karlovac, Rijeka, Zadar and Sisak and attributes them altogether to western Bosnia, to which only the commune of Donji Lapac and the areas on the left bank of the lower Una river had functional contacts before. In Hercegovina two Croatian communes of the Split hinterland are attributed to Dalmatia according to their functional orientation, but the Mostar macroregion is cut into two halves. Divided into two parts Croatia could survive as an economic unit only if peaceful relations with its eastern neighbours are provided.

The boundaries of Greater Serbian claims of 1918 and 1991 (overhead) are more reasonable from the functional point of view. But by including 47 and 54 %, respectively, of the Croatian population of ex-Yugoslavia they would not solve any problem.

Another question is the coincidence of functional regions in Bosnia and Hercegovina with the 10 provinces of the Vance-Owen plan. It must be said that only 1 province shows a fairly good coincidence with a functional region: the province of Mostar. But 4 of these ethnically defined provinces do not dispose of a mesoregional centre, that means that their territory is oriented towards such centres in other provinces, frequently with a different ethnic composition, or even to centres outside the country (Slavonski Brod, Dubrovnik, Split). The conclusion is that most of these provinces could not prosper economically without intensive interaction with one another or with foreign centres.

5 Summary

To summarize briefly it might be stated that

- due to the intensive ethnic mixture in this region any effort to subdivide according to ethnic principles excludes a good share of an ethnic community from its own territory.
- economic prosperity in Bosnia and Hercegovina, but also in Dalmatia and Slavonia is dependent on peaceful co-operation between these regions.
- a permanent interruption of the Una and Sava corridors by antagonistic forces means the end of Croatia as an economic unit.
- the Serbian communes of Croatia are peripheral areas without major urban centres. To cut them off their centres in Croatia and to join them with western Bosnia means to connect two peripheral regions, which never had functional relations worth to mention.
- to adapt the Bosnian-Croatian border in some sections (lower Una valley, hinterland of Split, south of Slavonski Brod) would be reasonable from the ethnic as well as from the functional point of view. But in general the present country boundaries coincide fairly well with the functional pattern.
- the subdivision of Bosnia and Hercegovina as suggested by the Vance-Owen plan is hardly in line with functional relations. To grant the provinces autonomy would not mean much more than a formality facing quite different functional and economic realities.

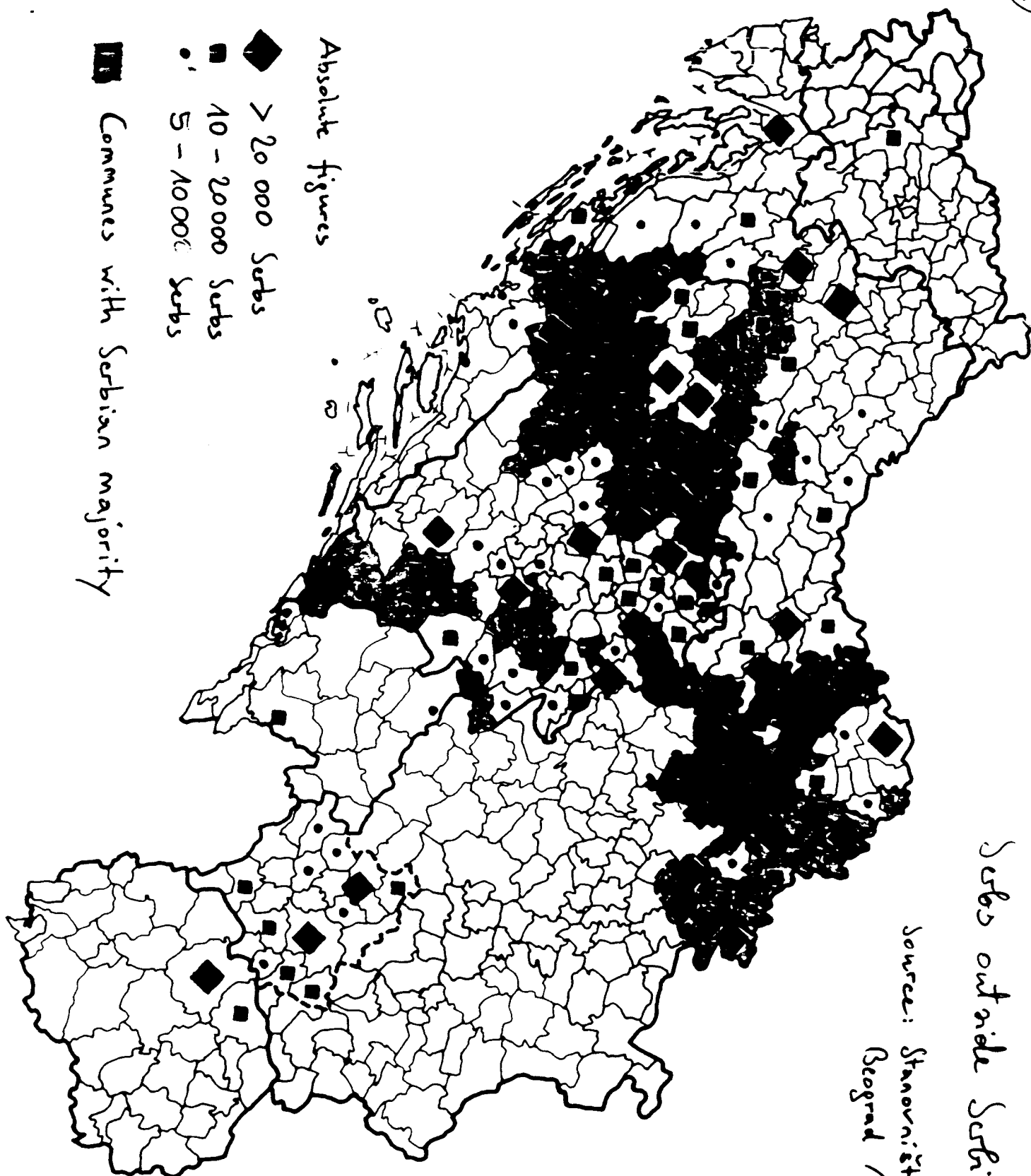


Ethnic structure
according to population census

Source: Stanovništvo 28/23-3/4
Beograd 1990/91

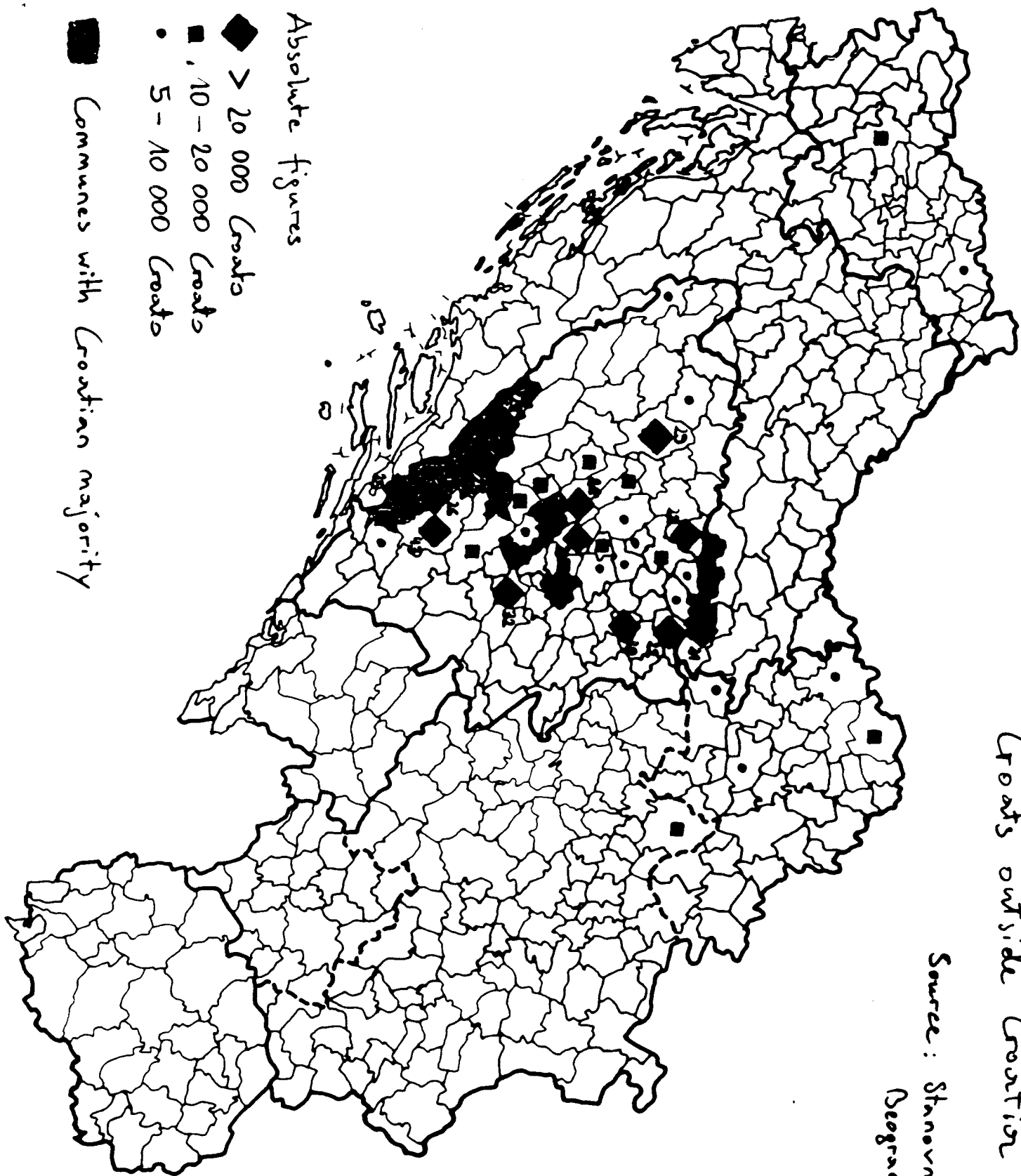
1991

0 50 100 150



Serbs outside Serbia proper 1991
 Source: Stanovništvo 28/25-3/4
 Beograd 1990/91

Croats outside Croatia 1991

Source: Stanovništvo 28/29-3/1
Beograd 1991/91

Absolute figures

◆ > 20 000 Croats

■ 10 - 20 000 Croats

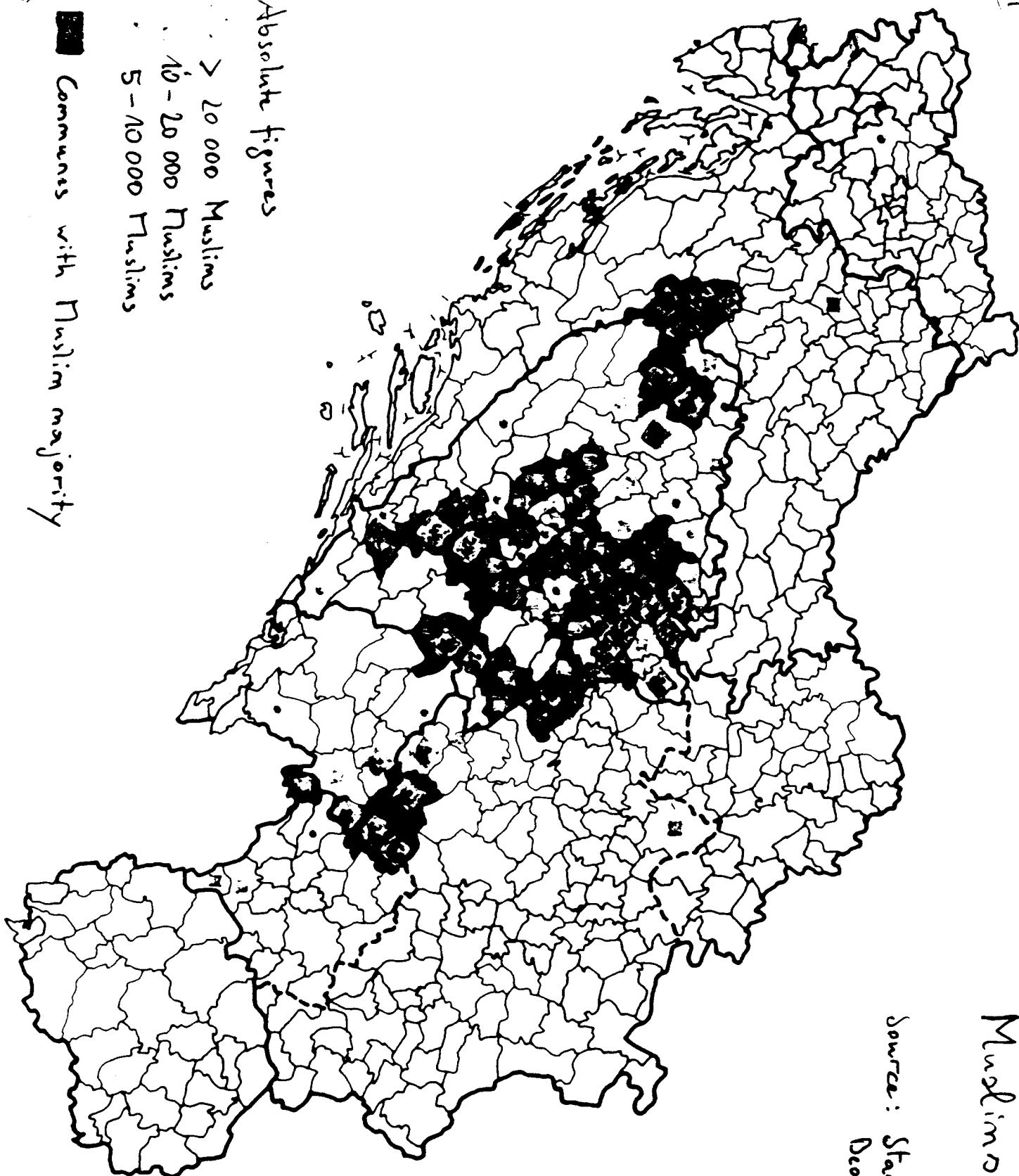
• 5 - 10 000 Croats

■ Communes with Croatian majority

(4)

Muslims 1991

Source: Stanovništvo 28/29
Beograd 1990/91



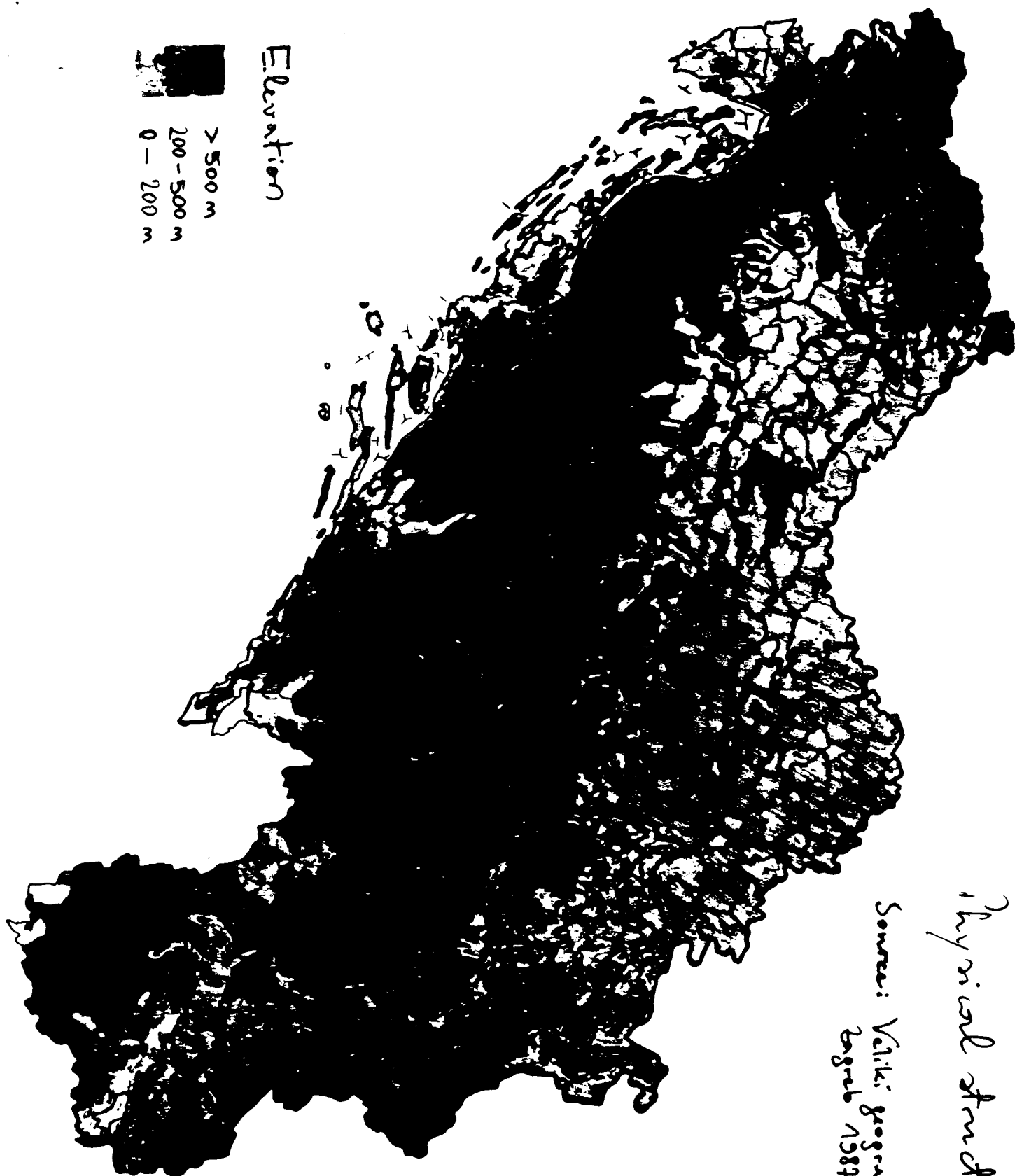
Absolute figures

> 20 000 Muslims

10 - 20 000 Muslims

5 - 10 000 Muslims

Communes with Muslim majority

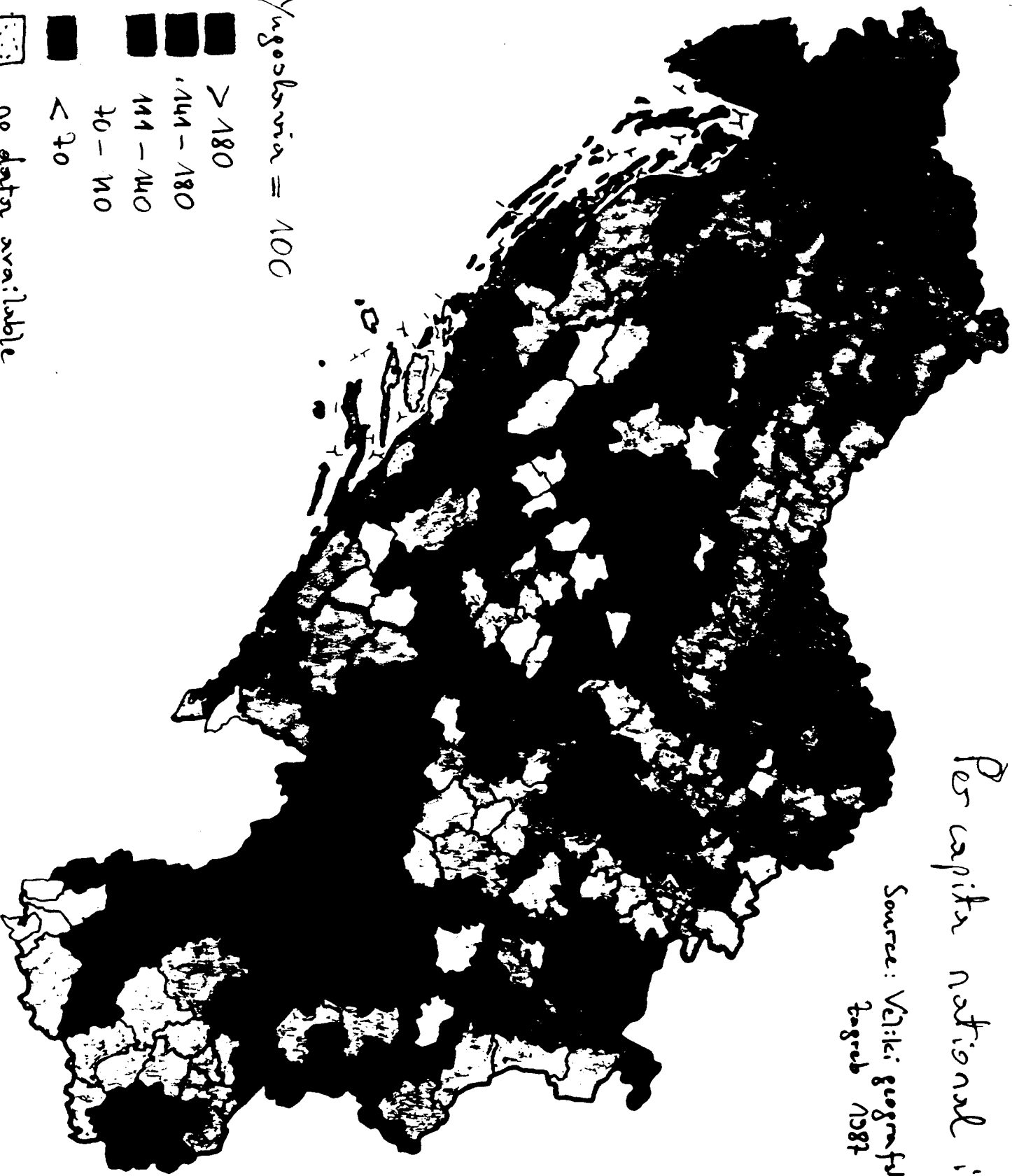
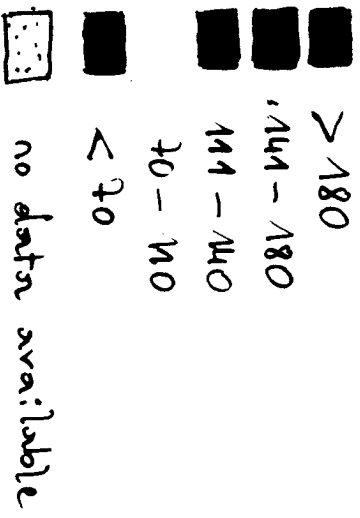


Physical structure

Source: Veliki geografski atlas Jugoslavije
Zagreb 1987

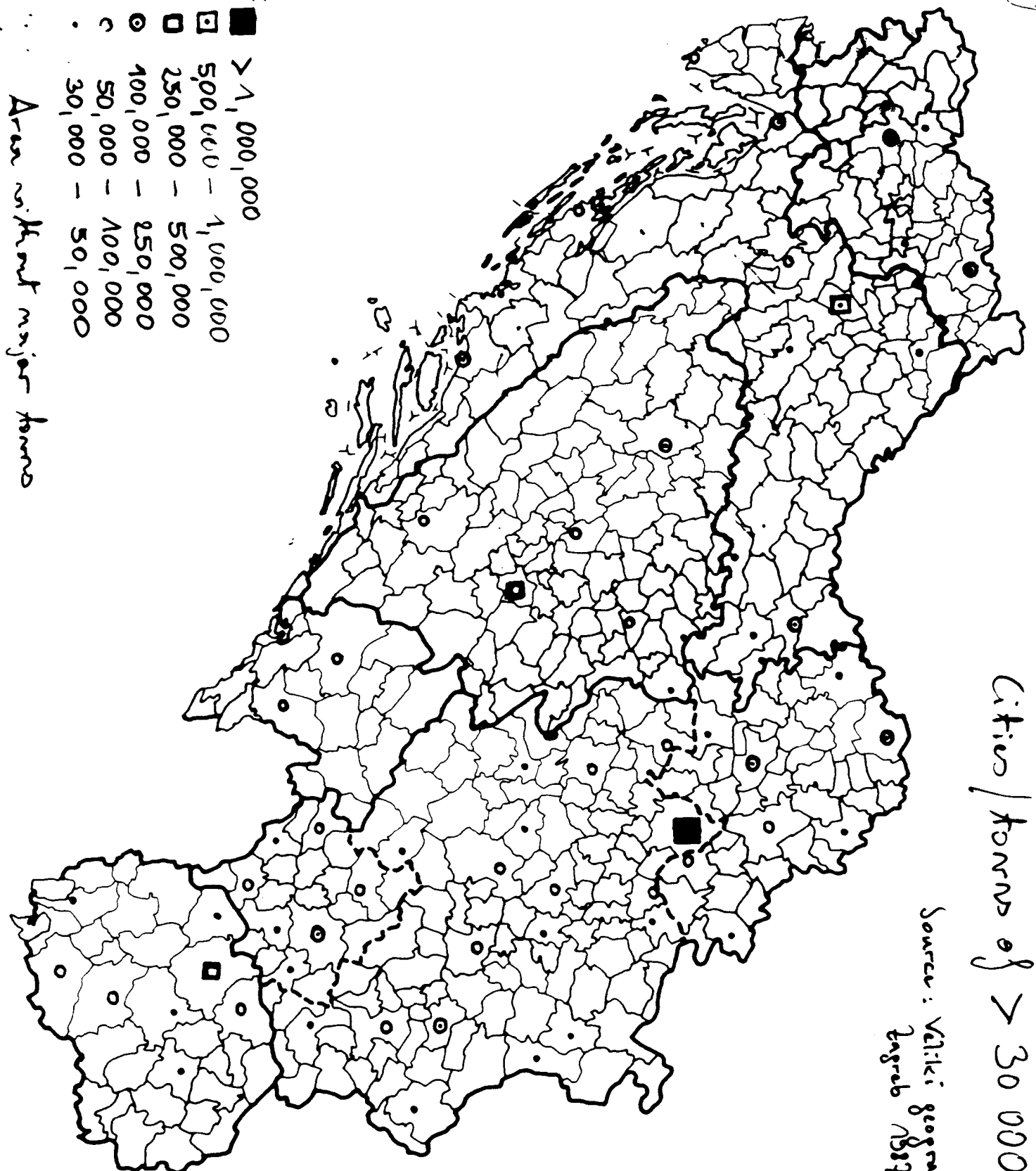
6

Yugoslavia = 100



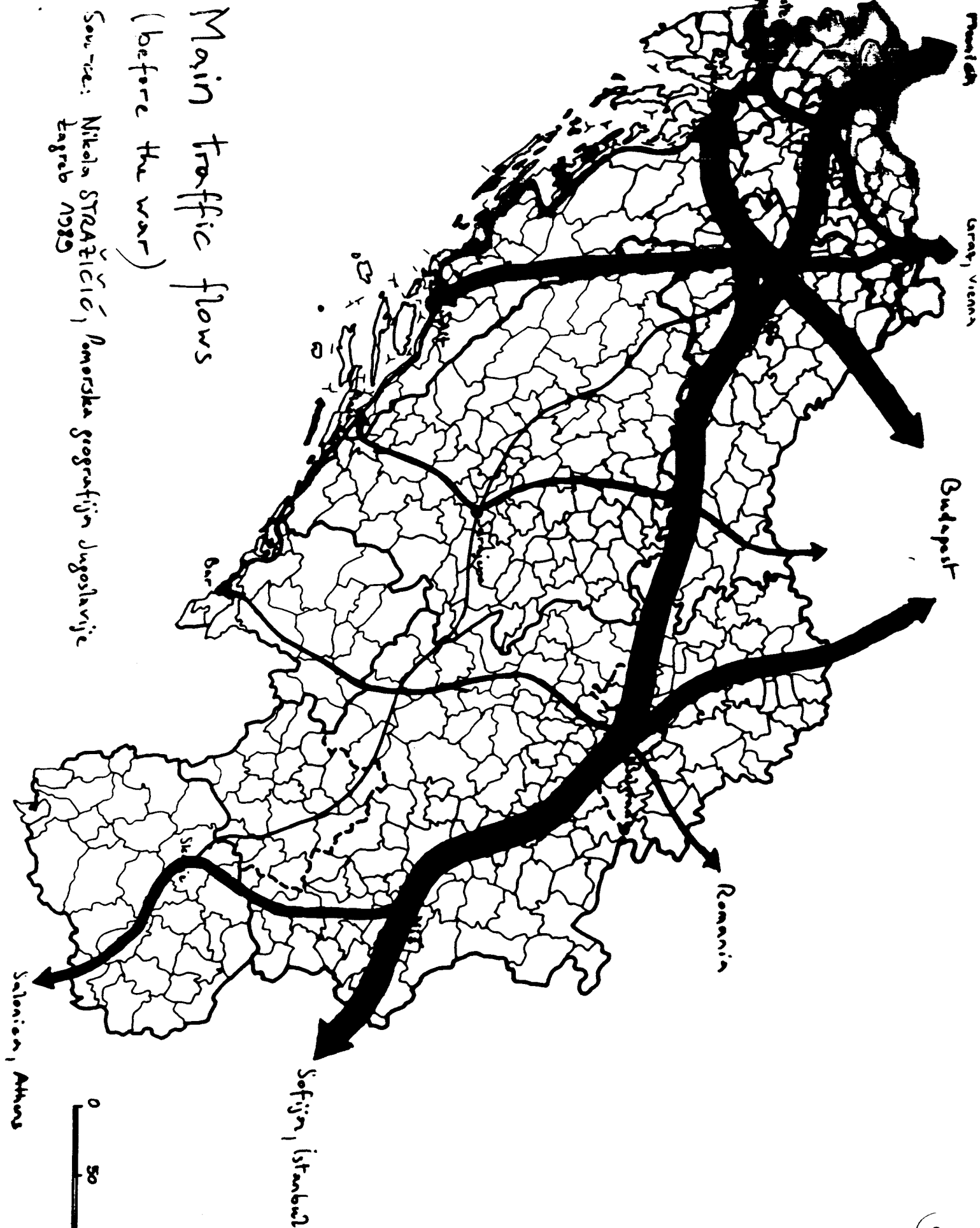
Per capita national income 1981

*Source: Veliki geografski atlas Jugoslavije
Zagreb 1987*



Cities / towns of > 30 000 inhabitants

Source: Välikki geografiski atlas Jugoslavii
Beograd 1987



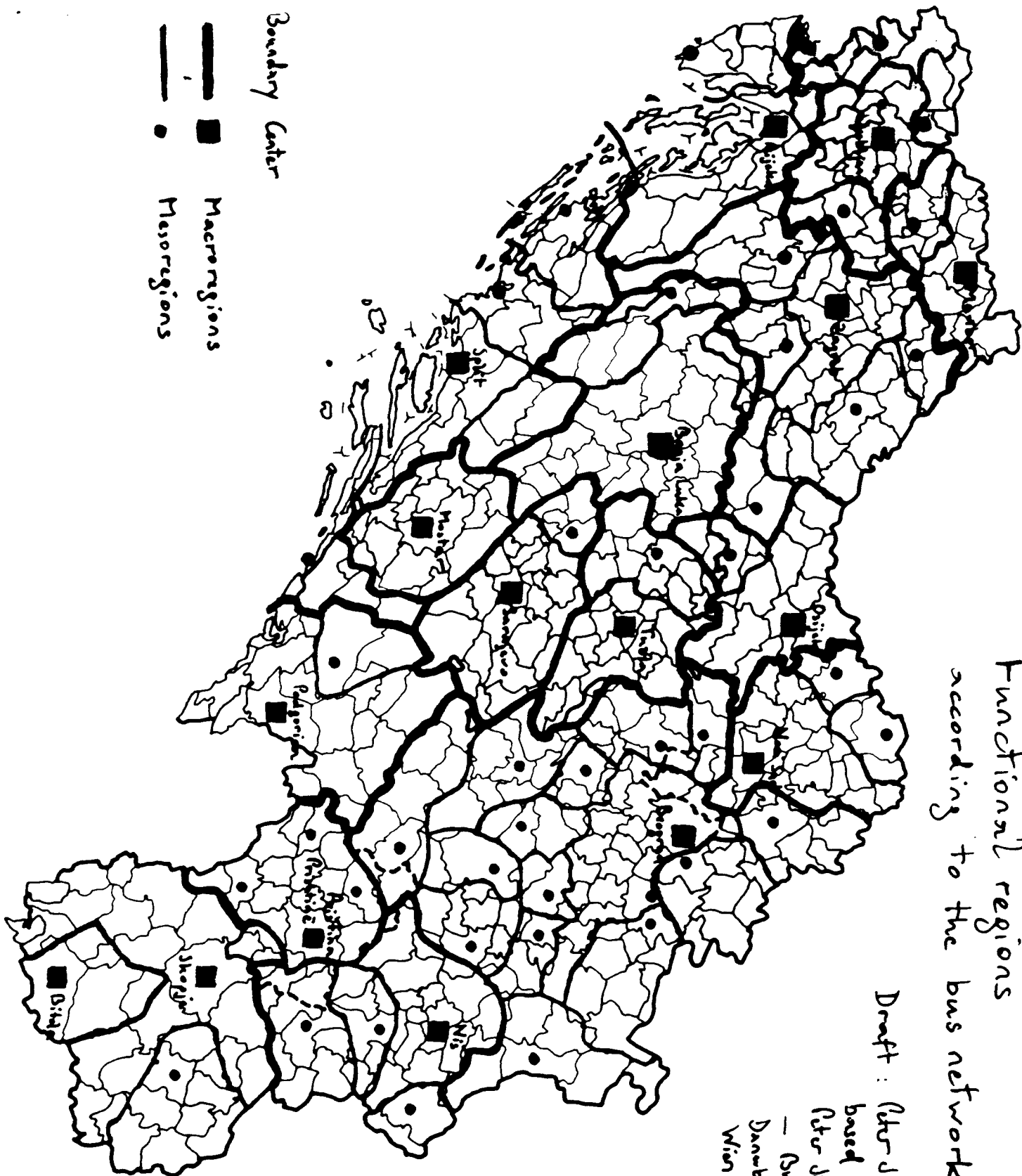
Main traffic flows
(before the war)

Source: Nikola STRAŽIČIĆ, Pomorska geografija Jugoslavije
Zagreb 1989

Functional regions according to the bus network

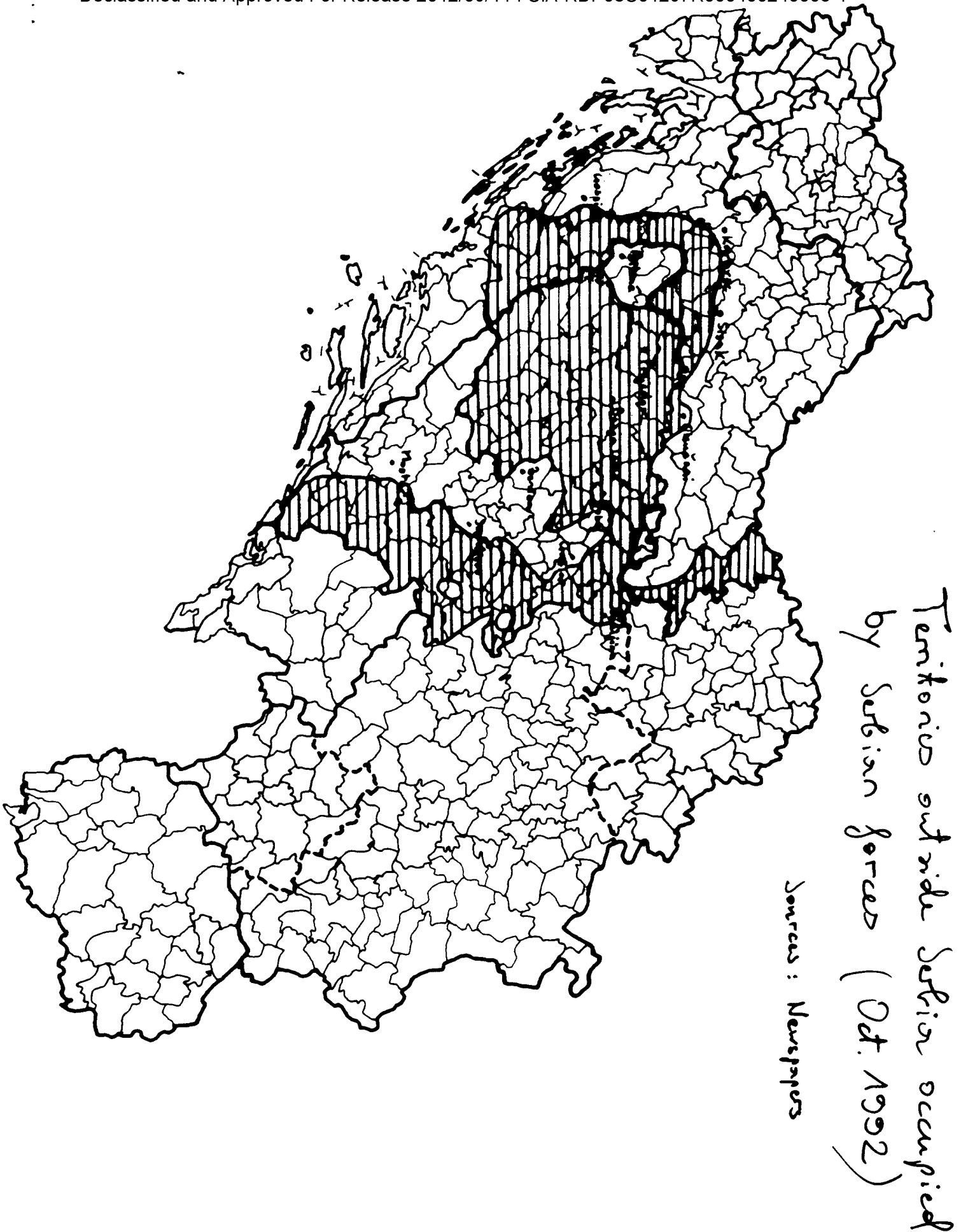
Draft : (for JORDAN (1998))




based on
 (for JORDAN), Communiqué
 — Bus traffic, Atlas of the
 Danubian Countries Tab. 38
 Wien 1984

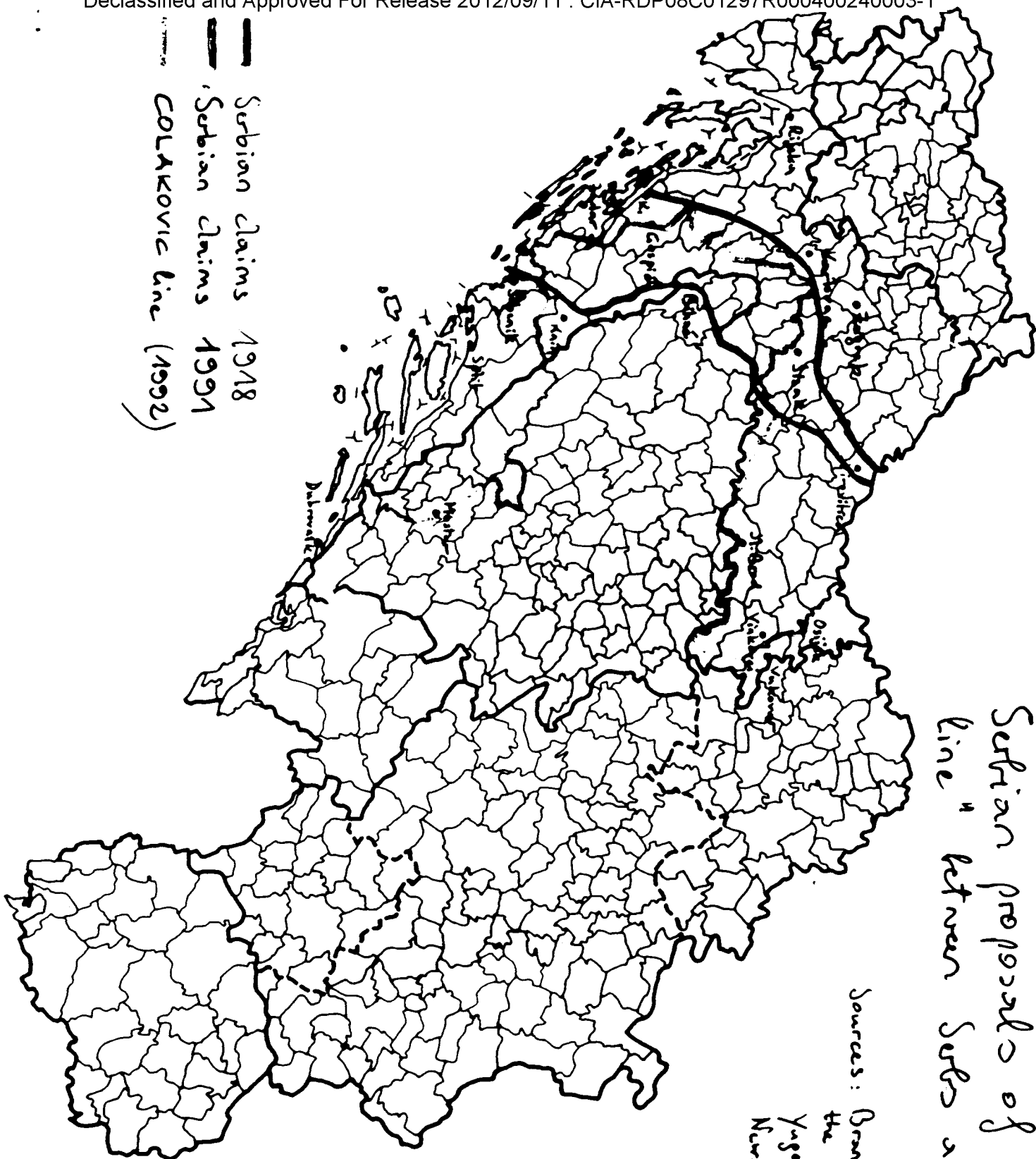


Boundary Center
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 Macroregions
 Mesoregions

0 50 100

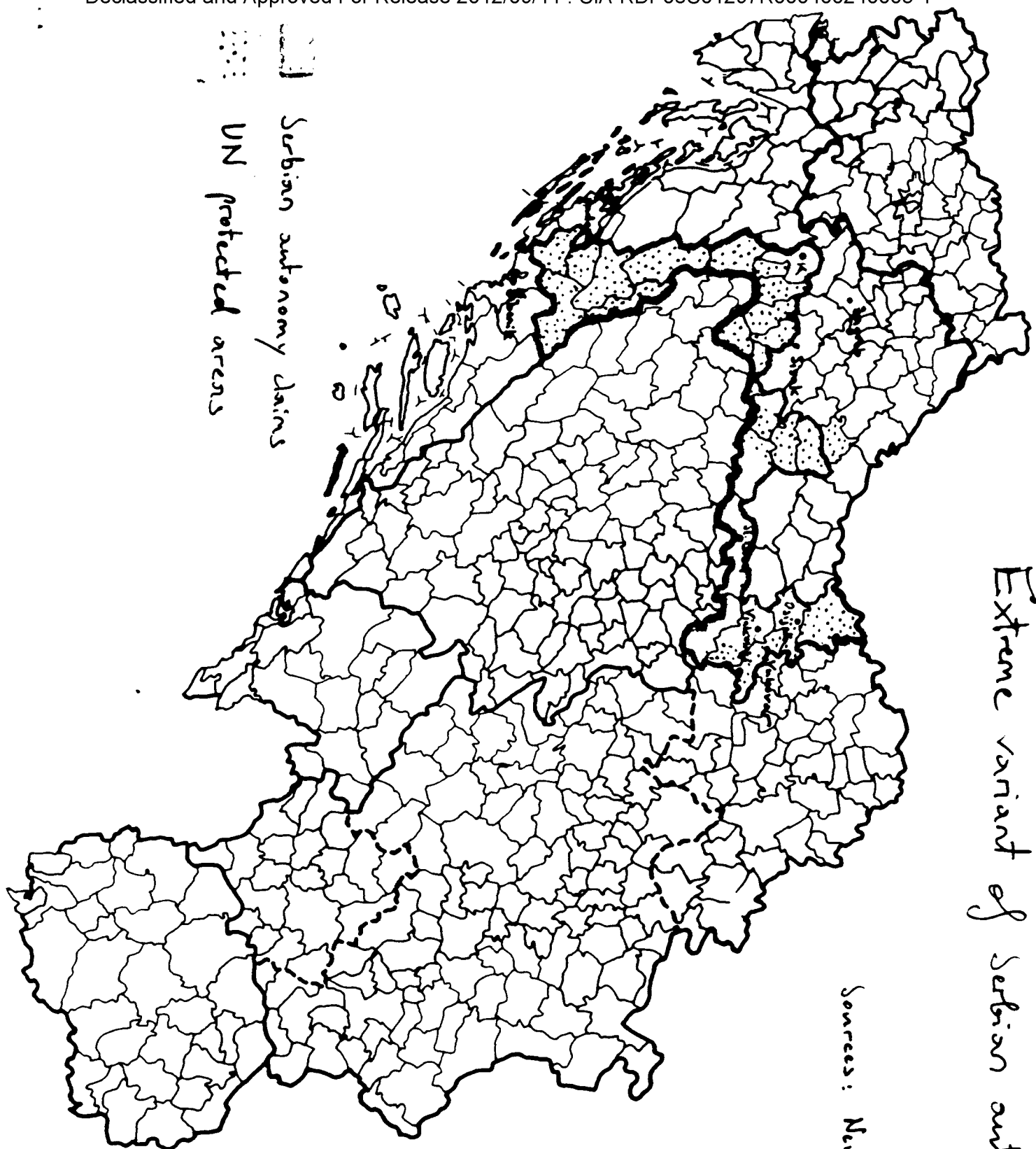


 Serbian claims 1918
 Serbian claims 1991
 COLAKOVIC line (1992)



Serbian proposals of a 'demarcation
 line' between Serbs and Croats

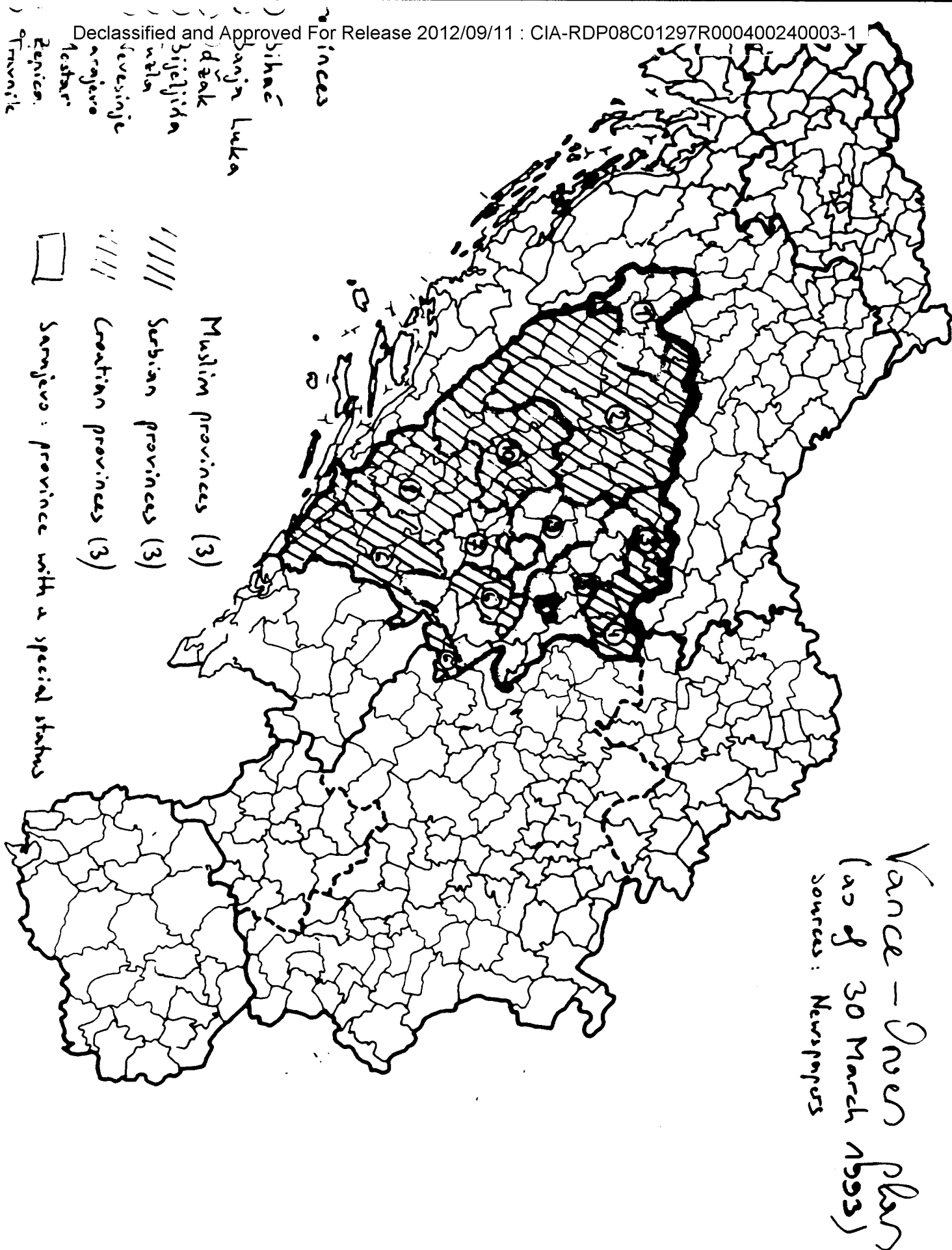
Sources: Branko COLAKOVIC, drawing
 the Serbo-Croatian boundary,
 Yugoslavia, manuscript 1992
 Newspapers



Serbian autonomy claims
UN protected areas

Extreme variant of Serbian autonomy claims
in Croatia

Sources: Newspapers



FUNCTIONAL REGIONS THAT INCLUDE BOSNIAN TERRITORY

