

SETTLING AND SETTLEMENTS

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Population density

From a global view, Slovenia is relatively evenly settled because cores of population are dispersed throughout its territory. However, a more detailed survey indicates that due to its great landscape diversity, the population density is uneven (Figure 1).

The average population density is 98 people per km² (Pannonian region 128 people per km², Alpine region 108, Mediterranean region 106, and Dinaric region 54), which ranks Slovenia among countries with a medium density of settling. A sixth of the country has an above-average population density, mostly in altitude belts below 400 meters where four fifths of the population lives or in the areas around Slovenia's largest settlements, which are mostly on the plains and along the shoreline of the Bay of Trieste. On the plains, the density is almost 500 people per km², in the hill regions about 100, in the medium-high mountain regions about 50, and in the mountains about 25 (Perko 1998). In the hundred-meter belt between 0 and 100 meters live 426 people per km², and between 1,000 and 1,100 meters only 5. Rough estimates indicate that almost a tenth of Slovenia is unpopulated (Kokole Vl., Kokole Ve., 1998)

Characteristics of the settlement pattern

Man settled the mountain areas of Slovenia as high as cereals can still successfully be grown. There are nineteen settlements above 1,000 meters, where around 1,600 people still lived in 1991. Above the limit of permanent settling, in otherwise unpopulated forest areas and occasionally even above the upper tree line, there are areas of periodic settlements including traditional summer dairy farms, forestry operations, glassworks, and modern tourist settlements. Among periodic settlements also belong the settlements of vineyard cottages characteristic of the winegrowing areas of eastern and northeastern Slovenia. Recently, people have settled permanently in parts of these settlements. Owners or buyers from the cities have also converted numerous vineyard cottages into vacation homes. Some larger colonies of vacation homes have grown on attractive locations, either alongside existing settlements or completely separate on their own.

A great dispersion of settlements is characteristic of Slovenia. On average, there are about thirty settlements for every 100 km², and therefore the distances separating them are relatively small. Just under two million people are distributed in almost six thousand settlements, about seventy of which are towns or cities. Only thirty-seven of these have more than 5,000 inhabitants, sixteen have more than 10,000, seven have more than 20,000, and only the two largest cities, Ljubljana and Maribor, have more than 100,000 inhabitants. Only a good half of the population lives in cities.

The cities are encircled by 280 settlements in the immediate suburban vicinity and then another 660 very urbanized suburban settlements; more than 400,000 people live in these two groups of settlements. The next circle comprises urbanized and semi-urbanized rural settlements. Their number totals 965, and 300,000 people live in them. The remaining 350,000 people live in just under 4,000 rural settlements.

◀ *Figure 1: Population Density in 1991.*

Table 1. Size of settlements in Slovenia according to population in 1996.

Size class (number of inhabitants)	Number of settlements	Number of inhabitants	Proportion of settlements in %	Proportion of inhabitants in %	Average size of settlement (in population)
up to 20	561	6,823	9.6	0.3	12
21 to 50	1,035	36,140	17.2	1.8	35
51 to 100	1,318	96,720	22.5	4.9	73
101 to 200	1,364	195,662	23.3	9.9	143
201 to 500	1,093	335,221	18.7	17.0	307
501 to 1,000	290	198,447	5.0	10.1	684
1001 to 2,000	105	146,170	1.8	7.4	1,392
2001 to 5,000	43	172,803	0.7	8.8	4,019
5001 to 10,000	21	139,210	0.4	7.1	6,629
10,001 to 20,000	9	128,530	0.2	6.5	14,281
20,001 to 50,000	5	150,544	0.1	7.6	30,109
50,001 to 100,000	1	98,811	0.0	5.0	98,811
More than 100,000	1	263,033	0.0	13.4	263,033
Total	5,846	1,968,114	100.0	100.0	337

Source: Kokole V., Kokole V., 1998.

Forms and types of settlements

The dominant economic activity, the natural conditions, the characteristics of colonization, and the cultural environment determined the form and type of settlements, which is why settlements in different regions differ substantially from one another. The majority of Slovene settlements were created in the period when agriculture was the fundamental activity, which is reflected by their location and pattern of development (Drozg 1995).

It is characteristic of solitary farms to stand alone and distant from each other, so there are no functional connections among them. An intermediate stage between the solitary farm and the consolidated settlement is the hamlet, which can also be a smaller part of a settlement that is spatially separated from the core. It is composed of only few farm households and does not have the formed center that is characteristic of consolidated settlements.

In dispersed settlements, the farmhouses are scattered over a larger area. The settlement is therefore not clustered because there are pieces of farm land between houses. The houses are arranged on the tops of ridges, and more rarely distributed along the margins of valleys or on hillslopes.

The most widespread are consolidated settlements that can be either nucleate or roadside types. The types of nucleate settlements include the following (Drozg 1998):

- Settlements of the alpine type built in a compact fashion where the buildings stand individually and are arranged in a group. Their positions are oriented in different directions, meaning that the orientation of one building does not match the orientation of its neighbour. The traffic network is very branched, and there are many side roads and field tracks.



Figure 2: Isolated farmsteads in a clearing in the Pohorje mountain range (photography Jurij Senegačnik).

- Settlements of the subalpine or Central-Slovenia type with a central road along which buildings are arranged in groups. Some buildings border the road with their longer sides, and others with their shorter sides. The buildings stand individually. The roads are substantially less branched in comparison with the previous settlement type.
- Settlements of the karst type with buildings joined in groups or »islands« of buildings that comprise a farm built around a central courtyard. These »islands« of buildings are arranged in clusters throughout the settlement, but the density of build-up is not high. The road network is very branched and dense, and there are many intersections and dead-end streets.
- Settlements of the littoral type where the buildings are attached to one another to form a relatively straight row. Rows of buildings spread divergently through the settlements in various directions, and therefore the traffic network is very branched. Characteristic of it are a uniform lengthwise and cross-wise profile of streets and a compact pattern of development.

Roadside settlements are of two types:

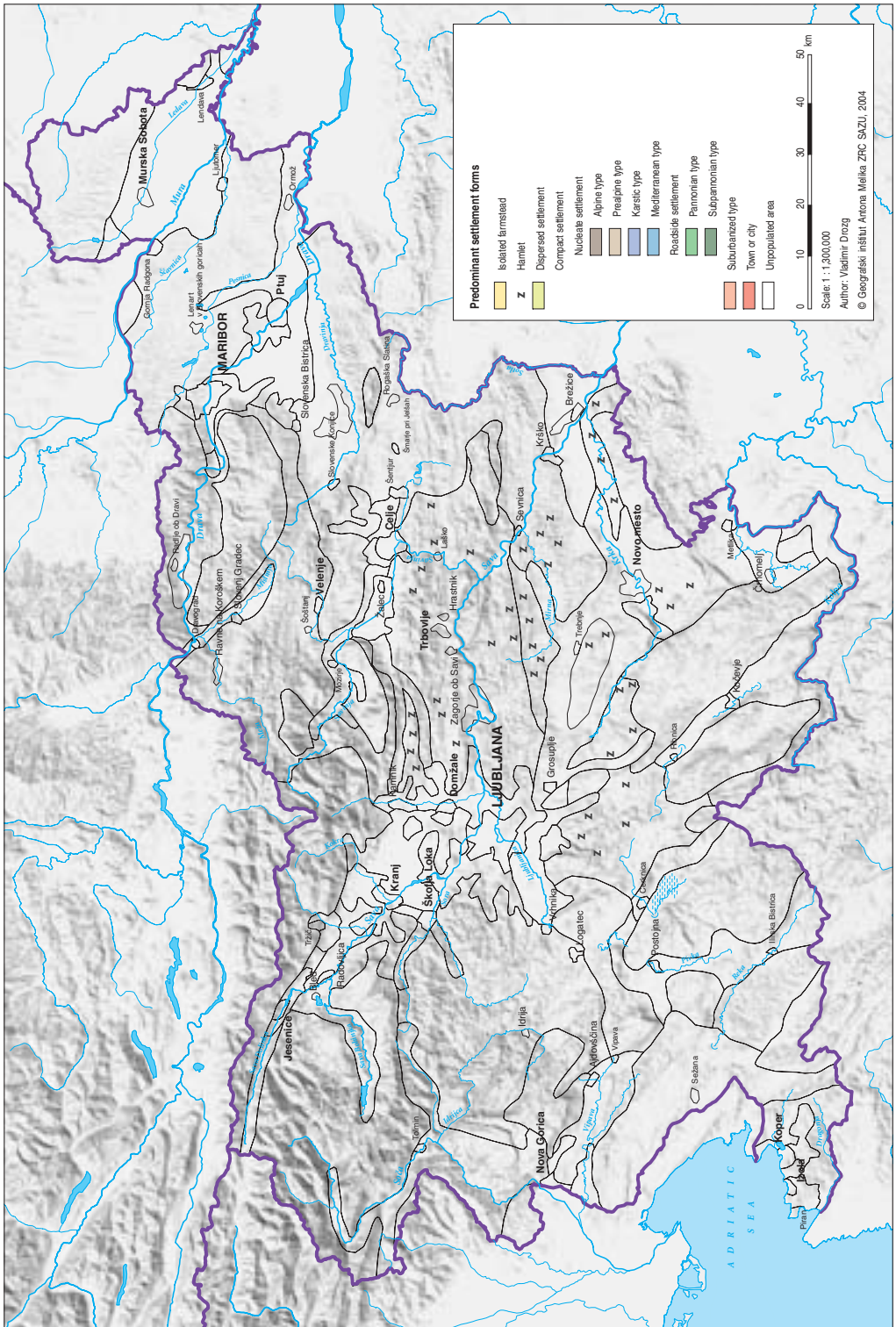
- In settlements of the Pannonian type, the distance between buildings is uniform, the buildings are oriented in the same direction, and they follow one another in a row. They are arranged along one or both sides of the road, but they do not border it and stand equally distant from it. Characteristic of this settlement type is very branched traffic network with circular roads, and hence there are numerous intersections in these settlements; imposing trees often grow alongside the roads and roadside shrines are set up.
- Settlements of the subpannonian type are similar to the previous type. The buildings are also arranged in a row, but there is only one road. There are frequently buildings on both sides of the road, which the buildings do not border and to which their distance varies.

Suburbanized settlements are characteristic of the modern settlement pattern. These are characterized by a linear traffic network and an arrangement of buildings that is neither a group nor a row. Buildings stand individually in the middle of a lot, equidistant from one another and facing the same direction. The traffic network is composed of primary collecting roads, side roads, and access roads.

The characteristic types of settlements spread over large consolidated areas, while individual types are only found in some regions (Figure 4). Suburbanized settlements are exceptional because they do



Figure 3: Nucleate settlement of Šmartno in Goriška brda (photography Marjan Garbajs).



◀ *Figure 4: Settlement forms.*

not have specifically regional characteristics. The classification of settlement types roughly corresponds to natural-geographical and cultural-historical areas. The following connections are noticeable:

- In the high mountains and subalpine hills (the higher parts of the Julian Alps, the Karavanke Mountains, and the Kamniške-Savinjske Alps, the upper part of the Soča Valley, the higher parts of the Pohorje mountain range, the Cerkljansko hills, the Škofja Loka hills, the Polhov Gradec hills, and the Posavsko hills), isolated farmsteads and nucleate settlements of the alpine and subalpine type dominate;
- In lower parts of mountains, hilly regions, and the karst valley systems stand hamlets (mostly in Dolenjska, the hilly areas of Primorska, and Pannonian Slovenia), dispersed settlements (Slovenske gorice, Haloze, Goričko, and Kozjansko), consolidated settlements of the alpine type (Gorenjska, Savinja Valley, Notranjska, the Pivka valley system, and the lower parts of the Posavsko hills, Škofja Loka Hills, Cerkljansko Hills) and the subalpine type (Dolenjska, southern part of the Posavsko Hills, partly Notranjska), the karst type (Kras), and the littoral type (Vipava valley, Goriška Brda, Vipavska Brda, and Koprška Brda);
- The plains, wide valleys, and gravel flood plains are dominated by consolidated settlements of the subalpine type (Celje basin, the Drava valley, also Gorenjska, Ljubljana basin and Dolenjska), the Pannonian type (Prekmurje, Mursko polje, and Bela krajina), and the subpannonian type (Dravsko polje and Ptujsko polje, the Krško basin and Posotelje, the Ščavnica and Pesnica valleys, and the eastern margin of the Celje basin).

Smallness, the main feature of Slovenia's cities, is also reflected by their modest morphological development. According to the type of ground plan and the level of its formation, the cities can be divided into seven characteristic types (Drozg 1998):

- Cities with formed medieval, classicist, and modernist ground plans,
- Cities with formed medieval and modernist ground plans and unformed classicist ground plans,



Figure 5: Roadside settlement of Dragonja vas in Dravsko polje (photography Jože Hanc).



Figure 6: Medieval centre of Ljubljana (photography Jurij Senegačnik).

- Cities with formed medieval and modernist ground plans,
- Cities with unformed medieval and formed modernist ground plans,
- Cities with unformed medieval and modernist ground plans,
- Cities with formed medieval ground plans, and
- Cities with formed modernist ground plans.

The higher the city ranks in the system of central settlements, the more complete its ground plan is. Only Ljubljana, Maribor, and Celje have formed ground plans from all the periods of construction history; otherwise, cities with only two formed ground plans, the medieval and the modernist, dominate. In some regional centers, for example, Kranj, Izola, Novo mesto, and Ptuj, only the embryos of a classicist ground plan exist. Many cities grew from modest medieval towns into industrial centers, which is why they have an unformed medieval ground plan and a formed modernist ground plan. The majority of rural towns have a formed medieval ground plan, and even though modest, it gives them a characteristic appearance.

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