

Proceedings

Qualitative Exploration of Perception and Use of Cultural Ecosystem Services from Tree-Based Urban Green Space in the City of Zagreb (Croatia)

Silvija Krajter Ostoić *, Ana Marija Marin *, Martina Kičić, Dijana Vuletić

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Abstract: Cultural studies on perception of cultural ecosystem services of urban green spaces are important and often recognized as such by people living in urban areas. There is lack of qualitative studies and understanding how people perceive cultural ecosystem services from different types of tree-based urban green areas. The aim of the study was to explore whether and how citizens of Zagreb perceive and use cultural ecosystem services of different types of tree-based urban green spaces. Focus groups were conducted in each city district with its residents. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and transcripts analyzed in MAXQDA software. To analyze the data without a predefined set of codes or categories the bottom up code-category-theme approach was used. Results showed that place attachment, aesthetic and recreational services were more recognized than educational and cultural identity services. Most important single attributes for place attachment were positive memories and good maintenance, while most important categories were facilities, existence of emotional ties, possibility of experiences, recreational use and access. Presence of specific tree species and presence of trees in general were the most important attributes for aesthetic services, while possibility of experiences and trees were the most important categories. People perceived various cultural ecosystem services from tree-based urban green space, even though some services more than others. Forests and parks were recognized as those providing multiple cultural ecosystem services. Other types of green spaces were also recognized as bearers of these services, albeit with fewer services and attributes attached. Findings support the importance of careful planning of urban green spaces in terms of providing a variety of green space types. The study provides a basis for later quantification of cultural ecosystem services from tree-based urban green space.

Keywords: focus groups; place attachment; aesthetics; recreation; education; cultural identity