

Causes and consequences of cultural and historical manor landscape fragmentation in the 19th–21st century Latvia

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Abstract. In the post-war years (50s-80s of the 20th century), the legislation of the Soviet Union defined that the list of monuments to be protected by the state is deemed a political document with ideological significance. Due to this reason, the list of architectural monuments was subject to politically motivated manipulations not only during Stalin's time, but also later.

The political situation after the occupation in 1940 required to adapt to the sovietization demands, didactically dividing cultural monuments into “progressive” and “bourgeois” or those unfit for socialist construction. The history of the cultural heritage protection measures has been related to politics. With the growing importance of cultural heritage in the formation of historical memory, the protection and promotion of monuments becomes an essential part of the ideology of nation states. A change in the state power means a change in the dominant political ideology, which affects the work of state institutions in the protection of cultural heritage.

The research topic has an interdisciplinary nature with the intertwining of political, economic and social aspects. The cultural heritage includes the political dimension and its role in shaping national identity models.

The rise of the Duchy of Courland in the first half of the 18th century made a serious contribution to the landscape of the Lielupe left bank basin in the Zemgale region. The landscape of the both historical ensembles of Svete and Vircava manors was disturbed (fragmented) by the economic and political position of the state. The basis for that was bringing new infrastructure in the nature.

As a result of political, economic and social pressures, the landscapes of cultural and historical manors have, over the centuries, fragmented and transformed the use of the original structure and functional landscape. The aim of the research is to identify and emphasize the causes and consequences of the fragmentation of the cultural and historical landscape of manors.

Keywords: cultural heritage, duchy summer residences, compositional structure, identity, transformation

Introduction

Cultural and historical landscape is only one branch of cultural heritage – its totality consists of multiple layers of heritage of the past that is the value for the entire society at the national level. Upon the contemporary continuous development of the society and spatial environment, the cultural and historical landscape and building structures it incorporates, have not been sufficiently utilized as a potential for a sustainable management, development, and conservation of landscape identity [5].

Every manor ensemble is not only aesthetic, landscape value and remembrance from the past but also one of the socio-economic and representative foundation-stone of the location identity, which a sufficiently large significance is not attributed to – conservation, restoration of the landscape and attaching of new functions to it would correlate with trends of the 21st century [2].

Every manor ensemble had a garden or park, worthy of mention, of which historical significance can be found in about the 18th century. The garden significance has long been a serene and harmonious outdoors often called the paradise where everybody could devote oneself to flight of thought in the environment of silence and nature beauty [7].

However, the current situation does not bear any witness that there was a grand park in the territories of many manor ensembles – two centuries has left considerable transformations.

Problem: As a result of political, economic, and social impact, landscapes of cultural and historical manors, have become fragmented through centuries and their initial structural and functional application has been transformed. *Objective:* To identify and accentuate causes and consequences of manor cultural and historical landscape.

Materials and Methods

Manor garden/park acquires its identity by merging cultures, ages, unique sculpture and architecture locations, human and nature interrelation, and totality of nature formations. Taking account of a political situation and German impact in the territory of Latvia since the 17th century, we can be proud of the number of cultural and historical manor landscapes however, to avert degradation of manors and their parks, a sustainable and adequate economic activity is necessary – tending, restoration and identification of cultural and historical values [4]. The study applies a comparative method – mapping, historical

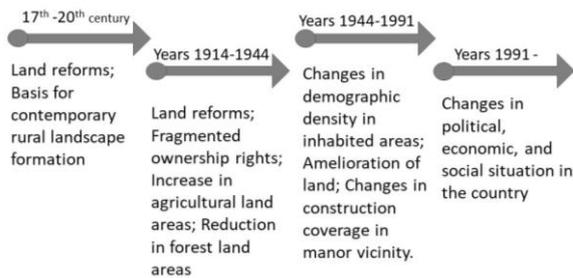


Fig. 1. Landscape genesis scale by authors.
Landscape fragmentation causes [created by authors]

research, collection of field study materials and photographs. Graphical-analytical method is based on representation of graphical material by visualizing the collected information in schemes and collages.

The study scale covers Latvian manor ensembles. Samples in Jelgava area has been analyzed in detail – ensembles of the former Kurzeme duchy: Svēte manor and Vircava manor where traces of different transformations in the cultural and historical landscape are the most typical and obvious. Noting that in the country, in the researched period from the 19th to the 21st century, different political, economic, and social changes have been going on comparatively smoothly, then samples of the aforementioned manor ensembles characterize the situation in general.

Fragmentation causes:

Fragmentation processes of cultural and historical landscape ensembles have considerably impacted the entire Latvian landscape and public understanding of it. Taking into consideration the past rough events, the Latvian nation has undergone, it considerably influences the scale of priorities and values as well as the cultural landscape in general cannot be expressed as a monetary value – it is difficult to grasp what is not comprehensible. This creates an additional burden on landscape and its elements that is reflected in human economic activity – degrading and transforming the landscape. Transformation consequences can be divided into two groups – functional transformation (according to economic activity) and structural transformation (infrastructure, construction, blue-green structure) [2].

Landscape transformation has been considerably influenced by historical events, triggered by political, economic, and social changes all over the world [12; 13].

Figure 1 shows the genesis of the landscape, how various processes in the periods have affected the overall landscape space of the whole of Latvia, especially affecting the manor ensembles. Multiple land reforms have fragmented the ensembles of the original manors - dividing it from 200 ha of property into smaller land units, creating autonomous new farms. In later years, the land was nationalized again

and a collective farm was established – later the consequences of privatization. These are the most important aspects that have divided the cultural heritage and start the degradation of manors. It is important to emphasize that politics, economics and social factors must be seen as a whole - they interact, they allocate separate positions and incorrectly.

17th – 20th century: Land reforms; Basis for contemporary rural landscape formation. Years 1914-1944: Land reforms; Fragmented ownership rights; Increase in agricultural land areas; Reduction in forest land areas. Years 1944–1991: Changes in demographic density in inhabited areas; Amelioration of land; Changes in construction coverage in manor vicinity. Year 1991 till nowadays: Changes in political, economic, and social situation in the country.

The first half of the 20th century is marked by functional transformation causes – economic and political factors. During the Latvian war for independence and WW II a large part of historical buildings was burned down. Today, the current manor management model and the former manor economic function must be revised because mostly it is degrading the identity of a location. It is important to acknowledge that in Latvia the cultural landscape is the value requiring a long-term development and not only an active involvement of branch specialists but also cooperation and education of the public [4].

Manors are mostly situated in vicinity of suburbs or within agricultural landscapes. Structures of construction coverage of rural landscape are impermanent. They change together with the nearest urban development processes that are closely linked to political and socio-economic conditions [8]. Thus, the landscape transformation picture and facilitating factors should not be searched for at local or regional level but at the State and global level. Every landscape – urban, agricultural, cultural, historical, or other should be examined in a general context, without separating them. This is the interrelation in time and space intensified by the aforementioned causes.

Just as sizes of manor buildings have considerably changed their initial architectural value, blue-green structures also play just as significant role in cultural landscapes. Changes in green structures are caused not only by changes in climatic factors in a long-term but also as the result of a thoughtless economic activity. As mentioned before, also in the result of inadequate and unprofessional economic activity of blue-green structures, historical sizes have been considerably disarranged, developing samples of bad practices [6].

In point of fact, the transformation as a process cannot be influenced – the landscape is continuously changing in time and space. However, importance

must be emphasized to research how to eliminate deliberate transformation causes, influenced by human economic activity (Fig. 2). Causes: Transformation processes – Economic functions. Structures. Ecology. Consequences: Political, Economic, Social changes.

Consequences:

Under impact of land reform of the 20th century, in 1920, manors and their lands were expropriated from German landed gentry thus, splitting the territory of manor ensemble among several owners that is one of the transformation consequences of cultural and historical landscape structures. As a result of political events of the 20th century, people were not able to properly evaluate the value of gardens or parks as the cultural and historical recreation space for public. The primary was political and economical factor and not cultural and historical heritage [7].

In the 20th century, a great damage was done by attributing inadequate economic function to manor buildings – they were converted into administrative institutions, schools, hospitals, cultural establishments [7]. Leaving impact not only on architecture of buildings but also considerably transforming territories of the adjoining manor ensembles – new structures were built in their gardens depending on what was situated in the manor, for example, sports field or production facility, community garages and other structures. Svēte and Vircava manor ensembles were split by a highway – such infrastructure elements create disharmony in cultural and historical landscape, posing risk to lose the undivided historical landscape. In the 21st century, a major part of cultural and historical landscapes is in disharmony not only in the context of the manor but also in an overall landscape. Inadequate economic activity is just as damaging as inactivity. Therefore, emphasizing once more that it is important to identify a need to correlate the functional management type of the cultural and historical territories with authentic values of the location in question. The authors' collage (Fig. 3) clearly shows changes in landscape and its elements in the period from the 19th to 21st century. According to structure, to function and to ecology.

Looking at (Table 1) the summer residences of Kurzeme duchy in Svēte and Vircava, it is obvious how building structures have been transformed in the course of time, the overall landscape has been changed, new structures have emerged, a historical layout has changed and according to economic activity the manor landscape has been left fragmented.

The rise of the Duchy of Courland in the first half of the 18th century made a serious contribution

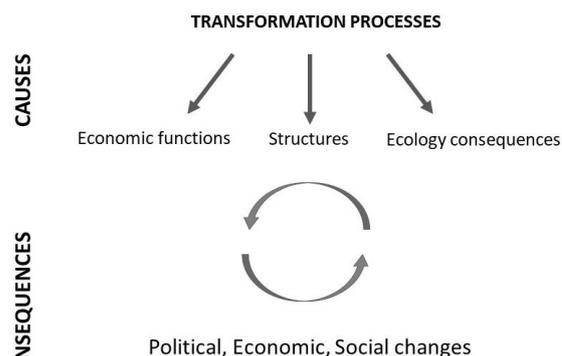


Fig. 2. Figure developed by authors. Interrelation of causes and consequences [created by authors]

to the landscape of the Lielupe left bank basin in the Zemgale region. The compositional structure of the landscapes of both manor ensembles mentioned was disrupted (fragmented) by the economic and political course of the state. The basis for that was bringing new infrastructure in the nature. In the considered examples, the main reason for fragmentation is the construction of the transit road bed – in Vircava Park in the 20s of the 20th century and in Svete Park in the 90s of the 19th century.

These periods have a different political position of the state (the time of the tsarist Russian province and the time of Latvia's independence). Although the political situation in the country is different, the actions in both cases are analogous: not aimed at protecting the values of the cultural landscape. The purpose of political power is characterized by narrow understanding related only to increasing the efficiency of functional significance. Consequently, not only a spatially new structure is introduced, but also the historical quality of the landscape is lost, referring it to the change of the line of sight, which was historically a strict condition. but also to county manors and private manors. These problems and causality are applicable not only to the preservation of the historical values of the duchy (later the province), but also to the manors and private manors. The possibility of recovering the historic park space has been well proven by the works that have been carried out for half a century in Rundale – the most luxurious summer residence of the Duchy.

The other summer residences, in Svete and Vircava, are located nearby – about 10 km by air line. Both of them are linked by a common road that leads to both Rundale and the Green Manor (*Zaļā muiža*), linking them in a circle in the southern part of the Zemgale landscape.

Nowadays, along with the growth of the economic situation in the state, the cultural and historical landscapes of Svete and Vircava have become closer to the scale and the infrastructure of Jelgava urban environment in the course of

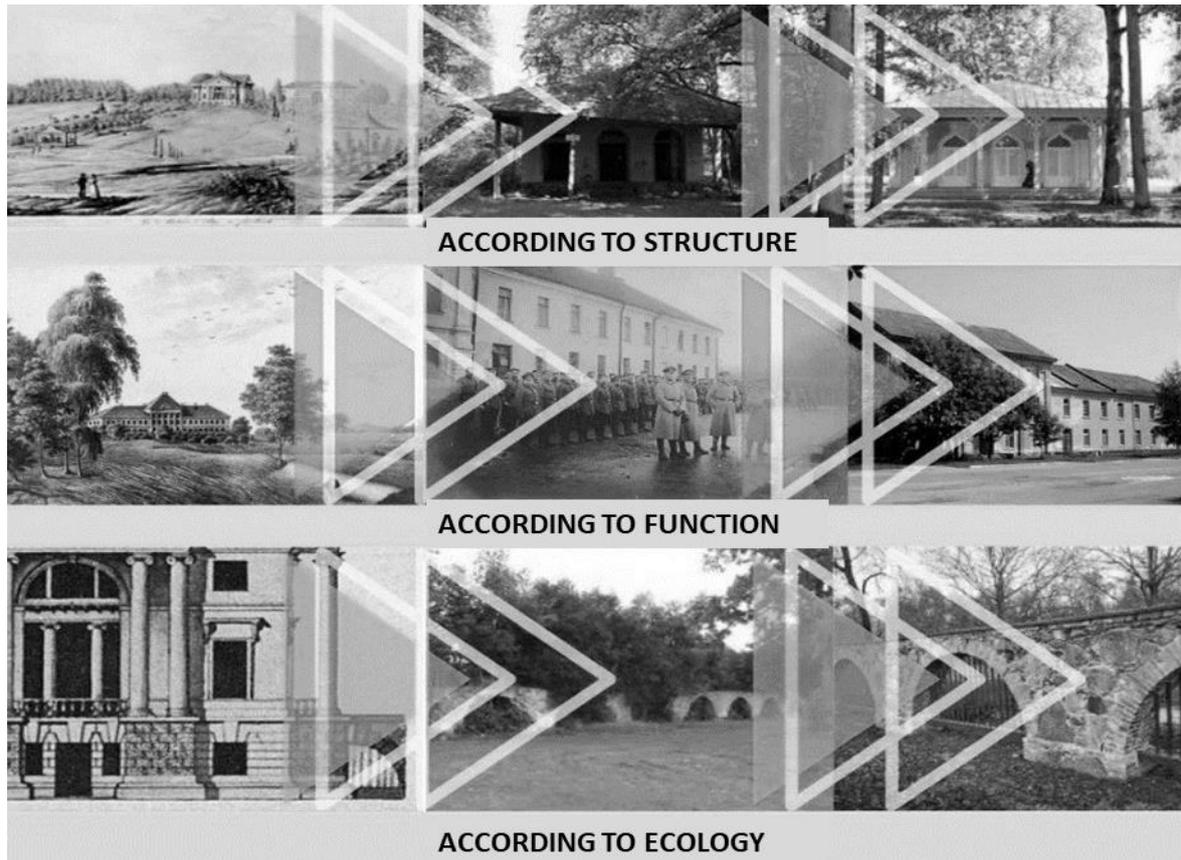


Fig. 3. Transformation consequences of cultural and historical landscape in the period from the 19th to 21st century [created by authors]

250 years (from the first half of the 18th century). After half a century, the suburban residential areas will merge with the manor landscape. Therefore, it is necessary to think not only about the protection zone and building regulation criteria, but also about the state institutions in an interdisciplinary cooperation.

The cultural and historical landscape of Svete and Vircava manors provide a serious opportunity for perspective development of Jelgava urban planning in the next 50 years.

Evaluating the current urban planning situation in Jelgava, the forecast indicates the ring-shaped construction of satellite villages around the current scale of the city. Therefore, it is expected that the cultural landscape of both Vircava and Svete will lose the character of a wide plain landscape with a park, river, floodplain meadows, fields. Longer and shorter lines of view will be formed with the change of the visual and functional character of the medium-distance view, background view and side scenes.

The above said is clearly expressed in the landscape around Svete Castle, where a mansion area with gardens is currently being developed. The adjacent industrial area in the territory of the former park has a temporary nature with contractual obligations. Huge floodplain meadows on the northern side of the castle as a natural base and the

historic dirt road to the castle have been preserved. The same can be said about the geomorphological features, such as gravel hills or the so-called Rullu hills on the eastern side of the castle.

In the context of the perspective development of Jelgava urban planning, blue-green wedge-shaped territories (Fig. 4), which form a unique green recreation in the southern and south-western part of the suburbs, are preserved – a picturesque plain landscape with the fields and forests divided into oblong zones by 4 rivers – Vircava, Eleja, Platone, Svete. They are forming the so-called blue-green wedges in the southern part of Jelgava – in a 10 km wide ring. The distance is also ideal for the development of cycle paths.

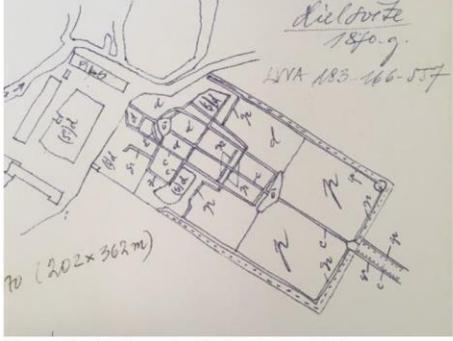
Green-blue wedges formed by forests and rivers in the southern part of Jelgava city space.

Landscape space prognostic around Svete castle ensemble

The floodplain of the Svete river in the northern part of the area of about 40 ha as a natural base will remain and will not disappear. Consequently, the historical view lines across the river from the old existing dirt road to the castle will not be lost either. The situation is more complicated in the southern part of the castle, where slums have formed in the territory of the post-war old park. The production

TABLE 1

Comparison of the Duchy of Courland in Svēte and Vircava in the 19th and 21st centuries [created by authors]

19TH CENTURY		
	VIRCAVA MANOR ENSEMBLE	SVĒTE MANOR ENSEMBLE
IMAGE		
CHARACTERISTICS	The main dominant in the landscape is the manor and its buildings. Highly atypical, admirable garden layout over the Vircava river with water partitioning system. Distant vista lines, alleys, and typical French garden elements. Agricultural landscape is surrounding.	The main dominant in the landscape is the manor and its buildings, particularly notable by its orangery. A large garden with several areas. Distant vista lines, alleys, and typical French garden elements. Surrounding agricultural landscape, the river flows along the manor.
21ST CENTURY		
CHARACTERISTICS	  	  
CHARACTERISTICS	Historical garden composition has been deranged by splitting it up and constructing the highway. As a result of amelioration, part of the green structure is bogged up, overgrown and vista line have disappeared. In the other part of the park, some historical alleys and water partitioning have remained but in the middle part, an artificial plot has been arranged where a sports field is situated. Manor house is in a critical condition. Some fragments of the former buildings have remained. The cultural and historical landscape is surrounded with agricultural landscape. Village buildings are situated by the manor perimeter. These are mainly private houses, which do not compete with the size of manor.	The historical garden composition has been considerably deranged by splitting up the cultural and historical landscape. The highway separates the manor buildings from historical part of the garden where currently various types of buildings are situated – private houses and production facilities. There is an unused sports field, occupying part of the garden. Part of perimeter plantings have remained that gives a notion about the scale of the garden. The manor house ensemble is in a critical condition. The major building is being restored, other buildings have been demolished or partly in ruins. Also, in this area production buildings are very closely placed. There is an apartment building built in front of the manor and it dominates the manor and covers it up. Taking into consideration that the manor is situated on a bank of the Svete river there are flood-lands on the other bank of the river, retaining vast and distant vista lines. Whereas, from the collective-farm times, there are private buildings and remains of the military buildings in the manor garden.

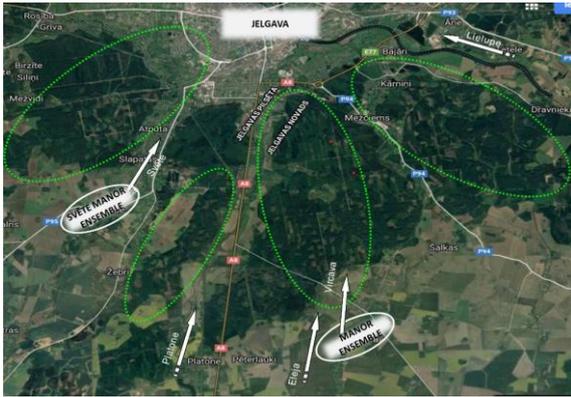


Fig. 4. Green-blue wedges formed by forests and rivers in the southern part of Jelgava city space [created by authors]



Fig. 5. Research of fragmentation of Svete manor landscape [created by authors]

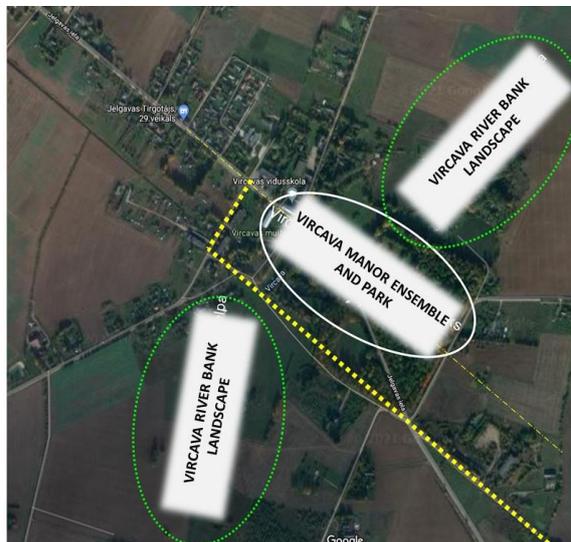


Fig. 6. Research of fragmentation of Vircava manor landscape [created by authors]

areas are being eliminated, recovering the historic park area and the approx. 100 m long alley of lost tree plantations in the southern part of the park. The same as Vircava Park, Svete Park was surrounded by a tree alley and a canal or ditch system, which formed a compositionally enclosed park space.

By dismantling the giant warehouse in the south-western part of the castle, it is possible to reclaim the

second floodplain area of the river with distant lines of sight. This will enclose the cultural space of the castle in a 180 degrees wide radial band (Fig. 5).

On the eastern side of the park, the park's longitudinal (Parka iela) or the old dirt road leading to the Vircava manor ensemble past the roadside pub "Lapas" and the burial area belonging to Vircava manor (Poķu kapi) has been preserved.

Landscape space prognostic around Vircava castle ensemble

The manor house of Vircava manor was destroyed during the World War I. Only some manor houses have been preserved. The territory of the southern part of the park with the old tree alleys is still luxurious. The northern part of the park is more deserted. To eliminate the fragmentation of the park and to restore the historical situation, it is necessary to restore the old dirt road along the south-western edge of the park.

In the eastern and the western part of the park, the landscape of the banks of the Vircava river is very picturesque. The river forms steep banks in the castle area, with river meadows or floodplains attaching to it in the lower and upper reaches of the river.

The above mentioned forecast for the development of urban space in the south-western direction is possible upstream the left bank of the Vircava river, with the lengthening of the administrative boundary of the city. This will partially include the above mentioned suburban forest park area, if we look at Fig. 6.

Legislation

The financial aspect is a considerable factor in rehabilitation of cultural and historical landscapes. This is a great burden for owners. Thanks to different support programs, restoration of manor houses is facilitated but it is not enough. Major part of manor owners lacks adequate funding to maintain or renovate the ancient pearl of culture. It is possible that ownership rights should be revised and the properties whose owners are not able to maintain should be alienated by the State or the Culture Fund. Although the most of cultural and historical landscapes in Latvia are in critical condition, they find young and entrepreneurial owners who take an active part in social live, popularizing the manor and its history, strengthening identity of the location, making projects and facilitate the development of the location.

Planning of landscapes, including cultural and historical landscapes is carried out at different scales: (Regulations on territory uses and construction coverage; Thematic planning of landscapes etc.).

- Internationally (European Landscape Convention);

- At national level (Latvian landscape policy guidelines; Cultural and political, etc.);
- At the level of Planning regions (Strategies, etc.);
- At the level of local governments.

To conserve a unique nature, cultural and historical landscapes, typical for Latvia and, which constitute prerequisites for ensuring of quality living environment for population, the following must be done [1]:

- The State support must be ensured for multifunctional and productive rural territories for conservation and formation of the cultural landscape;
- Landscapes, unique and typical for Latvia must be identified, their inventory must be carried out and proposals must be worked out for landscape management and monitoring of processes;
- The public must be educated and involved in landscape management;
- The territory plans must lay down requirements and conditions, providing for protection of locations, significant in term of the landscape.

A very good example, allowing to avoid development of dominants and competing structures close to cultural and historical landscapes, are the thematic planning of landscapes by local governments. Unfortunately, only some local governments have developed such plans, for example, it is laid down in Rundāle area that tree planting is prohibited if they obstruct open view to cultural and historic objects [1].

Regarding historical parks, considered as such are the territories older than 50 years. It is laid down that construction projects must be developed for the entire territory, without allowing a further fragmentation of land units there, as well as considering the nature of cultural and historical environment, planning structure, diversity of species and details of the landscape architecture. In case the park, its part or an object is a cultural monument, protected by the State, upon developing a construction project for enlarging (reconstruction), restoration or renovation, the conditions laid down by the National Cultural Heritage Board must be complied with. If the historical park that is the State protected cultural monument has been laid out according to a specific historical plan or project or a detailed design has been approved for it, establishing park's status according to these regulations is possible without the construction project, at one time, the park is laid out according to construction regulatory acts and the park construction project can be developed according to procedure of general construction regulations [10].

If the status of cultural monument has been applied to the park under this law, then economic activity is also regulated there. Just as it is laid down that a park owner or manager is obliged to ensure its

conservation and in case some changes are intended, they must be coordinated with the National Cultural Heritage Board. Also, if some damages have been caused to the cultural monument, the aforementioned authority must be notified. It is necessary to enable competent authorities to timely assess the impact of damages and how substantial they are, providing a possible solution to elimination of the damage or its restriction. Within the cultural monuments both economic and other activity is limited. Around cultural monuments, which protection zone has not been determined for and newly-found cultural monuments in rural inhabited areas, the protected zone is 500 meters but in towns – at the distance of 100 meters. Within the protected zones around cultural monuments, activities affecting the cultural and historic environment (for example, construction, artificial transformation of soil surface, forestry activities, lifting from water or unearthing of such prior unidentified items, which possibly could be of a historic, scientific, artistic, or other cultural value) are allowed only on a written permit from the National Cultural Heritage Board. For cultural monuments, which do not need the protected zone at the distance provided by the law, the National Cultural Heritage Board, upon cooperation with the local government, may reduce this distance. In case extension of the protected zone is needed, then the Board lays down it according to the procedure provided by the Cabinet of Ministers [11].

Unfortunately, upon getting acquainted with the legislation and inspecting cultural and historic landscapes in real life, a consistent implementation of this law has not been observed, which has led to destruction of the manor cultural and historic landscape. It is very easy to ruin historic values, but their recovery is time-consuming and financially hard...Neither replication compensates the original architecture or any other landscape element.

In the post-war years (50s-80s of the 20th century) In the post-war years, the legislation of the Soviet Union defined that the list of monuments to be protected by the state is deemed a political document with ideological significance. Due to this reason, the list of architectural monuments was subject to politically motivated manipulations not only during Stalin's time, but also later [3].

The political situation after the occupation in 1940 required to adapt to the sovietization demands, didactically dividing cultural monuments into “progressive” and “bourgeois” or those unfit for socialist construction.

The research topic has an interdisciplinary nature with the intertwining of political, economic and social aspects. The cultural heritage includes the

political dimension and its role in shaping national identity models.

The connection between the historical science and the field of cultural heritage protection is manifested at 3 main levels:

- History and the preservation of its material evidence is the main object and purpose of the preservation of the cultural landscape;
- The activities of protecting the cultural landscape is a historical phenomenon and forms the result of certain social processes;
- The protection of monuments interprets and changes history and its perception in by the society.

Awareness of history, which is sometimes called 'cultural memory' or 'social memory', refers to the society's conventional concepts of the past that are intended to provide a meaningful explanation of historical experience. The awareness of history gives the past its meaning and value [9].

The history of the cultural heritage protection measures has been related to politics. With the growing importance of cultural heritage in the formation of historical memory, the protection and promotion of monuments becomes an essential part of the ideology of nation states. A change in the state power means a change in the dominant political ideology, which affects the work of state institutions in the protection of cultural heritage.

During the Soviet era, Latvian rural manors were mostly included in the so-called "c" category architectural monuments, which could be used for economic purposes (for the needs of collective farms and state farms (kolkhozs) – farms, mechanical workshops, warehouses for grain, building materials, technical parts etc.) [9].

The promotion of the new Soviet state and the development of grain farming in the newly established sovkhoses and kolkhozes was also extended to manor houses, including the duchy's summer residences. For example, in the 50s of the 20th century, in Rundale Golden Hall, parquet floors were used to dry freshly harvested grain in the autumn, which was ensured by ventilation and air volume of the room – opening the wide windows of the hall on both sides of the room and high ceilings. This way, the state's political order and the state's economic development, which was built on the pillars of the cultural environment, were going hand-in-hand.

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Conclusions

1. Cultural and historic landscape has an essential role in an overall image of the location and strengthening of its identity, it can become a significant stimulus for economic growth, also promoting a flow of tourists and economic prosperity.
2. Transformation process is essentially unavoidable. It is important to understand interrelation of causes and consequences, to avoid inconsiderate decisions, which deliberately endanger values of cultural and historic landscapes.
3. In the 20th century, reconstruction of parks experiences its recurrent renaissance. Although this process currently is of a particular importance, still it is necessary to educate the larger public on the significance of cultural and historic landscapes.
4. It is necessary to develop a specialized and allowed use of territories in protected zones of cultural and historic landscapes to avoid identity degradation of a location and competition of dominants.
5. The summer residences of Kurzeme duchy in Svēte and Vircava have lost their historic identity, in the course of recurring inadequate transformation processes, including economic activity. It is important to find harmony between values of cultural and historic landscapes and contemporary economic function within them.
6. Along with the cultural environment, the pulsating urban planning infrastructure and its development rates are strongly approaching the cultural and historical territories of the outskirts. Although protection zones and lanes around the cultural space will be preserved, it will bring a new scale and pulsation of infrastructure.
7. Cultural and historical building volumes form the smallest part of the fragmentation of cultural heritage in the landscape space. In terms of scale, the part of the manor park is larger and its fragmentation is noticeable. Therefore, it is necessary to recover both the axes of the compositional structure of the cultural space and the dominant points of the axes.

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Kopsavilkums. Pētījuma tēma ir starpdisciplināra rakstura, kurā savijas politiskie, ekonomiskie un sociālie aspekti. Kultūrmantojums ietver politisko dimensiju un tās lomu nacionālās identitātes modeļu veidošanā. Kurzemes hercogistes uzplaukums 18.gs. pirmajā pusē ir devis nopietnu pienesumu Zemgales reģiona Lielupes kreisā krasta baseina ainavtelpai. Abu vēsturisko, Svētes un Vircavas, muižu ansambļu ainavu ir izjaukusi (sadrumstalojusi) valsts ekonomiski politiskā nostādne. Tās pamatā – jaunas infrastruktūras rakstura ienešana. Politisko, ekonomisko un sociālo slodžu rezultātā kultūrvēsturisko muižu ainavtelpas, gadsimtiem ejot, ir sadrumstalotas un transformētas to sākotnējās struktūras un funkcionālais ainavtelpas pielietojums. Pētījuma mērķis ir apzināt un akcentēt muižu kultūrvēsturiskās ainavtelpas sadrumstalotības cēloņus un sekas.