

Review paper

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THE NATURAL-GEOGRAPHICAL BASICS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADVENTURE TOURISM IN SERBIA

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Abstract: Adventure tourism represents traveling motivated by the wish to be in the nature. It includes both physical and cultural interaction between the nature and a tourist. The concept of "adventure" includes the wish of a guest for unusual activities and experience. This is also followed by excitement. The natural and tourist potentials of Serbia are analyzed in this work. The types of adventure tourism, for which there are favorable conditions in our country, are sorted out. Among different adventure activities the most important are: hiking, speleo tourism, rafting, canyoning, paragliding and mountain biking. Nevertheless, due to many problems this branch of tourism is undeveloped. In the analysis of the tourist space of Serbia, the beginning point is the mountain documents from the section about the development of tourism. In accordance with them and based on natural and anthropogenic resources and the potentials of Serbia, the possible ways of development of adventure tourism in Serbia are defined. The aim of this work is to draw attention to adventure tourism of Serbia and to point out the possibilities of its development based on the characteristics of the natural values. It also aims to suggest the potential areas- centers of development of this tourist branch.

Key words: adventure, adventure tourism, potentials, limitations, Serbia

Introduction

At the beginning of the research of adventure tourism, the definition of the notions "adventure" and "adventure tourism" should be defined. Clear line between the concepts and areas of acting of eco-tourism, adventure tourism and other types of tourism outdoor cannot be drawn.

Generally, the concept of "tourism" considers any activity which includes certain suspense and excitement. When defining this concept the crucial importance is the tourist's personal experience. That is, the activities which are adventure for some people, for others don't have to be and vice versa. For

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example, some tourists feel the excitement just by looking at the interesting areas, animals and plants. On the other side there are some people who need a certain physical activity in the nature (Buckley, 2006).

In the context of adventure tourism, the adventure considers the activities which happen outdoor, and which are based on natural values and characteristics of the area of certain geo-space (Buckley, 2007). Therefore, the contemporary definition represents the adventure tourism as the tourist travels which are based on activities outdoor, which demand specific equipment and which excite the tourists (Buckley, 2006).

By recommendation of the World Tourist Organization the definition of the adventure tourism has been accepted. This type of tourism represents any domestic or international journey, which includes at least two or three given factors - physical activity, interaction with nature and cultural studying, that is the interchange of the experiences (ATTA², 2009).

The research about the motivation of inclusion into adventure shows that the main motive is the challenge. Besides the motive, the adventurers must have a certain physical and psychological competence as well as the will to be in the nature and, quite often, in the uncomfortable conditions (Beedie & Hudson, 2003).

The development of the adventure tourism, as well as any other tourism, is based on pull and push factors. Pull factors are: natural environment (relief, climate, water and wild life), the conditions of the environment, tourist advertisement etc. Push factors are: running away from every day life, free time, financial resources and individual motives and demands of the tourists themselves.

The types of adventure activities

According to the aims and demands of the potential adventurers the adventure tourism can potentially be divided in two categories: hard and soft tourism. The first one is defined as the travel with the aim to get new extreme experiences outdoor. The aim of the "soft" travels is, in the first place, enjoying in the pleasant environment, getting new experiences, adventures, excitement and friendships (Scott & Mowen, 2007). In relation to the mentioned categories of adventure tourism are physically harder and easier activities. The first one is the

² Adventure Travel Trade Association

activities with high level of jeopardy which demand a certain physical competence, knowledge and ability. On the other hand, easier activities with low level of jeopardy do not demand physical competence and earlier experience of the participants (Pomfret, 2006).

Adventure activities can happen on the ground, water and air environment. Therefore, there are the following types of adventurism (Table 1).

Table 1. The types of adventure tourism

The environment where adventure activities take place	The type of the activity
Ground	Hiking, Biking and mountain biking, Speleo tourism, Free and Extreme climbing, Extreme Skiing, Skiing, Snowboarding, Hiking along marked and unmarked paths, Hunting, Riding, Moto driving, Orienteering
Water	Water Skiing, Surfing, Cannoning, Kayaking, Rafting, Cruising, Sailing, Diving
Air	Balloon flying, Bungee jumping, Free jump of the cliffs, Parachuting, Kite flying, Paragliding, Flying motor vehicle

Source of data: Pomfret, 2006

As a relatively new branch of tourism, adventure tourism becomes more and more popular in the world because it has a positive influence on people, environment and economic growth of the host countries. In the last few years the number of the countries which want to develop this kind of tourism has become bigger. Because of this there is a need for establishing the principles which can be used as the course of the future development. The principles are based on healthy environment of the country that is the area of the host, preserved natural and cultural resources, clearly defined adventure resources, the safety of the activities, the level of the tourist education, infrastructural competence, image and the level of the tourist development as a part of the economy. Based on the mentioned principles, ATTA has thought of methodology for the measurement of the adventure tourism index. The highest values of the index are achieved by economic developed countries. Studying the developing countries in transition, the Republic of Serbia is 114th. Comparing to the countries in the region, Serbia has the lowest position (ATTA, 2009). The question is if Serbia has the potential for the adventure tourism development and, if it does, which types of the adventure tourism should be developed and in what way?

The Republic of Serbia has diverse structure of the tourist offer, conserved natural resources, relatively good communication, important human resources and favorable position on the map of traditional and contemporary tourist markets. However, the problems in the development of tourism are the consequence of the centralization, both of the country and tourism as the branch of economy. The problems in tourism are: bad accommodation and infrastructural capacity, unmaintained tourist offer, old knowledge or the lack of it in the market conditions, the lack of cooperation between appropriate authorities and interest groups, the lack of law and subordinate regulations as well as control and punishment system. The fact that the tourist potentials of Serbia are not estimated enough contributes to the bad state of tourism (Strategy of the tourism development of the Republic of Serbia, 2006).

Related to this, adventure tourism in Serbia is still not developed enough. That is, the former research in the area of tourism did not pay attention to adventure in the mentioned sense. The reasons for this are the fact that the adventure tourism is a relatively new branch of tourism which has not been acknowledged yet, and that there is not the clear overview of the adventure attractions and destinations.

Conditions for development of adventure activities in Serbia

In the next segment of the work, the types of the adventure tourism for which there are conditions for the development in our country are suggested through analysis of the natural and the tourist potentials of Serbia. Among them the most important are: hiking, mountain biking, speleo tourism, rafting, canyoning and paragliding.

The purpose of hiking, as a type of active recreation, is to explore and to conquer the mountain peaks, physical activity and enjoying the nature. As such, hiking itself represents big adventure for all nature lovers. Since 1787, when the highest peak of Europe was conquered, hiking became very popular way of tourist traveling around the world (Stanković, 2000). Nowadays, the hiking is developed so much that includes several different disciplines- mountain walking, mountain biking, free climbing, alpinism etc.

Further in the work, related to physical-geographical and morphometric characteristics of the mountains in Serbia, special attention will be drawn to mountain walks and mountain biking, as well as the disciplines available to the majority of adventurers.

Mountain walks are the type of so called easier adventure tourism. They take place at the marked mountain paths, with or without the guide. This mountain discipline is very popular among tourists because it does not require special conditions, except for the favorable climate and personal equipment such as mountain shoes, backpacks, tents etc. Besides the special equipment, it is advisable for the tourist to have developed sense for orienteering as well as the ability to read geographical maps. Under given circumstances, mountain walks give plenty of positive impressions and experiences which come from contact with the wild and intact nature, and they have the positive influence on psychophysical health of an individual.

Regarding to the fact that mountains represent 2/3 of Serbia, the conclusion is that the natural resources for the development of hiking in our country are very prosperous. The attraction of the mountain in Serbia is determined by the height and physical-geographical characteristics of the mountains and their position in the mountain system (Jovičić, 1989). Tourist affirmed mountains in Serbia are Kopaonik, Goč, Zlatibor, Tara, Zlatar, Golija, Jastrebac, Rudnik, Stara planina and Besna Kobila (National Tourist Organization of Serbia, 2010). These mountains are so popular, in the first place, because of the winter tourism. Their organization lies in many mountain paths which represent the start point for the development of the adventure tourism, which has so far been in the second place. However, the mountains where tourist infrastructure is not developed are more attractive, in the sense of nature conservation. The high level of attractiveness, besides the mentioned ones, as well has:

- Carpathian Mountains: Homolje and Kučaj Mountains, Beljanica, Veliki i Mali Krš, Stol, Deli Jovan, Veliki Greben, Miroč and Šomrda;
- Balkan Mountains: Rtanj, Tupižnica, Tresibaba, Svrljig Mountains, Suva Mountain;
- Mountains of Western and Southwestern Serbia: Gučevo, Boranja, Jagodnja, Sokolske Mountains, Medvednik, Povlen, Maljen and Suvobor, Jelica, Čemerno, Radočelo, Javor, Mučanj, Murtenica, Kopaonik, Željini and Stolovi;
- Rhodope Mountains: Dukat, Rujen, Vardenik, Čemernik, Gramada, Kukavica, Vidojevica and Radan.

Mountain biking is as well type of the adventure tourism and the mountain discipline which includes a ride of the special kind of bicycles along the already defined or undefined paths. Biking does not require special conditions and equipment, except a mountain bike as the main way of transport and certain physical strength. However, this activity fully relies on weather conditions and

therefore is done during spring and summer. Morphological characteristics of the mountains are an important factor of the mountain biking development. The mountains where there is mild precipitation are more suitable for this type of recreation than steep mountains, with cliffs.

In Serbia, a relatively small number of people are practicing adventure tourism. Equipped paths exist mainly on low and middle mountains such as: Avala, Kosmaj, Bukulja, Venčac, Vršac Mountains, Fruška Gora, Valjevo Mountains, Tara, Zlatibor, Homolje and Kučaj mountains (National Tourist Organization of Serbia, 2010).

The development of mountain biking can be enabled by European projects in the function of the tourism in Serbia. One of the projects is EuroVelo 6. The project enables connection among the biking tracks from the Atlantic to Black Sea (www.eurovelo6.org). Besides Danube biking track, active tracks are: Tem and Zavoj Lake, Lisine - Despotovac - Manasija, Čačak - Ovčar Spa, Zrenjanin - Carska bara, Studenica - Brvenik, Lepenski Vir - Stari put, Mitrovac - Mokra Gora.

The mountain relief of the Republic of Serbia is mostly build of limestone, especially eastern and western parts of the country. In accordance with natural resources of the country, the attractive type of adventurism includes visiting the speleological objects as well. The caves and pot holes have always been attractive to the adventurers because of their mystery and authentic look. Speleo tourism consists of visiting the caves suitable and unsuitable for the tourists. The characteristics of the direct environment of the speleological object, the features, slope and length of the caves, the characteristics of the cave jewelry, sound and light effects and hydrological elements represent the main attraction of the underground objects (Lješević, 1981).

The tourist organization of the underground karsts objects in Serbia began in the '60s. The first ones were Petnička, Resavska, Rajkova and Lazareva Cave, than there were Vernjikica, Ceremošnja, Potpečka and Mermerna cave. The last ones finished were Risovača and Ravništarka Cave, in 2006.

Depending on what the tourists want and the aim of their visit, there are several types of speleo tourism. The most attractive caves for tourists are the ones which have tourist - geographical and traffic position. Visiting the caves is the motive of most researchers, scientists and athletes (Petrović, 2006). That shows the fact that the visitors can be of different age, and can have certain speleological knowledge and abilities.

Because of the great difference of underground karsts forms in morphological, hydrological and other characteristics, appears the question which of them can be used for the development of the adventure tourism. It is widespread opinion that organized speleological objects are the bearer of speleo tourism. A small number decides to visit the caves outside the marked and suitable paths. However, the caves, as the element of the development of the adventure tourism, do not have to be organized, but it is advisable that the canals have little steep and dimensions which provide easy movement for the visitors and thus they would not be forced to use the speleological equipment.

The development of the speleo tourism in Serbia depends on enthusiasm of the local population and some researchers. Small investments into equipping the caves and the lack of associating tourist contents the attraction of the objects, competition on the tourist market and the number of the tourists lowers down. The problem of underdevelopment of this kind of tourism can be found in inadequate organization and incompetent guide services (Petrović, 2006). Apart from mentioned organized caves, there are a certain number of unorganized speleological caves in Serbia which fulfill the conditions for the development of adventure tourism and do not require special speleological equipment and the training of the visitor, which make them available for almost everyone. These objects could make cave tourist offer of Serbia better in the future. According to geographical position in Serbia, they can be divided into:

Table 2. Potential speleo tourism objects in Serbia

Caves of West Serbia	Kovačevica cave, Šalitrena cave, Stopića cave, Potpečka cave, Hadži- Prodanova cave
Caves of East Serbia	Gradašnica, Dubočka cave, Vlaška cave, Velika Atula, Cane cave, Prekonoška cave, Popšićka cave, Manastery caves, Seselačka cave, Vladikine ploča

Source: Đurović, 1998

Rafting is an activity of using the special type of raft to go down the fast mountain rivers. People who love nature and adventure on the water, rafting allows them to be in touch with wild water and to have a view on cliffs and canyons from another perspective. As a potential branch of adventure tourism, rafting does not have long tradition in Serbia. The same as previously mentioned adventure activities, rafting does not have restrictions, like expensive equipment

or a certain age, but it has requirements in terms of physical- geographical conditions. Above all, there has to be a certain amount of rainfall and satisfactory pluviometer regime which give high flow frequency during the year, or at least one part of the year. It is also necessary that the river bed has a certain downfall. The speed of the bed depends directly on it. These conditions in Serbia fulfill four rivers - Drina, upstream from the lake of Perućac, Lim, in almost all its flow through Serbia, Ibar, upstream the lake of Gazivode and Nišava, in Sićevac gorge. Mentioned rivers are tourist well-known even outside Serbia.

Special type of adventure and active recreation is so called canyoning. Descending canyons and cliffs, river beds and waterfalls, going through cracks in the caves, diving in the whirlpool are activities which attract braver tourists. Canyoning very often requires the knowledge of certain skills, such as diving, climbing etc. as well as a qualified guide. Main restrictions in doing this activity can be low temperatures of the water and high water level, and sometimes the specific equipment is required. This type of adventure gives people the opportunity to stay longer in the nature, which is almost completely intact and conserved because of its isolation.

Canyoning is a potential branch of adventure tourism, without long tradition in our country. However, there are possibilities for the development because the mountain areas in Serbia are rugged with many cliffs and canyons. Some of them have already got a certain affirmation in a tourist sense (Drina canyon, Lim canyon, Đerdap canyon, Uvac canyon, Lazar canyon, Gornjak canyon, Ovčar-Kablar canyon). Observed activity can be done by people of different age and good medical conditions.

Table 3. Potential canyoning destinations in Serbia (grouped by geographical position)

Geographical position	Canyons
West Serbia	Canyons of the rivers Drina, Uvac, Lim, Trešnjica, Gradac, Ibar gorge, Đetinja gorge, Beli Rzav gorge
East Serbia	Đerdap gorge, Lazar canyon, Bovan gorge, Svrlijig gorge, Sićevac gorge, Temska gorge
Southeast Serbia	Jerma gorge, Grdelica gorge, Pčinja gorge

Paragliding is one of the air sports and a special way of recreation which includes free flying through air using a special vehicle- paraglide, which is

moved by the wind. It was created after the Second World War as the practical solutions for descending of the hikers and mountaineers from the mountains peaks. This potential way of adventure tourism require neither any special physical- geographical conditions nor developed tourist infrastructure. In fact, airfield can be any field which is higher than 200 meters - hill or a mountain peak, and the condition which makes the flight possible with the professional guide is the wind, that is favorable metrological conditions. Except for the mentioned, this sport does not require complicated training and big material investment, which make it more affordable than any other air sport, for everyone who wants a challenge, big adventure, travel and enjoying the beauties of the areas above which one is flying. After easy training and certain knowledge of meteorology and aerodynamics, anyone can do paragliding (A guide to paragliding, 2006).

Having in mind geomorphologic and climate conditions of our country, where mountains represent 70% of the country, with winds of different course and speed, it can be concluded that Serbia has very good conditions for the development of paragliding. Still, this sport in our country is undeveloped and it is done by a relatively small number of adventurers. The reasons lie in relatively short tradition of sport flying, which in our country began during the 90s, as well as the lack of financial resources for the development of paragliding.

Registered paragliding airfields in our country can be fount at Vršacke mountains - Kula, Rajac, Sićevo, Kopaonik, Suva and Stara mountains, area around Kragujevac and Kraljevo. Potential airfields, but still not tested enough, are at Fruška Gora, Titel Hill, Zlatibor, Stol and Tupižnica (Aeronautical Association of Serbia, 2010).

The possibilities and restrictions for the development of adventure tourism in Serbia

The main criteria which are followed when defining tourist areas are: geographical, economic and psychological - historical (Bjeljac, 2001). In the lack of exact definition of adventure tourism and the notion of adventure, and underdevelopment of this type of tourism, natural- geographical criteria were used for the division of potential adventure sections. From the economy point of view, it is impossible to talk about potential area because there is not any record of tourist movement in the area of adventure tourism in the examined parts of Serbia.

The basis for grouping potential areas is made of the following criteria: tourist - geographical position (the distance from other tourist attractions), traffic connection and position, the attraction of the area (Bjeljac, 2001). A special criterion is the equipped localizations with tourist infrastructure (paths, traffic signs, information service, and advertisement). For tourist valorization of the "adventure" area of Serbia also important are the types, characteristics and the placement of the adventure motives.

The Tourism development strategy³, divides Serbia into the following tourist units: area of Belgrade, Vojvodina, West Serbia (with Kosovo and Metohija) and East Serbia. The adventure activities are not mentioned as parts of these units, because they belong to specific tourist items and, as such, they are part of mountain, river, lake and rural areas.

Conditions for the development of adventure tourism are the attractive localizations, healthy environment, rich tourist images and specific tourist - geographic position. As for the adventure, Belgrade and Vojvodina are not particularly attractive for tourist development. For adventure attractions outdoor especially attractive are West and East Serbia. The accent is on the areas of Stara and Suva mountains, areas around Vlasina and Bovan Lake and caves. The tourist potential for speleo tourism lies, in the first place, in the organized caves for tourists. Apart from the river Danube, which represents the basics for the future development of the North Serbia, other rivers are not defined as potential localizations where adventure activities could take place. In West Serbia, the Strategy recognizes the following mountain areas: Zlatibor, Kopaonik, Golija, Tara - Mokra Gora, Zlatar, Divčibare and Šara Mountain. As well, in the same areas important parts are rivers West Morava, Ibar and Drina (The Strategy for the Tourism Development of the Republic of Serbia, 2006).

It can be concluded that the nature resources for the development of adventure tourism lie in the areas defined by the Strategy, but one of the tasks is to present the areas and the activities that can be done in them in more detail.

³ Further in the text Strategy

The natural-geographical basics for the development of the adventure tourism in Serbia

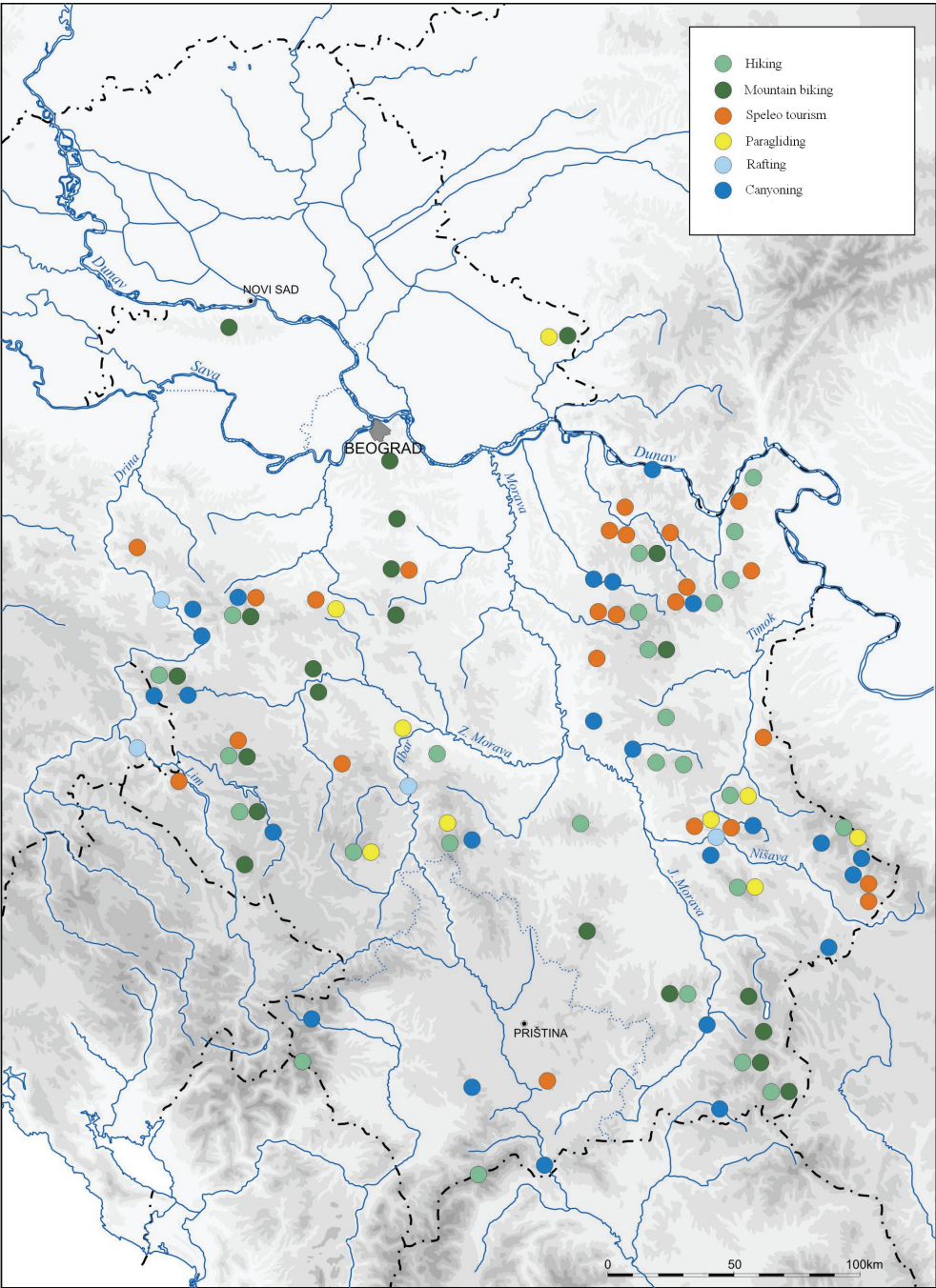


Figure 1. The Potential localizations for the development of adventure tourism

By the valorization of the area of Serbia and by quantitative overview of the adventure motives the following groups of the areas which are suitable for the development of the adventure tourism:

1. East Serbia

- The zone marked by Šomrda and the Danube in north, Negotin lowland in east, mountain Rtanj in south and foothills in west - Quantitative analysis of the possible adventure activities mark the zone appropriate for development of the speleo tourism. The rich and attractive karst relief could be the bearer of the development of adventure tourism in the future. Other activities, such as hiking and mountain biking, influence the tourist-recreational role of this area in the global development of Serbia;
- The zone south of the mountain Rtanj, marked by Stara Mountain and Bulgarian boarder in east, Ruj Mountain in south and South Morava in west- Colorful symbols on the Map 1 shows the wide variety of the natural resources which are good for adventure activities. Therefore it is justly to emphasize two subareas, the area of Niš and Pirot. Both of these areas can be defined as mountain and cave attractive. The main difference is in concentration of the motives for the development of the river tourism. In the area around Pirot there are some of the most beautiful canyons and gorges of Serbia, so the activities such as cannoning and paragliding can be the bearers of the tourist development. On the other hand Niš area enables the development of all types of activities and, as such, represents the most interesting area for adventure.

2. South Serbia

- The zone of south Serbia is favorable for the development of mountain activities, walking and biking. Even though they are relatively inaccessible, the mountains Dukat, Vardenik, Čemernik and Besna Kobila can be the bearers of tourism in this zone.

3. West Serbia

- The zone of west Serbia is shaped by Dinara Mountain, so the mountains represent important resource of this area. In this zone two more or less similar areas can be separated. The zone known as Podgorina, which is unique by both the mountains and river, which are not too demanding but which are organized. In such area the development of different types of adventure activities can be expected, because that area is already significant on the map of Serbia. The neighboring Tara and Zlatibor are developing as well. These mountains belong to another area which is marked by Užice in north, Ibar River in east, Novi Pazar in north and Drina in west. The novelty in the "adventure" of this area would be the activity of the rivers and lakes, both for cannoning and rafting, and other

nautical sports. Both areas are speleological interesting as well. This completes both specificity and difference of the natural resources and the richness of tourist motives of west Serbia.

Conclusion

The adventure tourism becomes more and more popular tourist branch over the years in the world. In the conditions of global haste, tourist travels enable people to run away from every day routine. Those travels also help them to do unordinary activities and make contact with the part of nature which has not been changed by the humans yet.

In general, the development of the main tourist movements (city, mountain, spa, manifestation and congress tourism) are not enough, so it is not likely that there will be any significant results in the development of special forms of circulation in the next period: eco-tourism, agro tourism, ethno tourism, adventure tourism etc. The development of the mentioned forms of tourist circulations depends on enterprise and initiative of certain local authorities, enthusiasts and entrepreneurs. However, these forms can be important addition to the main tourist offer of the certain tourist areas and regions, where adventure tourism will find its own place as the addition to spa, mountain and rural tourism in the widest sense.

Serbia as the country of mountains has great natural basis for the development of many adventure activities which are related to ground, water and air environment. Among them the most important are hiking, mountain biking, speleo tourism, rafting, canoning and paragliding. Unfortunately, a small number of people do these activities. There are many reasons for this: high centralization of tourism as the branch of economy, the lack of law, tourist infrastructure, conscience and knowledge for the promotion of the existing state.

In this work, from the physical-geographical point of view, the natural potentials of Serbia for the development of adventure tourism with the adventure activities have been analyzed. Potential regions which could be the bearers of the development of this tourist branch have also been suggested. In that sense, as the most attractive are the zones of East, West and South Serbia. Using its natural potentials in the right way, the new horizons for the adventurers in the region could be shown. At the same time economic revival of these areas, which are considered to be the poorest in Serbia, could be achieved.

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