

Chapter 2

Belonging to Green: Environmental Attributes of Place Attachment in Sarajevo

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ABSTRACT

Sarajevo's natural layout is extensively green as it covers large rural and natural areas. The city struggles with an insufficient urban layout in terms of environmental quality. Through a top-down approach, this study investigates the user's perception of 'green' and examines the environmental attributes of place attachment in the case of Sarajevo. The semi-structured study is based on online surveys with experts and in-depth interviews with residents and applies a reframed model of place attachment which provides both a quantitative and qualitative translation of, among other aspects, environmental factors. Within this framework, the research presents a recap of Sarajevo's environmental experiences and focuses on lessons learned regarding the post-war urban development in the environmental context of the city.

INTRODUCTION

With its urban agglomeration in the valleys of the rivers Bosna, Miljacka and Željeznica and embedded in the Dinaric Alps mountains, the larger area of Sarajevo has a respectively high significance of natural value. The Cantonal area of Sarajevo exists of nine municipalities of which each has its own function and characteristics. Four of them form the core of Sarajevo city, while the municipalities of Hadžići, Ilidža, Ilijaš, Trnovo and Vogošća have a relatively small number of residents and function as satellite municipalities in different gradations. Inhabitants of these settlements are commuting daily to the city. On the other hand, residents of Sarajevo city travel to the suburban municipalities for tourism, sports and recreation as these areas exist of a wild hilly landscape with high mountain peaks and protected natural

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-6725-8.ch002

areas. Although, the city struggles—among social, economic and cultural—with major environmental problems and it seems that the topography plays a major role in this (Martín-Díaz et al., 2015; World Bank, 2019).

The Balkan city has never been able to detach itself from the position of being a buffer zone, both topographically as well as politically. Besides its lasting potential for capital, its geographical structure was one of the primary drivers in its urbanization process. The city has been developed under various rulerships (Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, Yugoslavian and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)) each with its own urban agenda. Through its rooted and dynamic socio-cultural, political and economic history, urban development has led to a broad range of environmental experiences. More recent, rapid urbanization in the post-war period, diaspora and global migration trends has led to a new demographic and urban structure—and thus new habitation patterns—which demanded for a (delayed) new legislative urban planning framework regarding the environmental and building regulations. These spatial planning tools were lacking in the legislative framework of the near post-war period, which resulted in uncontrolled urban development and affected—among other issues—environmental protection. Sarajevo enacts to respond to these changing environmental conditions. The Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection of Canton Sarajevo have funded diverse projects of which the Cantonal Environmental Action Plan (CEAP) (Kanton Sarajevo, 2017) has been started to be implemented in 2016 and completed in 2017. The project contained a review of the current state of the environment, the major problems and priorities, an action plan with solutions and provision of funds for the execution and monitoring of the plan. Although the implementation took one year, the monitoring program of the project was planned for a five-year period. Presently, the region comprises a Green Cantonal Action Plan (GCAP) in which it enunciates the Canton's 'green city' vision and emphasizes on the key environmental challenges of the CEAP; air quality, mitigation of GHG emissions, water resources, soils, biodiversity and ecosystems, adaptation and resilience to natural disaster risks and green spaces (Kanton Sarajevo, 2017). The strategic plan prioritizes environmental tasks regarding green spaces on macro level and with mainly administrative and technical approaches. To be able to portray synthesized environmental concerns, it is important to address the micro level and understand the status quo of the citizens' approach to (public) green space and related environmental issues. Within this scope, the research deals with prioritized environmental subjects, either directly caused or indirectly encouraged by the unplanned post-war urban development.

BACKGROUND

Citizens identify and differentiate themselves from others by exercising distinct, social, cultural and spatial practices. In this way, they build on the physical environment and adapt their socio-cultural structure to it. These experiences include both human-human (social) and human-place (socio-spatial) interactions, whereby both social and physical attachment are of equal importance. Place attachment is a multi-disciplinary and multidimensional notion and is defined as “the emotional bond between person and place” (e.g. Florek, 2011; Giuliani, 2003; Low & Altman, 1992; Shumaker & Taylor, 1983). Most of the existing studies on place attachment has focused on scenic, rural and residential settings (Ryan, 2005). Within this scope, there is an intention to focus primarily on the built environment, while the natural environment and its dynamics are evaluated at least of importance. Nevertheless, facets of the natural environment encourage protection, preservation and defense of the individual and the society

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