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MENTAL PERCEPTION OF THE KARST

From the work in the project of Notranjski Park the difference between general perception in a certain area and the perception of same area on individual levels is clearly evident.

Where spatial management or planning is concerned the mental image is ignored, although it is well known that the particular image is of vital importance for the people living in the area. This is the main reason that we propose the preliminary study of the perception of the place from the point of view of the inhabitants and visitors before any planning procedures take place.

The perception in one of the basic functions of mans orientation in a place and has great impact. Its importance should be considered in the procedure of physical planning.

The identity of territory has impacts on visual and sensual perception of specific area.

The Notranjski Park has great diversity of landscapes and is interesting either for research or exploration in the view of professionals responsible for the establishment of the Park. The project begins with the testing of karst landscape. One method is used for the entire area of Notranjski Park. We intend to determine, whether the karst, as a land, has an identity of it is own which is different from the identity of other regions both in the natural and social point of view. We intend to determine, whether the people of this region differentiate their home from other landscapes both visually and mentally. It also concerns us, how karst is interpreted by the natives and the tourists and what are the differences between the impressions of professionals and others.

The participants of the International Karstological School will be asked to fill in questionnaires on recognition and mental image of the karst. They will represent the first pilot group, the one representing professionals, second group are visitors, the third are indigenous people.

Task of the project:

- to establish the existence or non-existence of difference between mental image of the karst phenomena and other geological features and areas.
- to establish which are basic expressions interconnecting the karst as such and the karst phenomena,
- to establish the mental image of the Notranjski Park according to their professional experience and knowledge,
- to evaluate the karst as the place of pleasant or non-pleasant experiance,
- to establish which elements of the karst are the most important for its recognition; elements of macro-reliefs or micro-reliefs,

- to establish the existence or non-existence of differences between mental images among three pilot groups.

Method used:

1. "knowledge questionnaire" (open and closed questions)
2. scales of measures for cognition (semantic differential)
3. association test
4. photo questionnaire

Sample:

- Group of professionals (people researching or studying karst)
- Group of visitors (enthusiasts, tourists enjoying the karst)
- Group of indigenous people (people living in the karst area perceiving it as home environment).

Procedure:

The results will be reached by questionnaire, which is the same for all pilot groups with contents: knowledge, association, perception, recognition and assessments.

Results:

Mathematical and statistical methods will be used to generate research result and to establish the level of achieved aims (factor- analysis, variance analysis with F test used...).