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## THE STRUCTURE AND MOTIVES FOR VISITORS TO THE BOAT CARNIVAL EVENT (BELGRADE)

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**Abstract:** Carnivals in Serbia have a tradition of holding for more than 150 years. By content they belong to the entertainment tourism events. One of the carnivals, taking place over the past 10 years is the Boat Carnival on the river Sava. This carnival is part of the overall tourist offer of Belgrade and by its holding it also promotes nautical tourism on the river Sava. A survey of visitors was conducted to determine the significance of this event in the tourist offer of Belgrade. The study sample consisted of 169 visitors, in random order, different structures. The analysis was done with the aim of investigating the tourism market, attitudes and behaviour of visitors in order to improve the tourist offer. Tourism valorisation of carnivals in Serbia was also done.

**Key words:** tourism, boat carnival, event, poll, Belgrade, Serbia

### Introduction

Carnivals in Serbia have a tradition longer than 150 years. At first, carnivals were organized in February or March, during the carnival festivities<sup>2</sup> (the so-called white carnival)<sup>3</sup>, on Easter Lent. Carnival (Poklade) is the national holiday prevalent in Europe and America. Its roots are pagan and relate to marking the cult of the Sun and the arrival of spring. Today, the carnival is usually associated with the Christian celebration of the beginning of Lent before Easter. Carnival (Poklade) is usually considered to be a period of unrestrained enjoyment of food, drink and festivities under masks, known as festival. Last week before the Lent is called "white Sunday", and the last day of this week is called the "white" or "cheese" carnival. Carnival is the day of forgiveness and joy. It was considered that the period of Lent should be without sin. In

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<sup>2</sup> According to customs, local feasts of all gathered family members or village celebrations on the eve of the Lents. ([www.pravoslavlje.com](http://www.pravoslavlje.com))

<sup>3</sup> White Carnival is the most spread and the most solemn throughout the year. It has been named by the White week, and is also called the Great Carnival, Closing Carnival. ([www.pravoslavlje.com](http://www.pravoslavlje.com))

households there was traditionally made fat rich feast, especially dairy products after which this holiday was named ([www.apatin.com/poklade](http://www.apatin.com/poklade)).

The celebration consists of a public parade, where participants disguise themselves, have a good time and perform various skills. “At the Serbian people, the notion of carnival is considered in two ways. In the first case, it is the last day before the beginning of one of the four fasts: Easter, Peter, Virgin Mary and Christmas. In the second, broader notion, carnival is the last two weeks before the start of Easter Lent, and those are the Shrovetide and White Sunday.” (Marjanović, 2003/2004)

Carnival of Flowers, held in Bela Crkva from 1852 (as part of the Carnival of the German population that by then was in the majority in the municipality of Bela Crkva), is the oldest tourist event in Serbia (with breaks, it takes place for 103 years in continuity) (Bjeljac, 2010). Also, carnivals (masquerades, fašanke) with a long tradition of maintenance are Fašanke<sup>4</sup> in the village Grebenac (municipality of Bela Crkva) and Masquerade (Carnival) in the village Prigrevica<sup>5</sup> (municipality of Apatin), as well as in some other villages in Serbia, such as the White Carnival in the village Lozovik and other areas of the municipality of Velika Plana, villages of Žagubica municipality (Bosić, 1996; Bjeljac, 1998; Marjanović, 2003/2004). “Therefore, even in the culture of the population in Serbia, where the continuity of masking on the White Carnival is observed, but also where they are introduced or updated, the mask has grown from a cult, ritual to the entertainment unit providing social discharge” (Marjanović, 2003/2004).

In recent decades, carnivals from a cult ritual became important to the tourist industry in the world and gather from a few tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of visitors. Carnivals around the world represent a common model of feast and spectacle. They are both national and trans-national emblems, media events, tourist mecca. For example, the ritual processions of dance samba troupes are converted into a free and ecstatic solemnity of thousands of people who have fun and dance in the streets of Rio.” (Lukić-Krstanović, 2007).

Carnivals have an important place in the world tourist industry: Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Mardi Gras (New Orleans, USA), Venice (Italy), and the Carnival in Rijeka (Croatia) is also attractive to tourists in surroundings. In Europe, the

<sup>4</sup> Name Fašanke is common with the Romanian and Serbian population, but the same custom has different layers, life and forms. They are also maintained in some other areas of Southern Banat.

<sup>5</sup> Traditions cherished by the Serbian population who immigrated to Prigrevica after World War II from Lika, Kordun and Banija (geographical regions in Croatia).

carnivals are gathered in the Federation of European Carnival Cities. According to the definition of the Federation of European Carnival Cities (FECC), carnivals are a way of life, cultural, folklore and customary popular heritage of the place or region of maintenance. In Europe, the emphasis is put on the following types of carnivals: Rhineland carnivals (West Germany, Eastern Netherlands, Belgium), Burgundy carnivals (province of Brabant, Netherlands), Mi-Careme (Luxembourg, France, province of Valona/Belgium), Guggenmusik carnivals (Switzerland, Liechtenstein,) Allemanic carnivals (Northern Germany), Balkan Folklore carnivals, Samba carnivals/Caribbean carnivals, Mediterranean carnivals (known regatta names), new carnivals and summer carnivals, as well as some very special carnivals that cannot fit into this categorization ([www.carnivalcities.com](http://www.carnivalcities.com)).

### **Carnivals in Serbia**

According to the classification of tourism events, by content in Serbia (Bjeljac 2006, 2010), as a part of the entertainment tourist events, carnivals stand out. Carnivals are events that in a fun way, with music, dance, parade and stage performances are certain aspects of human activities, and resulting from the rituals (Bjeljac, 2006, 2010).

Entertainment tourism events contain elements of the program of all forms of event tourism. One can speak of a combined form, in which entertainment has a priority function. Tourism organizations, using this fact, organize programs that are closely related to anthropogenic and natural values of maintenance, and all with aim of a richer and more substantial program of tourist stay. Entertainment and tourism events usually take place in the summer period and represent the most common form of receptive tourism offer (Bjeljac, 2006; 2010). “Best known events are exactly the carnivals the key feature of which is equalization of all people (regardless of status) and giving pleasure in a happy atmosphere” (Jovanović, Delić, 2010).

According to the definition of the Federation of European Carnival Cities (FECC), carnivals are a way of life, cultural, folklore and customary popular heritage of the place or region of maintenance ([www.carnivalcities.com](http://www.carnivalcities.com)). The following carnivals are held in Serbia: International Carnival in Pančevo, Carnival in Leskovac, Carnival in Požarevac, Čivijaški carnival in Šabac, Ada Carnival, Carnival in Rakovica, Kids Carnival in Kragujevac, Spring Kids Carnival in Pančevo; Big Spring Kids Carnival in Ćuprija, Kids Carnival in Titel, Street Artist Festival in Novi Sad, Royal Carnival in Banja Koviljača, Festival of drummers “This is to inform” in Čoka, Carnival of honey in Titel,

Carnival Vrnjačka Banja, Boat Carnival in Belgrade – which is the subject of this paper, Carnival of flowers in Bela Crkva, Vršački carnival. All of these carnivals are a rich family of carnivals in Serbia ([www.manifestacije.com](http://www.manifestacije.com)).

The above carnivals represent a significant element of addition of tourist stay of visitors, as well as tourism promotion of places in which they are maintained. Carnivals in Serbia are held in spas, urban and rural areas. As one of the carnivals with specific location is Belgrade Boat Carnival, which is held on the Sava River, near the city centre. Since this carnival also represents the promotion of the City of Belgrade, as well as nautical tourism on the Sava River, this event was chosen to determine how Carnival can have an impact on the overall tourist offer and what are the motives of coming to such an event?

As a methodological approach to data collection was applied survey testing using the sampling method, since this method is one of the most widely used quantitative methods of test for the tourist market. This is a continuation of the research of motives and structure of visitors to tourist events, which the team from the Geographical Institute “Jovan Cvijić” SASA with associates conducted in Serbia. The survey was conducted in written survey at randomly selected sample in Belgrade, stretching from Branko's Bridge to dock on the Sava, Belgrade, in 2013 on the sample of 169 visitors.

### **Belgrade Boat Carnival**

Boat Carnival is an event which has been organised since 2004 by the Tourist Organization of Belgrade in cooperation with a number of sponsors and donors, with the aim of popularizing the Sava and Danube rivers and estuaries of the same ones as a recognizable area of Belgrade. The Carnival promotes Belgrade as a tourist destination with a focus on nautical tourism in this part of the Sava and Danube rivers.

The program of the Carnival includes a parade of decorated boats, jet-ski acrobatics on the water, entertainment and music programs on the mainland (which include theatre performances, acrobats, street performers, an exhibition of traditional crafts). The program also provides for visitors a free cruise the Danube and Sava on tourist boats with sightseeing. Within the 10th Carnival, under the slogan “Clean and clear”, there were also a number of other activities, which were aimed to draw attention to the importance of environmental protection and improvement of the coastal area of the Sava and Danube (such as waste recycling campaign, where on the pier were placed special hand presses for recycling cans, bins for disposal and separation of waste and sculptures made out of used cans). In 2013, the Carnival was also part of the international event,

“Danube Blue Week”, in which on the Sava pier were presented Belgrade, Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, Ulm, Novi Sad, Veliko Gradište, Majdanpek, Kladovo, Smederevo, Golubac, Negotin, the site of Lepenski Vir, and the Tourist Organization of Serbia and Germany and the Danube Competence Centre had promotional stands. The aim of the presentation was to promote the aforementioned settlements as part of the Danube tourist destination. According to the geographical and economic group of criteria (Bjeljac, 2006; 2010), Boat Carnival have 76 points and is in the second category of tourist events in Serbia.

### **Number of Visitors at the Event**

The number of visitors varied during the ten years of maintenance. The largest number of visitors was in 2004, in the first year of the event. However, almost in 2005, a drastic reduction in the number of visitors to a 100 was apparent, and it can be assumed that the weather conditions were the cause of it. Then the visit continued to be noticeable less than in the first year of maintenance, but it increases from year to year. Although in 2013 it was the tenth carnival, it is noticeable that this year also there were fewer visitors than the first year of maintenance. The Table 1 shows the estimates of the number of visitors which the river police of Belgrade made from the location of Branko's bridge and includes the estimate of the number of visitors on the bridge, Branko's bridge - Sava port, as well as the number of visitors and participants on board. Assessments were carried out at a certain time period during the event, and that is also clearly visible from the Table.

Table 1. Number of visitors at the event

Ordinal number	Date and year of maintaining	Estimation period	Number of visitors
	24.07.2004.	From 16.00 to 01.00 h	10 000
	27.08.2005.	From 16,00 to 24.00 h	100
	26.08.2006.	From 16.00 to 24.00 h	1 500
	25.08.2007.	From 16.00 to 24.00 h	1 500
	30.08.2008.	From 14.30 to 23.40 h	5 500
	29.08.2009.	From 13.00 to 23.05 h	4 500
	20.06.2010.	From 15.00 to 23.00 h	2 000
	02.07.2011.	From 17.40 to 22.35 h	5 000
	07.07.2012.	From 16.00 to 23.00 h	4 000
	06.07.2013.	From 16.00 to 01.00 h	7 500
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>41 600</b>

Source: Data obtained by questionnaire surveys

It can be seen from the Table 1., that the carnival was held at the end of August for five years, from 2005 to 2009. Only in 2010 it was held in June, and in the first year and the last three years it was held in July. It can be noticed that the

carnival in the last three years was held in early July, and in the first year at the end of July. Of the total number of visitors (41,600) during the ten years of maintenance, the last carnival held in 2013 had a share of 7,500 visitors which is 18% of the total share, or one-fifth.

The Carnival held in 2013 was preceded by the election of the carnival queen, held on 4 July 2013, two days earlier. During the visit and the study of this election, it was observed that the organizer missed an opportunity to distribute the flyers to present observers and passers-by, and thus did not increase the visit of the carnival. It was also noted that in the magazine in which other events were announced, at the place where the election for the Queen of Carnival was held only the time of the election was given within other events, and the event was not given any additional attention within the magazine. Unfortunately, the organizer did not have a prepared advertisement in the form of flyers where the program of the carnival could be shown. A small number of visitors of this election indicate a slight awareness of this event, which is an introduction to the carnival. However, good marketing should be noted on TV given by a significant number of visitors to the “Boat Carnival” event.

### **Geographic Origin of Visitors**

Although it is in the second category, this event has a distinctly local character, because visitors are mainly from the inner region (the territory of Belgrade) and as such can only be a supplement to the offer for the residents of Belgrade and possibly those who find themselves there during the summer months. It should have a significant effect as an element of tourist promotion of the City of Belgrade.

Table 2. Structure of visitors from the rest of Serbia

A place where from visitors come	Number of visitors	Accommodation
Sremska Mitrovica	1	Own accommodation
Pančevo	2	At relatives
Smederevska Palanka	2	At relatives
Ivanjica	1	At hall of residence
Novi Sad	1	At friends
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	

Source: Data obtained by questionnaire surveys

Total number of visitors surveyed was 169, of which 150 visitors from different municipalities of Belgrade, seven from the rest of Serbia, 10 from abroad and two from countries that emerged from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Visitors from Belgrade were from thirteen different municipalities, while one visitor did not mention the municipality he came from.

Although the largest number of visitors was expected from the Municipality of Stari Grad (21) and New Belgrade (17) due to the vicinity where the event was held, the majority of visitors were from Palilula (23), even the number of visitors from Čukarica (20) was larger than the number of visitors from Savski Venac.

Each of the visitors from the rest of Serbia had a different type of accommodation. Of the total number, four visitors were at relatives, one visitor had his own accommodation, one was at a friend's, and one student was in a dormitory.

Table 3. Structure of visitors from abroad

A place where from visitors come	Number of visitors	Accommodation
Austria	1	Hotel
Greece	1	Hostel
Denmark	1	Hostel
Russia	1	Hostel
Bulgaria	1	Works in Belgrade
Italy	1	Works in Belgrade
China	1	Works in Užice (in a hotel)
Slovakia	1	Hostel
Netherlands	2	Hostel
Macedonia	2	Own accommodation
TOTAL	12	

Source: Data obtained by questionnaire surveys

The hotel accommodation found three visitors, as well as the accommodation in the hostel, two visitors had their own accommodation, two visitors worked in Belgrade and one in Užice. Two of the respondents were from the Netherlands, two from Macedonia, while other visitors were present in the same number, one. The event has also attracted a visitor from China who currently worked in Užice.

### The Demographic Structure of Visitors

The survey involved 100 females and 69 males. The most common age group that visited the event is from 19 to 30 years (55), and it makes 32.54%, slightly less common were people aged 31 to 40 years (48) or 28.40%. The percentage of these two groups represents 60.95% of the total number of visitors, and others make 39.05%.

Table 4. Structure of visitors by age

Up to 18 years	19–30 years	31–40 years	41–50 years	51–60 years	61–70 years	Did not state	TOTAL
14	55	48	20	17	13	2	169

Source: Data obtained by questionnaire surveys

The oldest visitor of the event is 69 years old and the youngest one is 6 years old. Two visitors or 1% did not state their age.

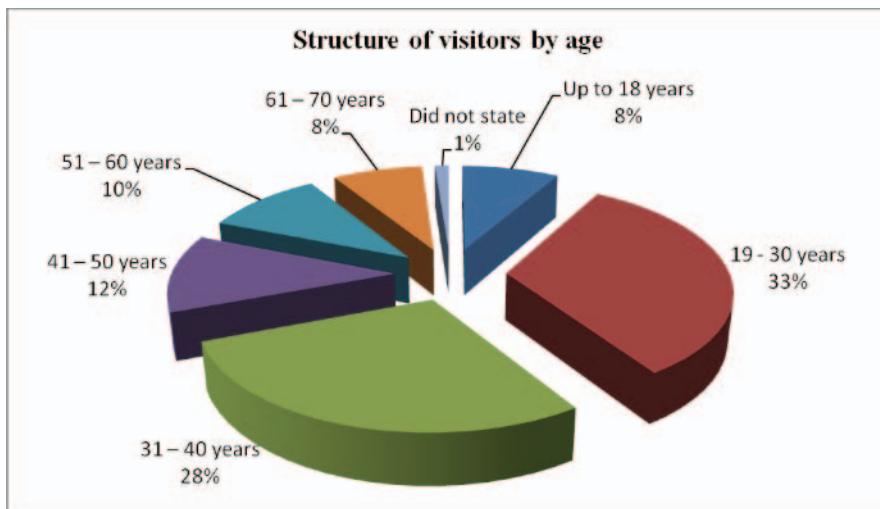


Figure 1. Structure of visitors by age

Analyzing the structure of visitors by education, the presence of visitors with a university degree (58) is the largest, slightly less with a high school degree (56). These two groups account for 67.46% of total visitors to the event.

Table 5. Structure of visitors by education

Elementary school	High school degree	Advanced school	University degree	Master	MSc and PhD	TOTAL
8	56	27	58	15	5	169

Source: Data obtained by questionnaire surveys

Among the visitors there were the masters and PhDs (5) which makes 3% of total visitors to the event.

Table 6. Structure of visitors by occupation

Pupil	14
Student	20
Unemployed	30
Old-age pensioner	16
Primary activities	5
Secondary activities	47
Quaternary activities	38
TOTAL	170

Source: Data obtained by questionnaire surveys

One respondent said that he was both a student and staff in the quaternary activity, thus the total number of respondents increased by one. The largest number of visitors has been employed in secondary activities (47), then in quaternary activities (38) and unemployed, 30. Other groups are represented on a smaller scale.

### Motives for Visiting the Event, the Organization and Consumption

Of the total number of visitors, 118 said they regularly came to the event every year, which is 69.82% while 51 visitors said that they came only sometimes (30.17%). The largest number of visitors is informed about the event through radio and television (68 or 40.24%), then by friends 41 or 24.26%, over the Internet 37 or 21.89%, from newspapers 22 or 13.02%, there were nine participants, five lived nearby and four foreigners out of twelve received the information about the event from the Tourist Information Centre. Interestingly, only three visitors were informed by prospect, of which one from Bulgaria and one from Italy, which indicates that this type of information was very poorly represented, and it certainly should not be underestimated. This is the alarm for event organizers that for the next event they should use this type of information as one of the most effective and inexpensive ways of informing. There was one respond of a foreigner that he found himself at the event by accident.

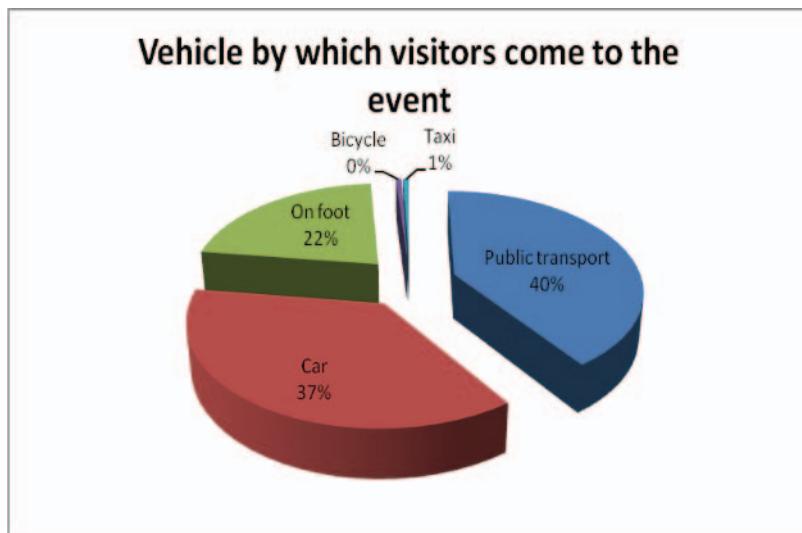


Figure 2. Vehicle by which visitors come to the event

The largest number of visitors comes by public transport (69), slightly less by car (63), even 37 visitors arrive on foot. A total of 171 have been provided as survey participants had the opportunity to circle more than one answer.

Table 7. Vehicle by which visitors come to the event

Public transport	Car	On foot	Bicycle	Taxi	TOTAL
69	63	37	1	1	171

Source: Data obtained by questionnaire surveys

Table 8. Who the visitors are coming to the event with

With friends	86
With family members	72
With colleagues	13
Alone	6
Organized	1
TOTAL	178

Source: Data obtained by questionnaire surveys

Visitors are mostly coming to the event with friends and family members and as a percentage relative to the other offered answers they make even 88.76%. A number of visitors come both with friends and family members and the total number is slightly higher.

Table 9. Motive for visit

Relaxation and rest	20
Companionship	6
Job	7
Pleasure and amusement	84
Curiosity	6
Whole event	6
Ships	17
Walk	42
Fireworks	2
Did not state	6
Photography	1

Source: Data obtained by questionnaire surveys

The largest number of respondents said that pleasure and amusement (84) were the motives for visiting the event, 42 respondents have decided for walk, 24 respondents said that the motive for arrival was only entertainment, and then followed relaxation and rest with 20 respondents, and ships are in the fifth place with 17 declared persons.

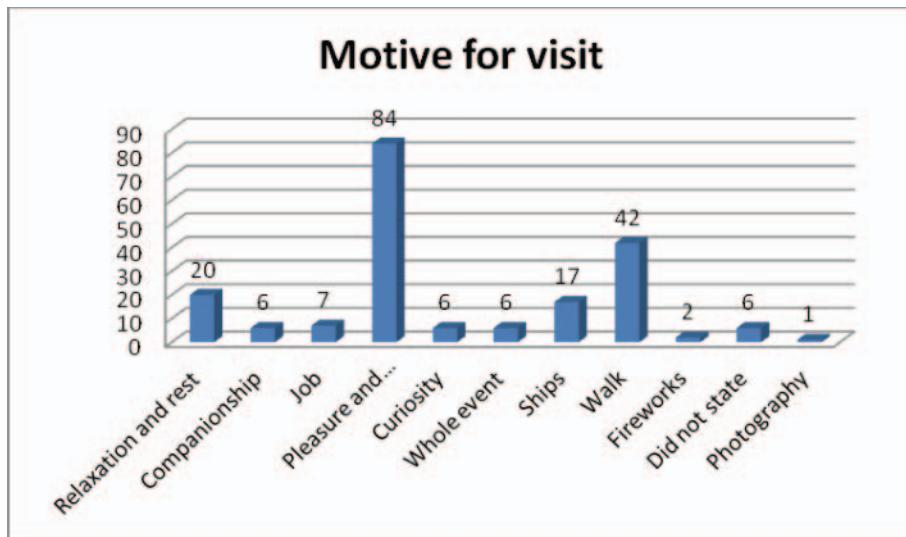


Figure 3. Motive for visit

In the percentage ratio, pleasure and amusement are the most common motives for coming to the event and it is 28%, which is a third of the total respondents. If we take into account that 24 respondents stated that their motive is exclusively amusement without pleasure, this percentage increases to 40%. Ships as a motive for the event are less than 9%.

Table 10. Spending money in RSD

Nothing	27
We do not plan, as much as we spend	13
I do not know	13
Nothing specific	3
Little	4
Up to 500	48
From 500 to 1000	4
About 1000	40
1 500	2
About 2 000	6
From 2 000 to 3 000	1
4 000	1
5 000	1

Source: Data obtained by questionnaire surveys

The largest number of visitors planned to spend up to 500 dinars (48) or less than 5 Euros, then about 1000 dinars (40) or less than 10 Euros, even 27 did not plan to spend anything, and the same number (13 out of each) stated that they did not plan anything, but they would spend as much they spent.

Table 11. Spending money planned

I do not know	On food and drink	On souvenirs	On bits and pieces	Nothing	On food	On drink
13	34	26	2	26	13	72

Source: Data obtained by questionnaire surveys

At the event most money was planned to be spent on drinks (72 visitors), and eighteen visitors stated that it would be beer, 34 visitors set aside money for food and drink, 26 visitors would spend money on souvenirs, as well as 26 of them would not spend anything.

Of the total of 169 respondents, 74 (43.79%) would not change anything at the event, and the rest of 95 (56.21%) respondents had suggestions for some changes of the event. The largest number of respondents suggested a greater number of boats participants, better lighting, more rock bands and serious musicians, better hygiene and maintenance of toilets, better availability of food and drinks, the greater participation of foreign representatives, more benches, more media representation, to increase the space maintenance and better announcements of daily events, more stands and a smaller prices, boat rides throughout the event, to grow into an international character and others. Although the event "Boat Carnival" has a local character, in the opinion of visitors it has a local character (88 or 55%), regional (47 or 28%) and international character (34 or 20%).

To the question "Would you recommend the event to your surroundings", 155 respondents said they would recommend, which is 91.71%, 8 respondents would not recommend manifestation or 4.73%, four respondents chose the answer 'maybe' (2.36%) and one respondent did not answer (1.18%)

### Conclusion

The largest number of visitors is from the territory of the city of Belgrade, that is, urban municipalities gravitating towards the place of maintaining, as shown by the fact that the city, local transport was used by 40% and 22% of the visitors came on foot, and 89% of visitors came with family or friends. Nearly two-thirds of the visitors said they had come because of the companionship, entertainment and amusement and one-quarter of the visitors said they had come for a walk, which in their responses is not clear whether they came for a walk on the occasion of Carnival or daily walking. That they came only as casual observers is shown by the result of research where 89.9% of respondents would either spend a little or they spent up to 1,000 dinars (about nine Euros) and 70% of respondents would spend money on food and drink. Only 10% of visitors said

they came because of the ships. The age group that predominates (19 to 40 years) and educational structure where almost half of the respondents (46%) have a university degree indicates that at respondents the Sava and Danube rivers are considered as significant tourist potentials of Belgrade.

Although Boat Carnival is classified in the second category of tourist events in Serbia, the origin of visitors indicates that it is a local event, planned as part of the tourism offer in the summer months. Some programs associated with cities in other Danube countries indicate the importance of this event as a tourist promotion of the city of Belgrade and coast, and nothing more than that. Programs that have taken place in the previous period, in particular as regards proceedings in the water, show that this event is rather exhibition of boats than carnival.

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Data obtained by questionnaire surveys.