

The Essence and Perception of Associative Landscapes

Nadav Sadeh and Eliahu Stern

Associative landscapes are those identified by strong associations to art, religion, history, geography and literature. They can be physical entities or mental images of certain sites. They are subjectively perceived and we assume that personal attributes determine the values which affect their subjective identification. The present study examines the relationship between selected personal attributes and a set of values which constitutes a typology used to identify and classify them. Based on two philosophical schools, Existentialism is expected to explain the role of personal attributes in the identification process, and Empiricism is expected to explain their connection to the tangibility of the identified landscape. A sample of 220 students was used as the statistical base. The results show that religiosity, national ideology, general cultural knowledge, and geographical acquaintance are the main attributes affecting the selection of values for the identification process. An individual without knowledge and/or experience will not be able to identify an associative landscape because that person will not be able to give the essence and values with which the landscape will be associated. Although the identification process is universal, the personal attributes are not. Therefore, the sampled population must be maximally heterogeneous to enable landscape mapping and planning.

Nadav Sadeh is a geographer and urban planner (M.A) graduated at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. He is the principal of "Sadot – Planning, Tourism and Environment" specializing in sustainable environmental and tourism development.

Eliahu Stern is a professor of geography and planning at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev specializing in urban & regional planning, applied geography and conservation of cultural and natural assets. He was the chairperson of the Israel World Heritage Committee for UNESCO and the chairman of the Israel Planners Association. He is the current secretary of the IGU Applied Geography Commission, received the 2012 Planners Award and the Local Governance Award twice.