

LANDSCAPE PLANNING OF URBAN GREEN SPACES - PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ON THE INHABITANTS OF IASI

AMENAJAREA SPAȚIILOR VERZI URBANE – IMPACTUL PSIHOLOGIC ȘI SOCIAL ASUPRA LOCUTORILOR DIN IAȘI

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Abstract. *It is well known in history that the rapid development of culture, civilization, technology and industry of the population from certain areas of the globe has been favored by a favorable environment, either geographically and climate or from the perspective of the absence of internal or external conflicts, by the presence on their territories of mineral or flora and fauna resources, or even their own human resource. Extrapolating the idea above, this paper seeks, at the smaller scale of a city nowadays, how the environmentally arranged landscape can beneficially influence the overall development of the urban area, but especially of its inhabitants, from the point of view of physically-psychological-sanogenic, but also socially and culturally, with examples from the city of Iasi.*

Key words: green areas landscaping, the impact of landscaping on the population

Rezumat. *Se cunoaște din istorie că, dezvoltarea rapidă a culturii, civilizației, tehnologiei și industriei populațiilor din anumite zone de pe Glob a fost favorizată de un mediu prielnic, fie din punct de vedere geografic și climatic, fie din perspectiva absenței conflictelor interne sau externe, fie prin prezența pe teritoriile lor a unor resurse minerale sau de floră și faună, sau chiar prin resursa umană proprie. Extrapolând ideea de mai sus, această lucrare urmărește, la scara mai mică a unui oraș din zilele noastre, modalitatea cum, mediul ambiant amenajat peisager poate influența în mod benefic dezvoltarea generală a zonei urbane respective, dar mai ales a locuitorilor ei, atât din punct de vedere fizico-psihologic-sanogen dar și social și cultural, cu exemplificări din orașul Iași.*

Cuvinte cheie: amenajare peisageră a spațiilor verzi, impactul amenajărilor peisagere asupra populației

INTRODUCTION

Accelerated urbanization results in the progressive increase of the urban population in detriment of the countryside people and may result in limiting access to nature for city residents and even exposure to certain hazards such as air, soil, or noise pollution, floods or overheating phenomena, etc.

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Major urban communities face these challenges in order to ensure a healthy and sustainable living environment for both the existing population and especially future generations.

The existence of green spaces within cities leads to improved water quality, air quality and mitigation of noise pollution and the impact of extreme natural phenomena, which may mean reducing the health risks associated with living in urban areas (Coldwell *et al.*, 2018; Johnston Eilidh *et al.*, 2008).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

It is already known that green spaces generally support well-being, physical and mental well-being and facilitate good health by alleviating stress, relaxation, physical activity, improving social interactions and community cohesion. Even more, green spaces provided in the general urban planning projects, but also those that were subsequently built up by redevelopment of existing green spaces, or the rehabilitation of degraded urban areas will have a major impact on the urban population, through social, economic, environmental and cultural factor as it highlighted in figure 1 taken from second reference in paranthesis.(Lestan *et al.*, 2014; Regional Public Health., 2010; World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe, 2017)

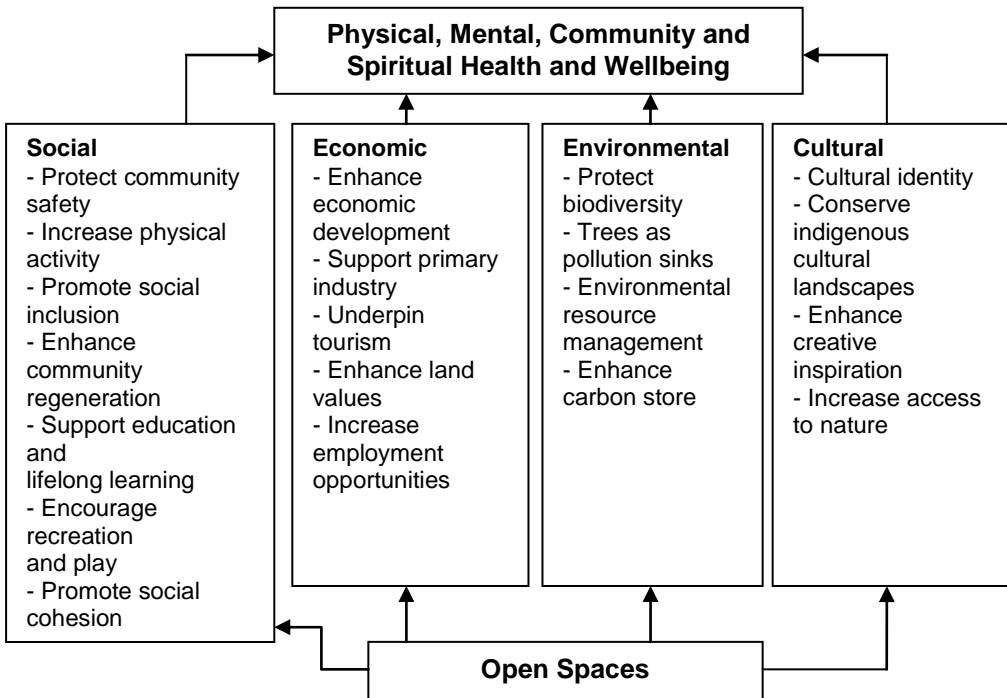


Fig. 1 The impact of quality open spaces on human wellbeing through social, economic, environmental and cultural factors

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Interventions on urban green areas are defined as actions that change the quality, quantity and accessibility of landscaped green spaces, or by changing the features and functions of existing ones.

The city of Iasi has benefited from a series of rehabilitations and refurbishments of existing squares, which, through the new features, have gained better visibility, accessibility, new quality standards and last but not least their better attendance from the majority of inhabitants.

The question is whether these interventions on the green spaces in Iași have a positive or negative impact on the population of the city?

An example is the „Biserica Lipovenească” Square, which, after trimming the existing vegetation, extracting the aged specimens and the living fence, planting the lawn rug and some ornamental plant groups, resulted an light green space and much more frequented by citizens (fig. 2).



Fig. 2 „Biserica Lipovenească (Orășel)” Square

By introducing into the central ring a support platform for a Romanian flag, built for the celebration of the centenary of the Great Union of the Romanian lands, the square also gains a cultural significance, completing the works of regeneration and renewal of the vegetation and the furniture and giving to space the feeling of safety, but also belonging to a well-defined ethnic and cultural community.

Prior to the redevelopment, the area in front of the Post Office building, in the ”Podu-Roșu”, was the meeting place of the chess players from the neighborhood, very crowded despite the small space in the vicinity of a major traffic junction of the city, with a lot of noise and olfactory pollution.

After the refurbishment, the space, although more generous, cleaner, protected from noxious and noise through partially transparent perimeter panels, has the disadvantage of hiding the look of the outside passersby over what happens in the square and therefore does not seem to have the same attraction as before (fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Chass player Square in "Podu-Roșu" area, (before redevelopment – the top-left image; after redevelopment – the top-right and the bottom image)

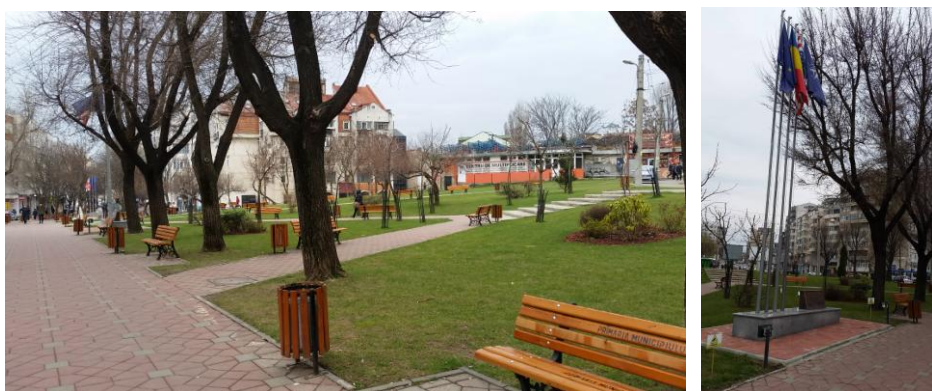


Fig. 4 "Woodrow Wilson" Square, the „Târgu-Cucu” ring area

The square in the "Târgu-Cucu" area, besides a renewal of the arboricola and flora vegetation, new furniture and pavements, the area was given a new name - "Woodrow Wilson" - after the name of the American president during the First World War, and the main alley will be caled "Lt. col. Henry Watkins

All these examples are meant to highlight that, although the green spaces in Iași have begun to be rearranged, the impact of these interventions on the population can be observed directly in the short term, or can be assessed in the long run.

The first observations of the refurbished premises bring to light the fact that the areas have a bright, clean and airy appearance, which makes the spaces safer and consequently much more frequented by the population than they were before redevelopment. Was also noticed the reverse effect of the depopulation of the Chass Players Squar in Podu-Roș, by placing the soundproofing panels that obstruct the view from the outside space. The long-term effects of green areas on the population, both physically, mentally and socially, have been studied in other European countries as well. The findings show that there is certainly a beneficial effect on the population of green spaces appropriately tailored to the functions, but also to the age specific of the users (Lestan *et. al.*, 2014).

CONCLUSIONS

Studies from abroad show that green spaces in general, but especially landscaped urban landscapes, have a positive impact on the population, both in terms of physical and mental health, as well as socially and economically.

On the other hand, exemplifications in the city of Iași, in addition to visible beneficial effects, can also illustrate the opposite, in that some arrangements are not made on the specificity of the area, or the users do not have the civic education necessary to exploiting this green spaces in good conditions.

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