

COOPERATION FOR RENEWAL OF LOCAL CULTURAL HERITAGE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES: CASE STUDY OF THE NIGHT OF LEGENDS IN LATVIA

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to describe the phenomenon of the Night of Legends in Latvia particularly focusing on the case of manors in Jelgava county. This event aims to preserve and promote local cultural heritage by active involvement of local community members and visitors (individuals, amateur groups, local businesses, schools, etc.). Thematic activities in manors and palaces are targeted to raise interest and cooperation, what in turn extends the tourist season. The event is organized by the Latvian Association of Castles, Palaces and Manors. The paper includes an analysis of the event's offer in the context of preservation of cultural heritage as well as interviews with tourism specialists from Jelgava county, particularly involved in organizing the Night of Legends.

Key words: cultural heritage, community involvement, cooperation, rural development, rural tourism

Abstrakts: Pētījuma mērķis ir raksturot Leģendu nakts pasākumu Latvijā, fokusējoties uz Jelgavas novada muižu gadījumu analīzi. Leģendu nakts mērķis ir veicināt vietējā kultūras mantojuma uzturēšanu un attīstību, aktīvi iesaistot vietējās kopienas locekļus un viesus (indivīdus, amatieru kolektīvus, vietējos uzņēmējus, skolas u.c.). Tematisko aktivitāšu uzdevums muižās un pilīs ir veicināt sabiedrības interesi un sadarbību, kas pagarina tūrisma sezonu. Pasākumu organizē Latvijas piļu un muižu asociācija. Rakstā iekļauta pasākuma aktivitāšu analīze kultūras mantojuma saglabāšanas kontekstā, kā arī intervijas ar tūrisma speciālistiem Jelgavas novadā, kuri iesaistīti Leģendu nakts pasākumu organizēšanā.

Atslēgvārdi: kultūras mantojums, kopienu iesaiste, sadarbība, lauku attīstība, lauku tūrisms

1. Introduction

Traditionally, social sciences have assumed that people in rural areas are emotionally closer and more dependent on each other for available resources and services, and they exercise stronger social control mechanisms, creating peculiar social systems as communities are oriented towards satisfaction of needs of local population (Zobena, Paula, 2014, p. 331). Consequently, each community has a set of natural, cultural, social and economic resources. Interaction patterns, however, are changing. In Latvia, inclusion of cultural heritage in tourism products is an integral part of tourism offer. On the other hand, tourism both exploits the cultural and historical heritage and also contributes to its preservation by enhancing its integration into the commodified product. In countries, where tourism is seasonal, the inclusion of cultural heritage in the tourism product is also a solution how to extend the tourism season. In order to attract more visitors, various events in Latvian rural areas are being organized, one of which is the Night of Legends involving different social agents from local communities. Since 2012, this is an annual tradition organized by the Latvian Association of Castles, Palaces and Manors and its members with the aim to promote popularity of a rich and diverse cultural heritage of Latvian castles and manors. As a result of cooperation, each manor which joins the activity makes a special offer of activities, which attracts travellers to have an opportunity to spend an interesting weekend in the autumn season. The aim of the paper is to describe the phenomenon of the Night of Legends in Latvia particularly focusing on Jelgava county case. On the basis of qualitative study, the authors reveal benefits and aspects of cooperation in local rural communities related to organization of the Night of Legends.

2. Tourism and local communities

Cultural heritage, the legacy of previous generations, is composed of monuments, buildings, and sites of historical importance, which often attract travellers having interest in history and historical attractions as well as sites of important past events (Lominé, Edmunds, 2007, pp. 90–

91). Cultural knowledge is maintained and passed on to future generations through communication. It is both material and non-material cultural heritage that attracts people and can be well used as a good basis for successful marketing, economic and social development of rural areas. Material cultural heritage includes all testimonies and artefacts that are in some way a physical embodiment of cultural values whereas non-material culture is traditional culture, folklore or popular culture created or practiced in direct connection with a "place" (Kaufmane, Paula, Ābele, 2007, p. 450). In other words, these are local traditions and knowledge (Eglīte, Kaufmane, 2019), including popular folklore, traditional events, festivals, food, music, handcrafts, daily work and routines, etc. (Lominé, Edmunds, 2007, p. 40). While "cultural" tourism considers curiosity and education as the main motivation of tourists eager to learn about other people and cultures (Lominé, Edmunds, 2007, pp. 39–40; Makkerčers, Du Krosa, 2007), "recreational" tourism usually involves leisure activities and recreation (Lominé, Edmunds, 2007, pp. 159). As it will be described later in the paper, the Night of Legends comprises the most attractive characters of both the most popular types of tourism: cultural and recreation.

A number of research focus on the role of cultural capital and heritage in local development. The heritage of nonmaterial culture is well transferable in a tourism product, thus increasing its popularity and availability when both material and intangible cultural values are integrated into one product. However, particularly nonmaterial heritage initiates more challenges for tourism industry. Therefore, tourists are offered and involved in performances of local traditions, festivals, local markets or craftsmen workshops (Kaufmane, Paula, Ābele, 2007). Mahon and Hyryläinen in their study analysed how communities can use cultural capital (arts festivals in particular) as a resource for local place-based rural development through developing their own unique stores of territorial capital (Mahon, Hyryläinen, 2019), while other studies focus on urban environments (e.g. Zhang, 2019). Looking at the theoretical aspects of events organised for tourists, five main incentives can be identified, encouraging people to attend cultural events and festivals (Allen, O`Toole, Harris, McDonnell, 2010). The first one is socialization which means spending time with a family, friends, and people with similar interests and beliefs. Being together with a family is actually emphasized as a separate stimulus. The third one is a need for excitement and emotions as people look for joyous activities giving pleasure and positive feelings. The fourth incentive is a desire to pull out of everyday routines and to seek new experiences and emotions. Finally, novel events can provide completely new experience and knowledge.

Cultural tourism contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage (Makkerčers, Du Krosa, 2007). Cultural elements are often closely related to natural environment. They change over time, both through the development of connections between different places and the takeover of elements of other cultures, through the introduction of new technologies and inventions, and by exposure to the culture of newcomers or invaders (Kaufmane, Eglite, 2017). However, not all rural areas with high levels of natural or cultural amenities are capable of implementing tourism-based development and benefit from it even though commodification of local amenities in the form of recreation and tourism can lead to local economic growth and population retention (Brown, Schafft, 2014, p. 82). In order to plan tourism development, it is important to understand what are needs, preferences and motivations of tourists. Nowadays, the issue of the quality and attractiveness of the cultural environment has become more topical in Latvia, both at the municipal level and from the perspective of local population. When it comes to sustainable development of any rural area, preservation of a natural environment is usually emphasized; however, importance of a cultural environment has also been considered more recently.

In Europe, since the late 20th century, the understanding about the countryside as a whole has changed greatly. Preservation and improvement of the rural environment is one of the key requirements of the European Union's policies for its Member States. The philosophical basis of rural development policy now is the idea of balance between exogenous and endogenous factors. In other words, neo-endogenous development schemes include both participatory approach and facilitative role of the state (Shucksmith, 2010). An important aspect to consider when integrating cultural heritage into a tourism product is that not all cultural assets have a potential for tourism. Initially, cultural heritage and sites are defined and chosen by the local community considering not necessarily their tourism potential. These may be objects of local

importance or unusual on a local scale, traditions, folk activities, applied arts, and crafts. Jeroščenkova has designed three models for the exploitation of cultural heritage in rural tourism (Jeroščenkova, 2016, p. 112):

- Scenario 1 is based on initiatives of entrepreneurs, public organizations and residents;
- Scenario 2 is implemented by means of a national and local government-funded programme;
- Scenario 3 is implemented by means of EU funds for cultural heritage.

The authors of the article in their research support the Scenario 1 focusing on cooperation between social agents in local communities.

At national level, preserving cultural heritage as an important factor influencing quality of life is stressed by national culture policy (Valsts Kultūras pieminekļu aizsardzības inspekcija, 2015) aiming to identify, protect and integrate material cultural heritage into modern life and to promote society's understanding of cultural and historical values. When incorporating cultural heritage into a tourism product, it is important to be aware of current trends (World Economic Forum, 2019; UNWTO, 2018) already increasing a major impact on European tourism demand. For example, visitors seek romance, individuality and authenticity of existing values and traditions in combination with their modern manifestations. Possibilities to experience, try, and feel become highly appreciated. In order to develop that kind of tourism product, cooperation is required between wide range of actors. Another trend is related to ageing society. It is expected that after 2020, more than 20% of the population in Europe will be older than 65 (European Union, 2019), and that will have an impact on demand of tourism routes. Some prognosis claim that elderly people will choose shorter distances and will travel out of tourist season: they tend to be immune to seasonality, but require higher standards of quality and sophistication (World Economic Forum, 2015; pp. 25–26). Also, regional tourism will become more popular, as well as a trend to spend less resources for maximally concentrated experience in a short period of time. People seek original and local values; thus, a number of domestic travellers will increase leading to cultural heritage sites as an attractive destination in local rural communities. Cultural and creative industries, in collaboration with other social agents, can offer products and services of economic, cultural and entertainment value.

In Latvia, the tourism destinations offer two main purposes of tourism: visiting tourism attractions or objects and attending cultural events. Major cities and venues dominate in offering events. Seasonality, which means an uneven tourism flows, is one of the most characteristic features of tourism, as demand for tourism services varies throughout the year. Tourism businesses face changing tourist flows and unstable employment, therefore tourism companies and destinations seek to take different measures to alleviate the problems caused by seasonality. In the context of tourism objects, each municipality in Latvia defines, which objects as well as places of interest (historical centres, cultural and historical sites, cultural monuments, places of activity of significant persons, etc.) in its administrative territory should be included in the tourism routes. Tourism events are popularized and purposefully organized events throughout the year, but most of them are offered during the warm season, when most travellers are on vacation. These include city festivals and activities related to traditions of food, music, theatre, and many more.

3. Cooperation for a common goal

Historically, both a rural landscape of Latvia and people's perception of life in the countryside have been rooted in the "farmstead principle", which means to be themselves, to define and maintain the boundaries between "we" and "them". Even though people tended to be independent in decision-making and in their activities, it did not exclude collaboration and opportunities for cooperation. Place identity and place attachment as both a territory (parish, county, city, region) and its people (community) are important aspects of capacity that influence people's decisions to retain, leave or return to the countryside, engage in community life, invest their time and other resources for local development, thus forming social ties with

neighbourhood residents (Zobena, Paula, 2014, p. 331). This is especially true nowadays, when the socio-demographic structure of rural population is still significantly changing due to migration processes, depopulation, and unbalanced regional development. Community capacity is also influenced by how strong local traditions are and how they are maintained, the way in which newcomers are welcomed, and how they represent themselves. Identifying with a place of residence is also associated with local patriotism and pride for one's community, county or region.

The attitude of local people is important in the development of tourism products, as each resident is involved in the creation of an overall impression about a particular place. In recent years, activities promoting development of civil society have contributed to increased citizens' awareness of the development of a place and communities. Level of responsibility of rural communities regarding their local issues has significantly increased in recent decades. Local communities have become more capable to pool resources and work together to raise the standard of living and overall satisfaction. Tourism activities should be carried out in accordance with the specificities and traditions of the host regions and countries respecting their legislation. However, at international level, various recommendations are being developed to coordinate cooperation. The World Tourism Organization emphasizes responsibility and defines functions for both public and private sectors (Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, 2006). While the main functions of the public sector, including municipalities, are related to normative regulations and defining long-term aims of tourism development, the private sector should concentrate on services and products which are ethical, sustainable, and responsible towards local communities and cultural heritage.

Tourism theories reveal that in order to develop a tourism product or new forms of tourism, partnerships are formed through the purposeful cooperation of tourism providers with partners directly and indirectly involved in this industry thus involving also new resources (Kaufmane, 2011). Collaboration is often based on rational considerations, which is explained by theories such as social exchange theory and rational choice theory (Roberts, 2006). According to social exchange theory, collaboration is interaction among organizations that achieve specific goals in their field by solving various problems. Resource dependence theory considers cooperation as a reaction to uncertainties coming from constantly changing external environment. Therefore, cooperation is a valuable resource. Transaction cost theory views collaboration as a chosen transaction structure that involves certain costs; organizations serving other entities have lower costs (Fyall, Garrod, 2005). A culture of collaboration marks a new type of relationship in the field of management and organizational culture, characterized by a shift from centralization to decentralization; instead of hierarchy and bureaucracy, trust between partners is much more important. Collaboration, like any relationship, is not a formal structure, but must be viewed as a process that is formed and developed dynamically. It has a dynamic that can be influenced by various internal and external factors (Glendinning, Powell, Rummery, 2002). There are several development stages in cooperation process; each of it has specific tasks and challenges. The first is establishment stage, where potential cooperation partners acknowledge a need for joint action and define a problem. The next stage is full of frustration and may involve disputes and disappointments. The third stage is a performance phase where the aim of cooperation is clear, cooperation models are established, and team spirit is present. Cooperation network members have their roles and responsibilities, there is a shared understanding about the result of cooperation. The final stage is full of trust and mutual respect, partners are flexible and complement each other. Trust as a form of social capital is both a precondition and result of successful cooperation when a coordinated action of multiple social agents is needed instead of individual efforts in order to reach the community aims. Trust fulfils important roles in the communities: encourages sociability and participation in common activities, enriches interpersonal network relationships, thus expanding the field of interactions. Putnam and Goss distinguish between inward-looking and outward-looking social capital (Putnam, Goss, 2002) because these types determine priorities in the direction of collaboration (internal cooperation or collaboration with external agents). Studies show that the attitudes and values of the participants, rather than their professional knowledge and skills or social status, are a very important precondition for good cooperation. In social science, the term social networking is used to describe contacts and relationships between people (Eglīte, Kaufmane, 2018), which is

particularly important when developing tourism offer in rural community. Networks emphasize importance of relationships, contacts, and communication. Also, in cooperation between organizations, human dimension plays a very important role and should be seen as one of the levels of cooperation. However, cooperation in rural community cannot be taken for granted. Different interests may prevail, and local social agents may have contradictory perspectives.

4. Research methodology

Qualitative approach and case study methodology (Yin, 2003) in particular was chosen for the research to characterize aspects of cooperation in local rural communities within a context of the Night of Legends. The advantage of the case study is that a phenomenon can be investigated deeply as a united and integrated entity by using several data collection methods. In other words, as Creswell states, through the case study “the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases)” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Explanatory case study aiming to explain patterns related to phenomenon (Creswell, 2007, p. 107), in this research to study cooperation, was used for this purpose.

Jelgava county is one of the most active in Zemgale region within a context of the Night of Legends, therefore, seven manors from this municipality, which have participated in the event in 2019 were selected for the study as seven cases. Various data sources and research methods such as content analysis, semi-structured interviews, and observations were used. For qualitative content analysis, official information from the tourism information centres and other sources was used in order to characterise the offer and activities in all selected manors. Five semi-structured interviews with tourism specialists from Jelgava county manors who organized the event were conducted in January, 2020. Representatives from all seven manors were invited for interviews; however, only five responded. Therefore, information about the activities and cooperation aspects of other two manors within a context of the Night of Legends was partially gained via content analysis of publicly available information. The interview data were coded and analysed in order to identify cooperation patterns as well as benefits of cooperation for local community. The paper focuses on cooperation from the perspective of organizers; therefore, opinions of visitors were not studied.

The authors of the paper are active visitors of the event every year, therefore personal observations and photos are included in the paper as additional material. Other photos were provided by the representatives of Jelgava county.

5. Research results

5.1 The Night of Legends

The Latvian Association of Castles, Palaces and Manors (LACPM) was established in 2000 currently uniting 103 members, both organizations and individuals, whose work, property or interests are related to the preservation of cultural heritage, management of castles and manors in Latvia (Latvijas piļu un muižu asociācija). The association seeks to promote preservation of Latvian cultural heritage, research, restoration, maintenance, adaptation, and development of the unique cultural heritage values of palaces and manors. It also contributes to raising both public awareness and its participation in the protection of cultural heritage. Therefore, activities towards development of tourism and respective infrastructure as well as involvement of creative industries are being implemented. One of the LACPM’s tasks is to raise public interest in historical buildings and to ensure that castles and manors are opened to the public. Thus, the first Night of Legends in Latvia was organized in 2012 by LACPM in all four cultural-historical regions of the country: Kurzeme, Latgale, Vidzeme, and Zemgale. In most cases, activities for the public are free of charge; however, some concerts may be for a fee. Normally, with a few exceptions, manors and palaces are open from 6pm until midnight.

Visitors are offered to participate and enjoy diverse in-door and out-door activities such as musical, dance and theatrical performances, exhibitions, fire shows, historical or ghostly appearances, lectures on local history, fashion and heraldry, creative workshops for adults and

children, tasting local cuisine, meeting local food producers and craftsmen. Local stories and legends in combination with historical facts about the castles and manors are offered as an opportunity to explore community's cultural heritage in diverse and unusual ways. Organizers welcome people dressed up like barons and baronesses, mistresses or castle servants. To attract visitors, popular musicians, actors and storytellers are invited. Concerts of classical music, jazz and popular tunes performed by legendary soloists, chamber orchestras and a wide variety of music groups, including from neighbouring countries, are organized. Candles in courtyards and parks, bonfires and neon lights normally are used to create a seductive and magical atmosphere inviting visitors to walk through the palaces and manors from their deep cellars to tall towers, and across their yards and parks. Those who are eager to experience some challenges can enjoy activities such as medieval martial arts, quest adventures or other games. Some manors invite local farmers and food producers to offer their products. In addition to recreational activities, visitors are offered exploratory and theatrical tours as well as lectures and exhibitions on the greatness of castles and estates in the Middle Ages, former owners and architects. Exhibitions introduce visitors also with informative materials and artefacts from the war and soviet period emphasizing its destructive impact on historical buildings, interior paintings and local communities.

In 2019, events within a framework of the Night of Legends took place throughout the country. Activities were offered by 38 members of LACPM representing all regions (Figure 1).

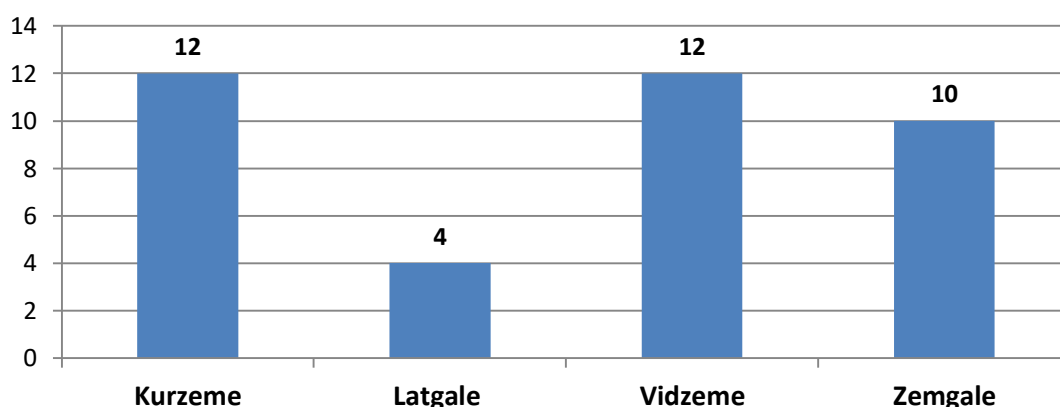


Fig 1. Number of castles, palaces, and manors participating in the Night of Legends, 2019.

Content analysis of the Night of Legends offer allows to conclude that visitors are given opportunity to explore local history and traditions through diverse activities from which most are interactive. From the perspective of tourism industry, visitors are provided with entertaining and educational activities at the very end of a tourism season. Domestic visitors and especially members of local communities have an opportunity to discover local values in their neighbourhood. The Night of Legends involves the most competitive cultural resources:

- architecture (wooden architecture, Art Nouveau, castles and manors, historical sites);
- intangible cultural heritage (craftsmen skills, rituals, traditional medicine);
- gardens and parks, including thematic parks;
- amateur groups (theatre, dance, music);
- filming locations;
- local cultural space and local lifestyle, traditions;
- local cuisine.

5.2 Manors in Jelgava county

One of the most active participants in the Night of Legends is Jelgava county, which is located in Zemgale region – a central part of the country (Figure 2).



Fig 2. Location of Jelgava county.

In 2019, seven manors from Jelgava surrounding were opened for visitors at the Night of Legends (Table 1). All of them are located in rural areas and have significant role in local communities; most of them are currently local schools.

Tab 1. Description of the manors in Jelgava county. Source: Jelgava county

Manor	Historical facts
Eleja Manor Park and Tea house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed in the beginning of the 19th century in the style of the Classicism after the order of Duke Christoph Johann Friedrich von Medem • Destroyed during the First World War in 1915 • The graveyard of barons and a bridge (built in 1910) leading to it were preserved • The manor park is fenced off from the road by the stone fence with arcades • The Tea House, reconstructed in 2015, is used for wedding ceremonies, tourist groups are offered tea
Lielplatone Manor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built during the time period of 1845–1860 • In the 19th century, the manor was the property of the dynasty of Baron von Hahn • Surrounded by 20 ha of park with ancient avenues including a house for servants, a laundry house, a chapel, a pond, the cemetery of the Hahn dynasty • In 2018, an authentic laundry house of the 18th/19th century was renovated, now offering the learning programme of ancient laundry washing traditions • Currently, there is a school in the manor
Vilce Manor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former hunting residence of Baron Hahn, built in the second half of the 18th century and rebuilt in the 19th century • The entrance door is decorated with the Medem-Kaizlinger alliance's coat of arms, which has been preserved well and is a valuable example of the 18th century decorative sculpture in Latvia • Since 1921, there is Vilce Primary School in the manor
Lielvircava Manor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed by Baron Dionysius von Kloppmann in the period of 1803–1808; at the same time the granary was built • In 1822, the manor was purchased by Dietrich von Grothuss • Members of von Hahn family owned the manor until the Agrarian Reform in

Manor	Historical facts
	<p>1920</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was rebuilt with features of the classicist style in the middle of the 19th century • After nationalization in 1920, the manor was divided into farms and the manor house became a primary school • Currently, there is an exhibition hall and exposition with the history of the manor and the fashion of the 19th century
Vircava Manor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built during 17th–19th century as a symmetrical ensemble of Baroque style • Favoured country residence for the last Duke of Courland, Peter von Biron • Devastated in 1919 with some buildings of the manor complex still existing • The chevalier's house is currently a school, the barn-manège is People's House • Some outbuildings: the stone kitchen building, the manor manager's house and the granary. • Picturesque park was formed in the 19th century with a beautiful water parterre • The site is famous for the oak tree planted in 1937 by the President, Kārlis Ulmanis.
Zaļenieki (Green) Manor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duke's hunting residence, a unique architectural example of the Duchy of Courland. • Historically significant interior elements dated back to the middle of the 18th century and the 19th century • Despite the loss and reconstruction in the middle of the 20th century, the building still contains a huge amount of significant original architectural elements, which is rarity in other Latvian manors • Unique 18th century wall paintings have been revealed under the layers of paint in the central hall • The 19th century interior examples are the ceiling paintings, which depict illusory frames with Empire and Renaissance motifs, stair baluster handrails and a marble fireplace built in late rococo style
Staļģene Manor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed in the 16th century as the domain of the Duke of Courland and Semigallia. • The current manor complex was constructed in the end of the 18th century, with the manor house being built in 1797 in the classicism style according to the plan by architect Severin Jensen • From the 1866, the manor belonged to the family of Baron von Repenak • In 1921, the building was adapted to the Staļģene Primary School • The manor building, the servant's house and park have been preserved • Staļģene High School is currently in the manor house, while Jaunsvirlauka Parish Local History Museum is in the cellar of the manor • The servant's building has been rebuilt and houses Jaunsvirlauka Parish Culture Centre <i>Līdumi</i> and the tourist information point

5.3 Tourism offer in Jelgava county during the Night of Legends

Information about the activities, which were offered by manors in Jelgava county during the Night of Legends in 2018 and 2019, is presented in the Table 2.

Tab 2. Activities of the Night of Legends in Jelgava county (2018–2019). Sources: *Leģendu nakts Jelgavas novadā, 2019; Leģendu nakts Jelgavas novada muižās, 2018.*

Manor	Activities	
	2018	2019
Eleja Manor Park and Tea house	Tea drinking ceremony Creative tea workshop Renaissance music concert Performance of the Shadow theatre “Star Wells”	Historically exploratory excursion Creative workshop and candle making Concert of wedding music Latvian Sand animation performance “Fairy tales of flowers”
Lielplatone Manor	Circus show Performance of gypsy dance group “Rademilla” Comedian’s performance Activities in the manor: face painting, fortune telling, photography Demonstration of ancient laundry Souvenirs and snacks from local producers	History and modern interpretations of historical martial arts Presentation on ancient martial arts and demonstration Quest room Performance of historical dance group “Senvedere” Demonstration of ancient laundry traditions Fire show
Lielvircava Manor	Stories about fashion in the 19th and 20th century Creative workshops Classical music concert	Lecture on fashion and demonstration of crinoline dresses Creative workshop: button making Story about the equestrian fashion in the 19th and 20th century Tasting
Stalģene Manor	Traditions of family being together in Autumn evenings [<i>vakarģšana</i>] together with folklore group „Liepģre” Creative workshops of different handcrafts	Traditional activities related to Latvian pagan culture: family being together in Autumn evening [<i>vakarģšana</i>], singing with a folklore group, creative workshops Feast for the spirits [<i>veģu mieloģana</i>] in the manor’s park
Vilce Manor	Financial board game Exhibition of paintings “Inner Light” Live cello music	Lecture on historical coats of arms and heraldry in Vilce Presentation of forthcoming book on family coats of arms in contemporary Latvia Creative workshop for children “Draw your own family coat of arm!”
Zaģenieki (Green) Manor	Excursion in the manor Exhibition of national costumes Performance of the amateur dance group “Jundari” Lute [<i>kokle</i>] and folk music Traditional Latvian cuisine at the campfire in the manor’s park	Lecture “The war in photos” Demonstration of the Latvian National Guard equipment Exhibition of old radio and TV sets Demonstration of a field kitchen in the park
Vircava Manor	Did not participate	Musical performance Duke’s menu Making sea knots and aristocratic decor

Analysis of the offer in Jelgava county manors reveals that preservation of cultural heritage in rural areas includes the use of heritage of the past as well as knowledge of contemporary culture and lifestyles of the region. Events of the Night of Legends increase a cultural value of the historical heritage as more and more people learn about it and enrich their own personalities. Each epoch represents its own values and colours, but the Night of Legends demonstrates that cultural creativity is only a potential of human society. Different groups, communities and individuals develop their own visions simultaneously integrating the authenticity and different perceptions of cultural environment. The history is an important component of the rural cultural landscape, still, attractiveness of events is crucial from the perspective of a tourism offer. Therefore, historical facts, stories and artefacts are linked to contemporary interpretations and put into modern contexts. Contemporary technologies are used to attract visitors of all generations, for example, to ensure thematic projections on the buildings (Figure 3) or to elaborate interactive games.



Fig 3. Projection of the coat of arms on the frontage of Vilce manor, 2019. Foto: Liga Paula

Old traditions, which people do not follow in their everyday life anymore, are often demonstrated in the out-door museums or specially designed sites. In 2018, the authentic laundry house offering learning programme of ancient laundry traditions (18th and 19th century) was renovated in Lielplatone manor (Figure 4).



Fig 4. The authentic laundry house in Lielplatone manor. Foto: Edgars Pažerauskis

Now it attracts visitors from the whole country. Children especially enjoy trying old washing and ironing tools and technologies (Figure 5 and Figure 6).



Fig 5,6. Exposition in the authentic laundry house of Lielplatone manor, 2019. Foto: Līga Paula

Analysis of the Night of Legends in Jelgava county allows to conclude that the importance of preserving rural cultural environment has several valuable aspects. Historical aspect is related to landscapes, historical and architectural monuments, old traditions, occupations, symbols and rituals. Scientific and cognitive value of the events is evident through presentation of factual information and expert lectures even though visitors seek recreational activities more than serious discussions. Social value of the Night of Legends is expressed through collective and individual participation whereas aesthetic value, of course, is subjective; however, both manor staff and visitors pay great attention to the creation of respective atmosphere. An interesting example is Eleja Manor Park and the Tea house (Figure 7 and Figure 8).



Fig 7, 8. The Tea house in Eleja Manor Park. Foto: Arta Joma

Visitors tend to be in several manors to get new knowledge, experience and entertainment. Activities providing that kind of experience can be referred to the cultural tourism involving significant cognitive component. Activities with an emphasis on leisure are related to recreation. However, some activities comprise elements of both types (Table 3).

Tab. 3. Recreation and cultural activities in the manors, 2019.

Manor	Activities	Rec	Cult	Both
Eleja Manor Park and Tea house	Historically exploratory excursion		X	
	Creative workshop and candle making			X
	Concert of wedding music	X		
	Latvian Sand animation performance "Fairy tales of flowers"	X		
Lielplatone Manor	History and modern interpretations of historical martial arts			X
	Presentation on ancient martial arts and demonstration			X
	Quest room	X		
	Performance of historical dance group "Senvedere"	X		
	Demonstration of ancient laundry traditions			X
	Fire show	X		
Lielvircava Manor	Lecture on fashion and demonstration of crinoline dresses		X	
	Creative workshop: button making	X		
	Story about the equestrian fashion (19th and 20th century)		X	
Stalģene Manor	Tasting	X		
	Traditional activities related to Latvian pagan culture: family being together in Autumn evening [<i>vakarēšana</i>], singing with a folklore group, creative workshops			X
Vilce Manor	Feast for the spirits [<i>veļu mielošana</i>] in the manor's park			X
	Lecture on historical coats of arms and heraldry in Vilce		X	
	Presentation of forthcoming book on family coats of arms in contemporary Latvia		X	
Zaļenieki Manor	Creative workshop "Draw your own family coat of arm!"	X		
	Lecture "The war in photos"		X	
	Demonstration of a field kitchen in the park			X
	Exhibition of old radio and TV sets		X	
Vircava Manor	Demonstration of the Latvian National Guard equipment		X	
	Musical performance	X		
	Duke's menu			X
	Making sea knots and aristocratic decor			X

There is always demand for qualitative entertainment programs, creative workshops. This is what organizers tend to ensure. Respondents pointed out some future challenges. The most important issue they need to think about is the capacity of the space and the environment, as the number of visitors is increasing and interest in the event is not declining.

5.4 Cooperation structure

Analysis of cooperation structure was carried out within a framework of cooperation stages discussed previously in the paper. Regarding the first, cooperation development stage, the respondents pointed out municipal support and necessity of being a member of the Latvian Association of Castles, Palaces and Manors. First of all, the manors need to have a clear vision on what they are ready to offer for tourists. Then in close cooperation with a local municipality, they have become members of LACPM. As it was acknowledged by the representative of Eleja manor, "We joined LACPM to be fully recognized members of tourism business. Afterwards, the cooperation for the Night of Legends began." Although precise data on both visitors and organizers from previous years are not available, the respondents emphasized that businesses and amateur groups solely from the closest neighbourhood were supporting activities initially. "At the very beginning, this event was organized only within boundaries of our neighbourhood [pagasts]. Only school staff and pupils were involved. Later, since 2015, we have involved also visiting artists" (Vilce manor). Even though the respondents did not emphasize the role of local municipality, content analysis of the information in municipal homepage leads to the conclusion that municipality is a crucial cooperation partner. It provides financial support in projects aiming to maintain cultural heritage and infrastructure (e.g., renovated Eleja Tea House, Figure 8), also each manor employs one permanent staff member who is funded by the municipality.

Frustration period is the second stage of cooperation when many uncertainties are still present. The interviews revealed that frustration period for organizers of the Night of Legends has been rather theoretical. The respondents remembered that no significant difficulties were experienced as the events always were exciting, raised interest and support from all parties involved throughout the country. As the respondent from Lielplatone manor stated, *“There is no confusion. Before every activity, we try to understand, what visitors like and how can we attract people”* (Lielplatone manor). Creating and balancing innovative ideas with available budget is highlighted as two of the main challenges for event organizers: *“[...] we brain-stormed new ideas according to assigned and available budget; feedback from people was important”* (Vilce manor). At this stage, benefits of cooperation are being recognized. In case of the Night of Legends this, first of all, is increased popularity of an object, site or place. As the event becomes more widespread and popular, it attracts greater number of visitors and manors face capacity challenge. *“[...] that was an issue: how many visitors we will have, what the concept of the evening should be, will there be enough space, what about the weather conditions... That was tight time, but now we have found a rhythm.”* (Eleja manor)

During performance stage, the aim of cooperation is absolutely clear which often is preservation of cultural heritage in an attractive way. During this period, cooperation models are established and stabilized. Selection of cooperation partners depends on the topic and as the respondent stated, *“In order to be successful, activities require collaborative work”* (Stalģene manor). If initially the main cooperation partners were LACPM, municipalities and local amateur groups, now variety of participants has expanded. *„Every year we have regular participants, who are staff members, actors, artists. But we also invite representatives of different occupations, lecturers, dancers, event managers.”* (Lielplatone manor) In this context, when the offer is developed, cooperation partners are involved to implement the idea. Famous artists, local dance groups and musicians as well as local producers providing home-made delicacies are invited to attract visitors. According to a particular theme which is chosen by the manor, key speakers, historians and scientists, are invited to give a lecture on a specific topic, for example, on heraldry and coats of arms (Vilce manor), fashion (Lielvircava manor), or life in the soviet period and experience of the war period (Zaļenieki manor). Enthusiasts of medieval martial arts demonstrated old fighting traditions (Lielplatone manor).

However, there is a competition between manors as each of them tries to get the greatest share of potential visitors. As the respondent from Vilce manor acknowledged, *“A few more manors are nearby which might have more interesting themes and activities. And people go there. This event is also some sort of competition between manors.”* (Vilce manor) Therefore, planning and coordination normally is started several months before the Night of Legends, thus avoiding overlapping activities. *“At first, the event is being coordinated by one person who assembles representatives from all manors. We brainstorm, decide upon a topic, activities and ideas... Later on, each participant is assigned a specific role and tasks.”* (Lielplatone manor) The partners develop a “team spirit” as well as common responsibility towards results. Division of roles is presented in the Figure 9. At national level, LACPM organizes marketing activities, its member organizations manage the event at place and allocate funding.

However, role division depends on availability of human resource in manors. Sometimes only one person takes all responsibility. In most of the manors, there are schools allocated, therefore, school staff is asked to help. *“It is me who organizes everything, starting from the idea to its implementation. It is difficult, as I have no subordinates whom to delegate some tasks. I try to involve all available school staff, also ask other local people for a help”* (Vilce manor). Local community members do volunteering: *“Each year we receive more and more applications from local people willing to participate in the event. Last year, a local school girl expressed her wish to decorate the attic of the manor, and we did it. We also gather ideas from visitors, which we try to implement when possible”* (Lielplatone manor).

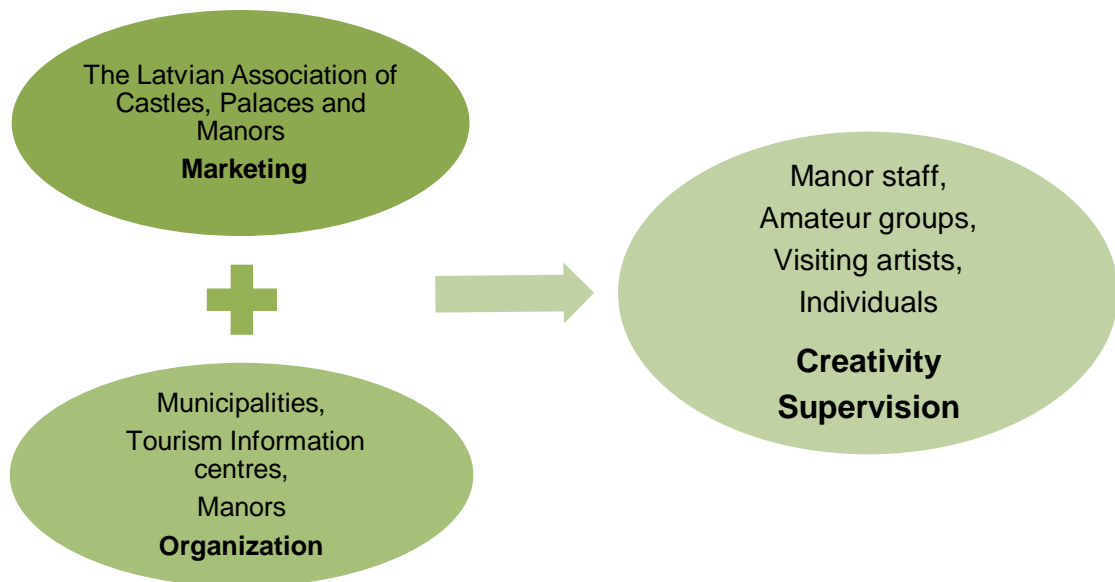


Fig 9. The main functions in organization of the Night of Legends.

To conclude, partners of cooperation network in Jelgava county have reached a certain level of mutual trust and respect, flexibility and alignment with a clear understanding of key partners and their roles. According to the social exchange theory, cooperation indeed is often based on rational considerations. Both internal and external cooperation agents were identified or, in other words, collaboration networks of inward-looking and outward-looking social capital, as Putnam and Goss describe it (Putnam, Goss, 2002), are present. Inward-looking networks are important to strengthen local ties and community self-awareness whereas outward-looking social capital is needed to develop more attractive tourism product, to get funding and to involve external expertise. Themes of the events determine priorities in direction of collaboration. Following are the groups of key cooperation partners:

- associations and municipalities;
- local authorities in whose territories the manors are located;
- local community groups, e.g. amateur groups;
- local businesses;
- invited artists and/or lecturers (according to the topic);
- Individuals and volunteers.

The aim of the cooperation is reached as the number of visitors and their interest increases. As one of the respondents stated, „*Themes for the Night of Legends evenings have become more serious in recent years. They are more cognitive, and not everybody is interested in that. Visitors mostly come from other Latvian counties and towns. They come here because of the particular topic, they want to learn something, to find out something, and to get knowledge on topics which are not easily available elsewhere*” (Vilce manor).

Even though accurate statistics is not available, estimates indicate that total number of visitors reaches several thousands; however, precise number is not available as there is no entrance fee and no formal registration is made. The interview results reveal that the main benefits of the Night of Legends are as follows:

- Places and tourism objects become more recognizable: “*Popularity for this place has grown greatly, people are interested to participate in these activities. For us, this is an excellent opportunity to develop interesting and exciting event once a year. Of course, for us as tourism object managers this is a challenge to show what we can do and to do the best*” (Eleja manor);
- Satisfied visitors;

- Opportunities for local communities: “*Organizers of major events, activities, seminars and other educational events*” (*Lielvircava manor*);
- Attraction of popular artists and celebrities to small scale tourism objects.

6. Conclusions

Development of cultural factors in the country is a means of increasing opportunities to attract visitors. Cultural and historical heritage does not comprise solely physical and material objects. It is also a social world of people, or in other words intangible values, in which dialogue is developed with cultural monuments of the past. Language of signs and symbols of a given locality tells stories of ancestry, their world vision, beliefs, and traditions. There are different dialogues through which people in local communities learn and maintain heritage of previous generations. The Night of Legends as a product of cultural tourism, which is a natural synthesis of the culture and tourism industry, is one of them. Culture in general has an international character, e.g., music and dance are understood by everybody, but the surprising and interesting elements are national peculiarities and local identity. Recreational aspect of the event is closely linked with the cognitive and cultural ones in most of the activities offered by the manors as visitors are not just passive viewers. Activities are made as interactive and entertaining as possible. Natural resources such as manor parks and landscape are used for out-door activities to emphasize local cultural identity and history.

The events of the Night of Legends contribute to the activity of travellers, thereby extending the tourism season in Latvia. In recent years, due to the marketing, the Night of Legends attracts not only domestic but also foreign travellers. Even though organizers tend to register participants, the problem is a lack of reliable statistics because most of the activities are for free and the same travellers visit multiple sites.

The events of the Night of Legends have become a tradition in surroundings of Jelgava. It is a celebration based on a brilliant and original scenario, which have a special task to create an atmosphere on the basis of qualitative performances, local traditions, and rural environment. As a result of the cooperation with local social agents, the organisers of the event have an idea of what tourists are, why they go to the event, what their motivations and needs are.

Over the years, a firm pattern of cooperation has been established to the activities of the Night of Legends, involving different community agents at national and local level such as associations, municipalities, local entrepreneurs, schools, amateur groups, performers, libraries, media, etc. Each partner has a defined function. The cooperation partners have clear objectives to create awareness of cultural and historical sites and to integrate the historical and contemporary mix of rural cultural elements in an attractive way that is binding on travellers from different generations. The pattern of cooperation between the communities in the organisation of the events is not a formal structure; it is rather a process that forms and develops.

On the basis of the unique landscape and cultural environment of Latvia's regions (significant cultural-historical and natural objects), there is a room for cooperation agents to develop more closer synergy between local cultural heritage and tourism industry: cooperation partners in tourism can solve problems, for example, caused by travel restrictions during a pandemic. As a result, local rural communities and their sites become interesting and attractive destinations for domestic travelers.

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