

SENTIMENTALITY VERSUS TRANSFORMATION OF THE HISTORICAL TRADITIONAL RURAL LANDSCAPE (A CASE STUDY: THE LANDSCAPE OF DUTCH LAW SETTLEMENT IN POLAND)

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ABSTRACT: The study concentrated on social attitudes towards landscape heritage and the how the place of living was perceived in the context of the transformation of the rural landscape that is currently taking place. The following question was formulated: Are individuals' approaches to landscape and their attachment to their place of living essential in terms of landscaping and future landscape changes? The research revealed that individual perceptions of rurality and the historical traditional rural landscape (HTRL) varied in different groups of interviewees. Nevertheless, observing the loss of the landscape's beauty was a traumatic experience, and destructive changes to the landscape were difficult to accept for most of individuals who had spent their lives in the countryside and who felt a strong sense of patrimony. Conversely, the HTRL presented a less important value to other respondents, thus the destruction they observed of the local heritage induced less painful feelings in them. Overall, the results suggest that it is one's personal interest that will ultimately decide about his/her preservation of the HTRL in the nearest future.

KEY WORDS: historical traditional rural landscape HTRL, Dutch law settlement, place identity, Poland

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Introduction

The rural landscape is the result of human nature interactions and even takes on the form of competition between land users' expectations and environmental restrictions which, throughout in a long history, have resulted in a wide variety of landscapes (Fischer-Kowalski, Weisz 2016, Krausmann et al. 2016). Currently, the primary role of rural areas, i.e. farming production, is shifting towards versatility of the countryside. Thus, rural areas are not only perceived as land that is intended for agro-production but also as

a space that offers a wide variety of non-farming options (OECD 2001, Renting et al. 2009). This transformation, on which a wide variety of socio-economic circumstances is based, very often takes place in an uncontrolled manner (Vos, Meekes 1999, Lieskovský et al. 2015), and this can be a threat to the survival of the traditional rural landscape.

In many cases, contemporary changes in the countryside lead to a disharmony of the landscape. This is particularly dangerous when it results in degradation of the historical traditional rural landscape (HTRL), of the original

settlement arrangement and both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. As Walker and Ryan (2008) emphasised, rural residents feel a sense of loss when drastic changes take place in rural landscapes, thus an urgent need has recently been raised to protect the traditional rural landscape. However, the idea of protecting the HTRL is not necessarily to do so through the creation of open-air museums but rather by adapting the existing rural potential to the present needs and expectations of rural dwellers (Plit, Myga-Piątek 2016). In this case, the basis for careful management of rural areas is to gather knowledge on the connections that exist between the local residents and the space they live and work in (i.e. villages, farmland and of course knowledge of the characteristics and history of these landscapes).

For this paper, the following question was formulated: *Are individuals' approaches to the landscape and their attachment to their place of living important in terms of landscaping and future landscape changes?* Bearing in mind the above research question, this study focused on two main aspects, i.e. on the issue of social attitudes to the HTRL and on how the place of living was in the context of landscape transformation. The research was conducted in the landscape of Dutch law settlement in the environs of Nowy Tomyśl in a region that stands out in terms of its uniqueness among historical traditional Polish rural landscapes. Although the research refers to an example of the HTRL in Poland, the tendency and course of changes that can be observed in this case are similar to those taking place in other parts of European countries where the traditional landscape pattern is still preserved, but is being exposed to destruction.

State of the art and conceptual background

The Historical Traditional Rural Landscape (HTRL)

Since the retreat of the glacial era traditional landscapes in Europe have been distinguished from other human-shaped landscapes throughout the world by a long history of land-use that facilitated the co-evolution of species, ecosystems and man (Hampicke 2006, Erb et al. 2016, Krausmann et al. 2016, Plieninger et al. 2016).

Taking into account the intensity of anthropopressure, several phases of landscape changes in the European context can be distinguished:

1. natural/prehistoric landscape (from Palaeolithic till ancient Greek times),
2. antique landscape (from ancient Greek times till early Mediaeval times),
3. mediaeval landscape (from early Mediaeval times till Renaissance),
4. traditional agricultural landscape (from Renaissance till 19th century, sometimes till today),
5. industrial landscapes (mostly from mid-18th till mid-20th century, in many places till today) (Vos, Meekes 1999).

Diverse driving forces and circumstances (Vos, Meekes 1999, Markuszewska 2013) operated in each period that significantly transformed the landscape, however, rapid landscape transformation can currently be observed (initiated after the WWII) that is a threat to or might even destroy the valuable cultural heritage of historical landscapes (Meeus et al. 1990, van Eetvelde, Antrop 2004). This is particularly dangerous when it results in a degradation of the pattern of the old traditional landscape and the original settlement arrangement and of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. As Walker and Ryan (2008) emphasised, rural residents feel a sense of loss when they observe the drastic changes that take place in rural landscapes. Faced with the above, a growing interest in protection of traditional rural landscapes can be traced on local, national and even international levels. In this case, the basis for reasonable management of rural areas is to gather knowledge on the connections that exist between the local residents (the local actors) and the space they live and work in (the villages and farmland).

The historical traditional rural landscape (HTRL) is distinguished by outstanding cultural and natural values in which the history of a certain region is inscribed (Plieninger et al. 2006). In comparison, the modern rural landscape is characterised by, among other aspects, a uniform space and by a lack of identity and personality, as was noted by Antrop (1997). Fry (2000) added that it is specific land use that expresses the character of the traditional landscape and influences the identity of the local landscape. The historic landscape is distinguished by traditional land use that

is defined as a group of outdated farming practices and techniques which no longer constitute a part of modern agriculture (Bignal et al. 1995). The specific but diverse land uses have created a diverse range of traditional rural landscapes that vary regionally. However, currently in European countries, in which intensive agriculture is dominant, the traditional landscape is being wiped away entirely in order to create a completely new modern agriculture (Antrop 1997). Nonetheless, the remnants of traditional land-use systems have persisted in remote, sparsely populated areas and in the countryside, where natural constraints have prevented the modernisation of agriculture (Plieninger et al. 2006).

One of the characteristics of a traditionally shaped rural landscape is its multifunctional management, which is usually based on mixed agriculture systems and integrating field cultivation with forest grazing, tree pastures and rough grazing lands (Vos, Meekes 1999). Additionally, this integrated farming system was regionally varied as a consequence of adjusting to different natural conditions and cultural traditions. With regard to product destination, these farms were mostly self-sufficient and oriented towards the market only in a small range. Because of the technology that was used, the HTRL creates heterogenic polycultures and small-scale fields that are spatially fuzzed and mixed with non-cultivated landscape elements (Plieninger et al. 2006, Vos 2000).

As Marcucci (2000) pointed out, the HTRL is valuable mostly due to its cultural values, i.e. the history of the place, its tradition and natural values. Thus, when it comes to protecting the HTRL, both cultural heritage and natural beauty should be taken into account. It is worth noting that the landscape's history provides important information for management of that cultural landscape and for reasonable land use planning (Berger 1987, Hersperger 1994, Cronon 2000, Tress et al. 2001). Even so, Antrop (2005) argued that the general perception of what kinds of landscape should be protected has changed over time. Also, the traditional cultural landscape has an influence on the landscape's features and indirectly determines their sustainable use (Štefunková, Dobrovodská 2009).

The HTRL is also distinguished by its uniqueness. In their search for the definition of a unique

and outstanding landscape, Dika et al. (2011) stated that an outstanding landscape is an area of high scenic value which is a reflection of a distinct structure and usually represents a unique agrarian and settlement land-use pattern together with the natural elements. In addition, this kind of landscape represents the highest achievement of cultural values and is of a significant importance in shaping the social identity.

Several examples of a traditional agricultural landscape can be mentioned here: the *bocage* landscape, also known as *hedgerows*, *enclosed fields*, *Heckenlandschaft*, *campi chiusi* or *campos cerrados* is widespread in Western Europe, i.e. from north-western Spain to Scandinavia, as well as in parts of Alpine and Eastern Europe. The *open-field* landscape occupies a vast area of both Western and Eastern Europe from central France to eastern Poland. Only relics of *coltura promiscua* landscapes exist in Tuscany, Umbria and Marche. *Huertas*, known as intensive Mediterranean irrigated market farming, occur along the eastern coast of Spain, in the southern Rhone Valley in France, in southern Italy and in Greece. The *montado* (*dehesa*) landscape straddles the Portuguese-Spanish border in the Extremadura, Andalucia and Alentejo regions. The *Mediterranean open-field* landscape, also known as *alberata padana* or *open grain fields*, occupies most of the Iberian peninsula, southern France, northern and southern Italy, including Sicily, and most of the Balkans and Greece, and the Spanish Meseta. *Marschhufen* (marsh hides) appear along the German and Dutch North Sea coast. *Waldhufen* (forest hides) are found along the German-Czech border in the Ore Mountains, in the Bohemian/Bavarian Forest, in south-eastern Poland, and as an isolated pocket in the Odenwald (Meeus 1995, Williamson 2005, Zimmermann 2006, Renes 2015, van der Zanden 2016).

The concept of place identity

The concept of place identity is, according to Zimmerbauer (2011), described as a group of distinct features and qualities of a certain place that differentiate one region from another. It is not only the territorial uniqueness that creates place identity but also the symbolic relationships between people and landscapes as expressed through spiritual ties (Low 1992, Paasi 2003, Zimmerbauer, Paasi 2013).

In the literature, the term *place identity* is also defined as a sense of belonging or as a sense of place (de San Eugenio-Vela, Barniol-Carcasona, 2015). Individual or common memories of local residents build a spiritual link that attaches them to the place of living. This sense of place contributes to the cultural identity of the local landscape, as it is based on both experience and memory (Scannell, Gifford 2010). Wheeler (2014) names memory as the informal aspect of history that persists in a rural landscape and is linked with the everyday lives of the rural dwellers. Wheeler also adds that getting to know a rural space better is helpful in understanding the meaning of the past in creating place identity and allows to build links to people's memories of the past. For this reason the social identity of local landscape undoubtedly plays a vital role in maintaining the local cultural heritage.

Farmers from Eastern and Central European countries are distinguished by a more sensitive commitment to land which results from these countries' historical backgrounds, such as peasant enfranchisement, loss of independence and restrictions of private ownership during the socialist period (Markuszevska 2017a). This attachment to the land makes these residents more sensitive to and engaged in the family heritage, thus not only because it is an economically sanctioned source of income. Strong bonds are created between farmers and their farms, as these are their fundamental place of everyday work. This personal involvement in the work-place, which is very often associated with strong dependence on family relations, develops a sense of belonging, and this linkage is strengthened over time as farmers spend their entire lives in one particular place, cherishing the patrimony that exist there. In other words, place attachment builds psychological connections between people and their place of living (Riley 1992, Walker, Ryan, 2008). Here, subjective individual experience has a tremendous impact on these people's personal attitudes towards the rural environment and the role that the place plays in their lives. On the other hand, according to Hummon (1992), having satisfaction from the place of living strengthens place attachment. Consequently, the relationship between place attachment and landscape preference, i.e. the manifestation of people's needs and desires, is complex (Walker, Ryan 2008).

Moreover, people with high place attachment are more involved in protecting the local environment (Anton, Lawrence 2014, Brown et al. 2002).

The sense of belonging that is connected with one's attitude towards the landscape incontestably interacts with the manner in which the land is managed. Farmers, or in the broader range landholders, play a predominant role in shaping the rural environment by actively using, managing and changing the rural landscape. Many professionals have emphasised that, in the landscape planning process, the local actors' knowledge and practical experience are irreplaceable in landscape assessment (Palang et al. 2005, Antrop 2006, Bohnet 2008, Agnoletti 2014, Lefebvre et al. 2015). Additionally, this attachment on the part of the local residents is also important for gathering knowledge that the planners can then use for landscape development. However, landscape management and planning are regarded as domains of the scientific world, which means that the local residents are rarely perceived as an integral part of a certain landscape (Naveh 2001, Fisher et al. 2012, Agnoletti 2014, Sklenicka et al. 2017). Nevertheless, in order to ensure that the process of landscape development and protection is appropriate, the local residents and professionals should work together in shaping future landscapes.

Research framework

This study concentrated on social attitudes towards the HTRL and how the place of living was perceived in the context of landscape transformation. Special attention was paid to the interviewees' answers that were provided to the main research questions, such as:

1. which circumstances influenced the shaping of the HTRL?
2. which factors threaten the cultural heritage of the HTRL?
3. how do local residents express their attachment to the HTRL?
4. are local residents willing to protect the unique cultural heritage of the HTRL?
5. what is important in transforming the contemporary landscape from the point of view of preserving the HTRL's non-material values?

In addition, since in this paper the rural landscape is considered to be a holistic system that includes interactions between natural characteristics and socio-economic elements, the following key assumptions were made and followed during the analysis:

1. the HTRL is the result of adjusting natural conditions to human needs, and currently it presents a unique landscape pattern that decides about its individual ecological landscape (the environmental context).
2. the HTRL is the result of specific agricultural practices regarding land use management and documents the history of the place, through social perception of the landscape it also reflects tradition and cultural identity (the socio-cultural context).
3. the HTRL is an essential space for farming activity and is consciously shaped by farmers with regard to maintaining productivity effectiveness and human well-being (the economic and environmental context).

The above-mentioned research framework was implemented in an empirical analysis of the case study, which was the landscape of Dutch law settlement in the environs of Nowy Tomyśl in Poland. Several villages were selected for detailed analysis: Sękowo (established as the first village in this region in 1700 (Rusiński 1947)), Glinno and Paproć (1701), Przyłek (1704),

Jastrzębsko Stare (1710), Grubsko (1712), Sątopy (1736), Nowa Róża (1765) and Nowa Boruja (1795) (Fig. 1).

The following tasks were conducted within the research framework. First, the landscape biography (the case study's history) was investigated. This information was collected by reviewing both past and present literature and by analysing a cartographic database. Also, a review was done of strategic and planning documents on landscape management.

Second, a synthetic resume of both archival and current materials made it possible to identify the studies area's unique characteristics, which then helped to determine the landscape's cultural identity and ecological values. Cartographic materials such as the Messtichblätter in a scale of 1:25 000 from the years: 1891 (3662 Neutomischel, 3663 Wonsowo) and 1893 (3762 Borui) were used. Also, statistical data were gathered from the Local Data Bank (GUS 2018). Historically changing land use was analysed using the spatial database of Atlas Fontium (2018). Current land use was interpreted using the Geoportal (GUGiK 2018), which was then verified by a field study and photo documentation.

Afterwards, attachment to the place of living was investigated. Place attachment was defined through individual landscape judgement (aesthetic and even spiritual landscape values),



Fig. 1. Location of the study area.

where relationships between scenic backdrops and the residents' attitudes towards the landscape were determined. All of the above information was gathered from open, semi-structured and interactive interviews with the local residents. Fragments of the interviews are quoted below, although the interviewees' names are not disclosed in order to maintain their anonymity. It is worth mentioning here that the author of this paper knows the farming environment as she used to live in the countryside, and this was helpful in initiating contact with the farmers, who by nature are wary of new people and are suspicious. Complementing the interviews, informal talks and discussions with the farmers were conducted at spontaneous meetings during the field work. Also, a few in-depth interviews with representatives of the local authorities were conducted. A total of 77 interviews and conversations were conducted that took place a time period from 2014 to 2016.

Finally, the predicted future landscape outlook is presented based on an analysis of the landscape changes that are taking place in order to preserve the heritage and cultural identity of the landscape of Dutch law settlement.

Outcomes and discussion

History of the landscape

In Poland, the rural landscape of Dutch law settlement (so-called *Olęder* settlement) comprised three aspects: environmental, socio-cultural and political. This type of landscape was the result of a transformation of natural environment by the colonisation and economic activities of new settlers, who possessed knowledge of flood control, groundwater melioration and a well-developed agrarian culture (Markuszevska 2017b). As for the environs of Nowy Tomyśl (the Wielkopolska region), Dutch-type settlement took place during the 17th and 18th century. Before that time, the region had been unsuitable for agricultural purposes because of its woodiness and the predominance of swampy areas. This situation changed at the turn of the 17th and 18th century, when the area underwent an intensive colonisation process, based on Dutch law, which, in fact, was one of the most spectacular

settlement movements conducted in Poland at that time. In the analysed area, Dutch law settlement was firstly introduced by Ludwik Szoldrski and his successors (Związek, Panecki 2017). On the other hand, the Partitions of Poland was a turning point signalling the end of the Dutch-type settlement. One of the reasons was that many settlers, due to their religious beliefs, did not perform military service, which conflicted with the ethos of such a heavily militaristic state. In addition, administrative reforms carried out by the partitioning powers eliminated the legal arrangements that constituted the distinguishing characteristics of Dutch law settlement (Rusiński 1947). The next step was regaining independence (in 1918), which enforced emigration of the descendants of Dutch law settlement, particularly, German-speaking inhabitants. The last wave of emigration was noted after 1945 (Rusiński 1947).

It should be explained that the term 'Dutch law settlement' does not refer to the settlers' nationality but to specific legal rules and economic aspects (Związek, Panecki 2017). In addition, the settlers were not a homogeneous group in terms of nationality, language and religious. As for the nationality, the environs of Nowy Tomyśl were settled mostly by German (from Brandenburg and Mecklenburg regions, Rusiński 1947), and also by Czech and Polish settlers (Czopek-Kopciuch 2004, Chodyła 2011).

The legal foundation of Dutch law settlement was based on the settlement 'privilege'. The contract precisely regulated relations of the community of new settlers with the land owners and other persons and institutions (Ciesielska 1958). In practice, the settlers maintained their own religion and beliefs, their personal freedom, and, as they were free people, they did not depend upon the land owner. Other privileges were the following: long-term or perpetual use of land, the possibility of transmitting land to heirs, and at any time, they could sell their farm and depart the property. These facts made *Olęder* settlers the wealthiest group of peasants. In addition, the community was self-governed (Rusiński 1947). This explains why the distinguishing characteristics of Dutch law settlement were legal not ethnic or religious conditions.

The eighteenth-century colonisation was based on grubbing-up of forests and drying of swamps, and this, according to Związek and Panecki

(2017), indicates the way in which the Olęder colonies were developed. Location privileges contributed to the formation of large settlement structures, not only in the area of Nowy Tomyśl, but also in other parts of the Wielkopolskie region (the northern part between Noteć and Warta rivers and the environs of Wolsztyn) (Chodyła 2005, Związek, Panecki 2017).

The new settlers, upon arriving in the area of Nowy Tomyśl, found, a substantially, uninhabited land covered by forests. However, there is evidence (onomastic remains of the names of the villages, such as Buda east of Chrośnica village, for example) suggesting that temporary villages existed, set up with the purpose of acquiring wood, forest fruits and bog iron, burning charcoal, and soot and tar production (Rutkiewicz 2001, Panecki et al. 2018). Through deforestation, drainage and reclamation of the soil, these wetlands were transformed into fertile land that could be used for cultivation. The area's distinct

soil and climate conditions determined the initial planting of hops and wicker. To meet the community's needs, small-scale manufacturers were established, such as craft, milling, distillery, weaving and forest industries (Raszeja, Klause 2006).

Settlements were organized under the particular rules of Dutch law. However, considering the large differences in Dutch-type colonization in different regions in the country and the fact that it was conducted at different times, it is difficult to distinguish a single type of village arrangement. Everything depended on local conditions (the requirements of the terrain and the character of land cleared for sowing or pasture), and the background of the settlers. In the analysed case study, two types of household arrangement can be detected (Figlus 2014). The first type, *rzędówka bagienna* (marsh row-village, one-row bog village) (Fig. 2), is characterised by long strips of fields running to streams and/or wetlands. In this case,

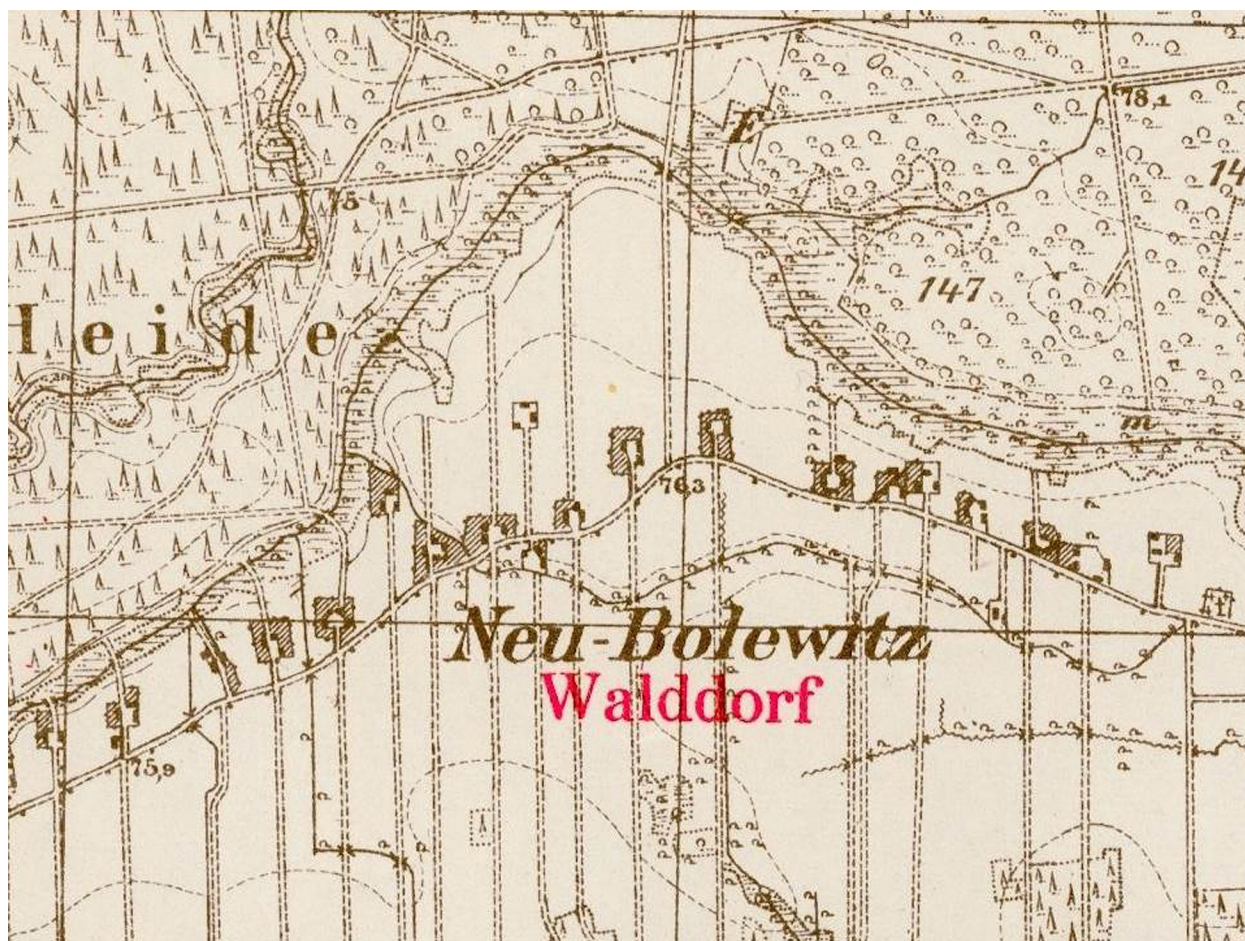


Fig. 2. One-row bog village as an example of Dutch law settlement.
Source: Messtichblätter, 3662 Neutomischel.

villages on terrain that had been drained, most often one finds buildings constructed in a straight line, with farms located between the river and a road running parallel. Each settler received a thin strip of land located at a right angle to the river or other body of water (Ciesielska 1958). The second type, *wieś samotnicza* (solitary village, scattered settlement) (Fig. 3), and by far the most frequent, was located in the middle of rectangular, previously wooded areas. In cases like this, the main task of the colonists was clearing forest lands, and after that, choosing the best place to situate a farmstead. As a result, the village had a dispersed character (Ciesielska 1958). Basically, the Olęder settlers occupied an average area of 16–24 ha (Rusiński 1947). Because of the high incidence of scattered settlements, the fields were mainly in the shape of separate blocks. In addition, in the eighteenth-century, Dutch-type settlements of a mixed type can also be distinguished, namely villages that represent a non-scattered character

with a church square in the central point and buildings in village vicinity (Panecki et al. 2018). Remnants of these settlements are still visible in village architecture (Fig. 4), the regular and structured shape of the village arrangements and in the names of villages (e.g. Holendry, Olędry) (Rutkiewicz 2001, Chodyła 2011).

Dutch law settlement greatly influenced village architecture and the natural environment in the environs of Nowy Tomyśl (Chodyła 2005). The new landscape was designed through land reclamation and deforestation, and this move entirely transformed the natural scenery. The elements of the new landscape were the following: a dense network of drainage ditches, scattered buildings together with numerous access roads, linear woodlots that accompanying ditches and roads (Raszeja 2013). Solitary settlements, evenly dispersed throughout the landscape, resulted in a distinct landscape pattern consisting of compacted and geometric homesteads, small tree-covered

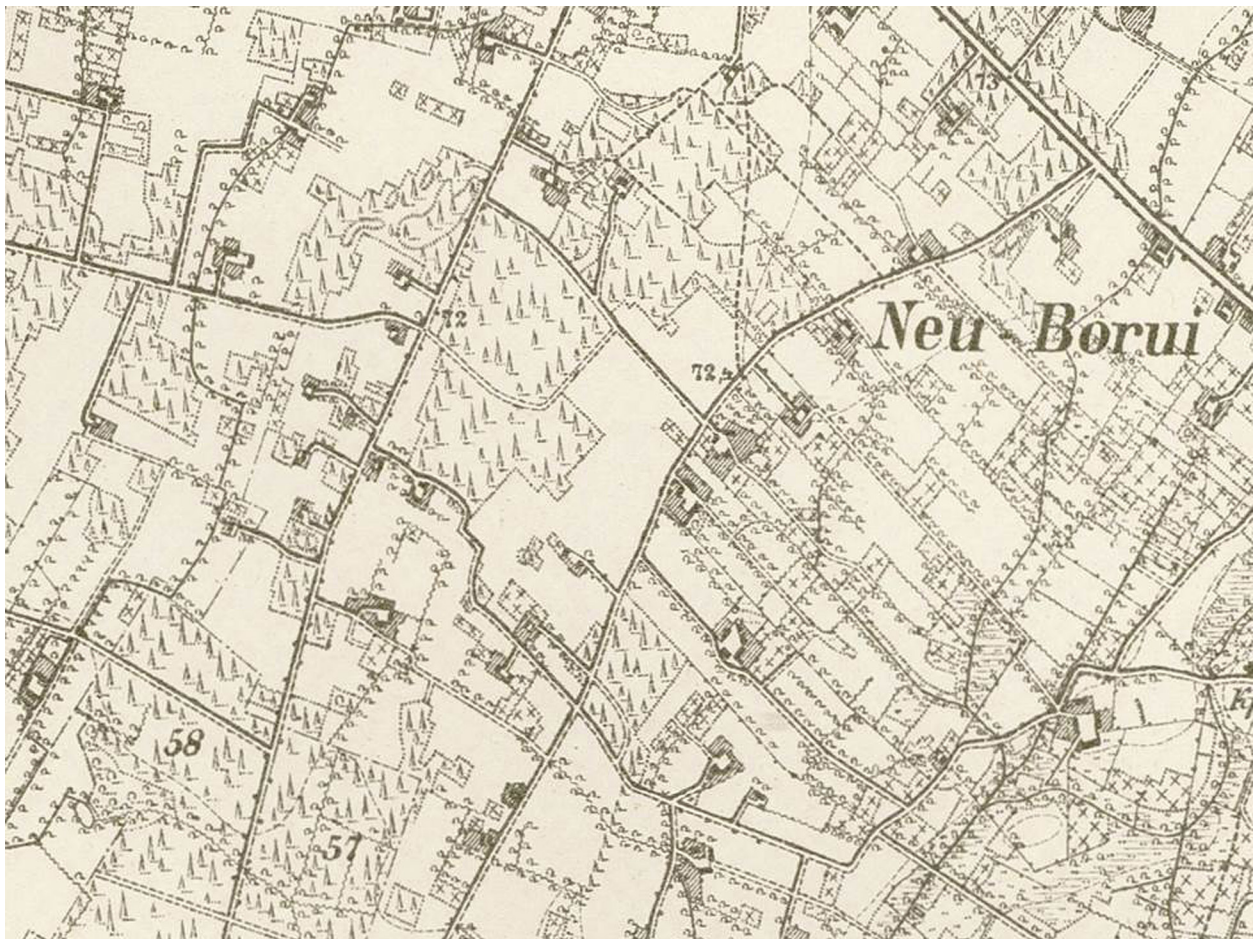


Fig. 3. Solitary village as an example of Dutch law settlement.
Source: Messstichblätter, 3762 Borui.



Fig. 4. Dutch law settlement in village architecture.

areas and rectangular-shaped meadows and fields divided by a network of channels and drainage ditches. Trees grow along the dense network of dirt roads and forest paths and also close to the farm buildings. In this landscape, open views and panoramas were rarely found and closed landscapes are dominant (Raszeja 2013).

In the case of a solitary village, a typical element of a settlement landscape is a square-shaped homestead, with a size of 30×30 metres and situated away from other homesteads by 200–250 metres (Rusiński 1947). The homestead usually consists of three to five detached buildings, i.e. a one-storey oblong cottage, a barn and other outbuildings. The buildings of the settlers were made of wood that was collected from the grubbed land. It needs to be explained, however, that according to eighteenth-century regulations (regarding the relationships between new settlers and their environment), there were limitations on using oak trees, due to the economic value of this raw material (Związek, Panecki

2017). A characteristic feature of the barn was the attic, which serves as both a granary and an oats house. These were used during the processing and preparation of hops and wicker, i.e. the specific plants that were grown in this region. Small gardens and orchards were planted beside the homesteads (Pelczyk 1996).

The cultural landscape, created by generations of Ołęders residents, is discernible today in the majority of their settlements. However, different circumstances influenced landscape transformation after the WWII. Some of the wooden residential buildings and outbuildings were pulled down; only a small number of buildings have been moved to open air heritage museums in Dziekanowice. In the 1970s, when it was possible to transfer farmland from private farmers to the State Treasury, the landowners practised this to receive pension as compensation. Farmland acquired by the State Treasury underwent successive afforestation, as poor-quality soil made it necessary to transform this agricultural land back

into forestland (Raszeja, Klause 2006). Since the 1990s, destruction of the HTRL has been caused by different factors. Some worth mentioning include the rapid development of rural areas for non-farming purposes and the removal of marginal habitats from field areas. Currently, a cultural landscape with no visible remnants of historical evolution is increasingly being threatened by new investments that are destroying the structure of the original landscape. The most negative consequence is the building of individual constructions on farmland. Additionally, changes in land use can be observed. On the one hand, farmland has been afforested thanks to EU subsidies for forestation of poor-quality land, which is in fact changing the agricultural land scenery; on the other hand, meadows and farmlands are turning into fallow lands, while the exploitation of peat also has a negative impact on the condition of the landscape. Moreover, shelterbelts and drainage ditches are gradually disappearing from the landscape (Raszeja, Klause 2006).

As well as all of this, the local traditional design of the houses is being replaced by modern 'urban' standards that do not adhere to tradition. Traditional wooden houses, i.e. those from the 18th and early 19th century, that used to fit in harmoniously with the landscape, are vanishing. The only remnants of these houses are lone examples of lilacs and lindens. Unfortunately, the new land buyers are not interested in their new houses in the same places where the now-defunct farmhouses stand (Raszeja, Klause 2006).

Parents' landscape – children's landscape: When rurality loses its nature

A brochure published in 2006 by the Commune Office of Nowy Tomyśl describes the region's rich history and unique landscape of Dutch-type settlement. The brochure's authors convincingly claim that an untouched HTRL and unspoiled local architecture can still be found there. Additionally, they assure their readers that the atmosphere of the place will move them back to the times of the early Dutch settlers.

Yet, field exploration has turned out to be disappointing, as it seems indeed difficult to find the *genius loci*, i.e. the prevailing character of the place. Although wooden architecture, a source of pride for the region, still exists and is utilised,

modern houses constructed by newcomers have significantly disfigured the original style. These kind of landscape changes are the side-effect of the ongoing process of urbanisation of rural areas that can be so evidently observed in zones affected by a metropolitan area, which has been the influence of the Poznań Agglomeration that has resulted in the region's loss of its rural character of Dutch law settlement. The farmland has also changed its use along with the wave of newcomers and with the notable population growth, as arable lands have turned into developers' housing estates. The importance of this transformation can be illustrated by the numbers. Until 2005 the number of rural dwellers in the commune of Nowy Tomyśl did not exceed 9,000 inhabitants, but since that time it has grown rapidly, currently reaching over 11,000 (GUS 2018).

It should be noted that among the interviewed local residents there are those who referred to the beauty and harmony of the HTRL with respect and who agreed unequivocally that the only aspect that bothered them was the inflow of city dwellers. Generally, they did not react enthusiastically to newcomers who did not want to adopt to the 'local code of living', which one farmer, aged 69 [interviewee No. 7] from the village of Sękowo, explained as follows:

They [the newcomers] aren't interested in coexisting with farmers in every-day life, in engaging in social relations, nor in participating in public community activities. What they really want is a beautiful landscape outside the windows of their houses, but the irony is that by putting up these dreadful cottages they simply spoil the stunning views. Also, urban incomers just want to have clean, non-polluted air, but by moving to the countryside they do not realise that the breeding of animals can produce unpleasant smells, which the dwellers then constantly complain about.

Generally, the local inhabitants who were interviewed expressed their worries regarding this uncontrolled inflow of new residents who did not respect the local heritage.

Usually, uncontrolled new investments are not warmly welcomed by the 'old' residents. They expressed their dissatisfaction and lack of approval for the chaotic sprawl of buildings that was appearing in the middle of the fields. One interviewee from the village of Grubsko, a male

aged 58 [interviewee No. 35], did not hide his anger when talking about the inflow of urban migrants.

I do like this landscape with its scattered farms, trees along the roads, stretches of forest, and the only thing that bothers me are those ugly new buildings, they're spoiling the landscape. The people who come here say that they like the old wooden houses, but no one asks me if I like the new, ugly houses.

However, it is worth noting that the approach to newcomers depends on one's personal opinion and personal interest, e.g. a resident of the village of Nowa Boruja [interviewee No. 12] aged 55 who lives in an old Dutch house surrounded by newly constructed buildings with their novel designs and aesthetics that do not fit into the rural environment expressed his positive attitude and much satisfaction with his neighbourhood. Yet, during the interview it turned out that the land that had been adapted into the new housing estate used to belong to him. He had deliberately sold his land for this investment purpose, so it is not surprising that the newcomers were warmly welcomed by him. However, he remarked that the only one aspect which bothered him was the noise from increased traffic that had intensified when the wave of newcomers arrived.

During the research it turned out that the newcomers' motivation to change their place of living was a combination of an attractive environment, cheap land and easy access to their workplace. A 30-year-old couple from Paproć who had been living in the countryside for two years:

We had been looking for a nice place to live, you know – quiet, green-areas and fresh air. But just because the prices of land within close vicinity of Poznań were terribly high we decided to move here, where the land was relatively cheap. Now we have what we wanted, even if now we spend plenty of time commuting – we still work in Poznań, and the distance from here is around 70 km one way. But if you ask me about my attachment to this place, my feeling of belonging, that's quite a difficult question. We like this village but, to be honest, we don't participate in the life of this village, we hardly know our neighbours.

It is needless to state that the wishes and expectations of both groups of actors, i.e. of the old

settlers and of the newcomers, are very similar in that both groups want to be surrounded by a beautiful landscape and want to garner benefits from the natural environment. However, common acceptance of using the same space in harmony and mutual respect seems to constitute a considerable challenge for this region's future development.

Conversely, the results of the survey presented a controversial finding, i.e. that it is difficult to resist the impression of a duality of perceptions regarding the place of living and preservation of the local heritage as expressed by some long-living rural residents. They claimed that they appreciated living in old wooden houses but, on the other hand, they would be very happy to replace them with new homes, e.g. a woman aged 70 [interviewee No. 10] who was living in Nowa Boruja admitted proudly that her family had just sold their farmland and that the money would be used to help them to build a new house. The location had already been chosen and it would replace the old barn. Asked whether she felt any regrets in destroying a valuable old building, she replied:

Why should it be? We don't run a farm anymore, so that's why we sold the land. And this barn is useless. Besides, it's run-down because ever since we stopped using it, it has been worse and worse. We don't repair it. There is no point in that.

It is worth noting here that this interviewee added that the land had been purchased by a corporation from the nearest town and that the new owner's intention was to build a sort of company there. Obviously, she had no objections to the planned investment, even though the land directly bordered along her own land.

However, there are local residents, particularly those aged over 50, who appreciate living in wooden constructed houses, e.g. a married couple that lives in a Dutch house in Sękowo made the life-choice decision to move to the countryside:

We had been dreaming about living in the countryside, but not just in any village but in a small house with a history, with a style... you know what I mean.... that was our dream. When we found this offer we didn't need to think about it too much. Now we live in a peaceful area, far away from other neighbours and surrounded

by wooded land. We used to be some kind of urban animals, but after resettling we very quickly transformed into "rural" creatures [interviewee No. 11].

Another interviewee [No. 17], a 70-year-old woman and a resident of Nowa Boruja who had been repatriated from Warsaw as a child, had been living in the same house since she was four. She complained that the housing conditions were inconvenient, particularly as three generations were living under the same roof.

But this will change soon since a new house for the extended family will be built. But the old house will be kept, just as it is now. My son has told me that he will not let us destroy the house. The house must be kept, together with the linden tree growing next to it.

This attitude towards patrimony determines the strong aspect of nostalgia that lies in preserving the vanishing landscape and that is expressed by many of the local inhabitants. This is confirmed by the words of another interviewee, a villager of Sękowo [interviewee No. 9] aged 60:

When you are in the heritage park in Wolsztyn [one of the towns in the region of Nowy Tomyśl], please draw your attention to the old Dutch house. It was my mother's family home, she was born there.

When talking about the future, an interviewee from Glinno [no. 62], a male aged 54, stated he would definitely never leave his place of living, but when it came to his children, the potential heirs of the farm, he did not hide his scepticism because he was not sure whether they would share his enthusiasm and deal with the agricultural matters.

I love the countryside, I love my home and can't imagine living anywhere else. But I'm afraid that my children will choose a different life. They don't see anything particularly important in living in the countryside, so staying here would make them feel stuck. They prefer to live in the city, they want to be surrounded by a vibrant atmosphere rather than lead a boring rural life.

There was no particular enthusiasm among the young inhabitants who were interviewed, in this case, potential heirs of the farms. They often stated that despite liking the countryside

they did not see their future in patrimony. A low sense of belonging and attachment to the place of living, made them feel more cosmopolitan. As one interviewee, aged 23 from the village Glinno [interviewee no. 63], stated:

Now I'm studying in Poznań and am not going to return to my home village. I want to get to know the world, to gather new experiences. At least find a job in a big city, like Poznań, for example. I don't feel a part of my village, a part of the local society. Besides, Glinno now is not what it used to be in the past – sometimes I feel like I'm in a town, not in a village. It has changed, the landscape, the people, the lifestyle.

It is not unique to this region that this kind of indifference towards patrimony, local heritage and cultural landscape can be observed among its young residents. Contemporary social mobility and the global network of the flow of information are more often making inhabitants forget about being entrenched.

Present landscape – Future landscape: How to save the local heritage from being forgotten?

The above-mentioned duality in attitudes towards the Dutch constructions as expressed by a group of local residents also results from different reasons. When the survey was being conducted, some of the interviewees shyly confessed that other villagers, and particularly newcomers, considered their old, wooden cottages as archaic and antiquated. This made them feel uncomfortable and even a 'worse category of rural dwellers'. The *soltys* (head of the village) of the village of Sękowo [interviewee No. 8] summed it up as follows:

These people are ashamed of their homes, because they think that others assess their lifestyles as worse, as if they were living in a live museum. This overinflated concept was recently altered when inventory work conducted by students helped them to realise how valuable their homes are. At the beginning the farmers were sceptical and surprised that scientists and students might be interested in wooden cottages and outbuildings, but because of this they are now proud of them.

The *soltys* mentioned the interdisciplinary workshop that took place in the village of

Sękowo in July of 2013 in which both students and academic teachers from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Zielona Góra, the Faculty of Architecture and Design of the University of Arts in Poznań and the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź took part. This project's invaluable advantage was the collection of documents relating to resources of cultural heritage, particularly to traditional wooden architecture. However, the workshops also gave its participants a chance to gather information on the histories of individual families living in this area that were written down by the students.

A similar workshop was organised in the summer of 2015 in the village of Boruja Nowa. In October 2015 the *sołtys* [interviewee No. 8] warned me that now the residents might be unwilling to talk openly with me.

Just a few months ago they were interviewed by students. Some of the dwellers were open and allowed the students to explore their houses and do some sketches. But some of them didn't even want to talk to them. So another attempt at this might fail.

In fact, the inhabitants did not show much interest, although a short talk with them was possible. During my conversation with the *sołtys* I asked him whether the local inhabitants were willing to protect the unique cultural heritage of the HTRL. He answered:

People shy away from taking care of legal building conservation because they know that afterwards making any changes will be impossible. On the one hand, they glorify living in the Dutch houses, this is undoubtedly true, they like the wooden construction, and not only for sentimental reasons. But, on the other hand, if they had a choice to replace them with houses that were in better condition, they obviously would.

This opinion was confirmed during the interviews, and it can be noticed that not everyone was willing to admit that s/he might prefer to live in a new house, but it was only financial reasons that limited their living choices and put them in the situation they were in.

On the other hand, the desire to live in a more comfortable house and in modern conditions means that over the past decades the villagers have systematically replaced the old houses with

new ones. Unfortunately, this restoring process has not maintained an agreeable image of the village and contradicts local architectural traditions. However, this behaviour can be justified by the general mentality, namely, that in Poland in the post-war years, i.e. after 1945, traditional rural style and design were associated with economic backwardness and low socio-economic status. In order to improve living conditions and break away from this rustic image, new solutions were propagated that had nothing in common with the regional style and local architecture. Only relatively recently, when the fashion for everything rural has been revived, people have learnt to appreciate the simplicity of rural life as well as of village homeliness. Nevertheless, this metamorphosis in breaking down the above stereotypes has not been associated with adopting old farmsteads as second homes. The return to the countryside is usually manifested in purchasing farmland to build a new house rather than in repairing an old cottage which, additionally, is an awkward transition of city habits to rustic surroundings. Some additional words of criticism should be mentioned here. Currently, newcomers are choosing the option of new, pre-existing construction designs from commonly available catalogues of homes as offered by construction companies. In fact, all of these offers are an amalgamation of different regional architecture that present a counterfeit image of rurality. Another issue is the spatial pattern and arrangement of the new farmstead, as in the past a rural estate had always been distinguished by a logical spatial order, where a specific code and rules of arrangement were imposed, and not only in the organisation of the village but also in relation to the location of the buildings and the natural conditions. Today, housing estates are created in portions of farmland that are sold by farmers, where houses are spread out in a chaotic and illogical manner in the village. Most importantly, there is no linkage with the surrounding landscape. Kuriata et al. (2014) pointed out that villages are being transformed into multifunctional housing complexes with dominantly urban-style detached houses. The village with its new design repeats the urban lifestyle in the way those who dwell in these residential complexes think.

The question of how to protect the HTRL does not seem to be easy to answer. Several of the

farmers who were interviewed, i.e. the elderly owners of the Dutch-type farmsteads, expressed deep words of bitterness. Seeing that the conservation of old constructions is not supported by any kind of external financing source, such as, for example, the municipality budget, the residents are faced with a tough dilemma, i.e. should they maintain their sense of patrimony which is more costly than building new households? One farmer, aged 60 [interviewee No. 22] from the village of Paproć, expressed this issue as follows:

The municipality and the local government are proud of their rural heritage. The Dutch law settlement is a well-marketable tourist product. And every one of us, the villagers, knows about its unique landscape. We understand how valuable it is, but there is no interest on the officials' part to help us, to help those farmers who want to keep the landscape for posterity and for our children.

Another farmer from the village of Sękowo, aged 60 [interviewee No. 24], complained:

My barn is 200 years old. It is now in bad condition and is not suitable for the current needs of the farm. But I can't rebuild it because it's protected (Ustawa 2003a). Even its renewal must be authorised by the monument conservator, which is quite complicated, I mean all of the bureaucracy. I don't have the time nor the energy. But, above all, the point is that these works are expensive and in the future they will require increasing amounts of both work and money. I'll do it as long as it is profitable, but one day I will be forced to discontinue. I've heard that they are going to establish an open-air museum, so I would be willing to give them my barn. The profit from selling it would help me to create a modern and practical building. It's just that no one is interested in buying this historic building.

As well as in the example mentioned above, the Old Monuments Law allows to establish a new form under legal protection, namely a Cultural Park (CP) (*Park Kulturowy*). A CP is created to protect a cultural landscape and to uphold areas distinguished by ethnic aspects and monuments that are typical of the local architectural tradition and of the settlement arrangements. The CP enforces restrictions on possible alterations in the construction of buildings, and even the use of land is specified.

Nevertheless, how the HTRL should be protected is not the only source of worry, as another issue that should be addressed is – what is important in transforming the contemporary landscape from the point of view of preserving the cultural values of the HTRL? If the legal basis is truly so ineffective, perhaps the chance for improving the protection of landscape and architecture would be involving the local communities, and here grassroots initiatives might be solution. For the time being, a number of social associations operate in the area, e.g. *Sękowo Wieś Olędrska* (Sękowo the Dutch Village) in the village Sękowo, *Pokochaj wieś* (Love the Village) in the village of Boruja Nowa and the *HOLendry* foundation in the village of Nowa Róża. The mission of the *Sękowo Wieś Olędrska* association is to integrate the local community and to encourage the local inhabitants to actively participate in various activities in order to create a form of living contact among all generations in promoting the values of the local cultural heritage, i.e. Dutch law settlement in this case. The main objectives of the next association, *Pokochaj wieś*, are the following: protection of the village's cultural and natural environment, increasing the number of resources of both the cultural and natural heritage and integrating the local community in developing the residents' civic and cultural awareness. Finally, the main aim of the *HOLendry* foundation is to promote Dutch culture in Poland. As for the local participation in protecting landscape, it is not only connected with spreading knowledge about the region but particularly about creating an emotional attachment to the place of living among the local residents, which in turn helps to take on collective responsibility for the shared landscape.

Another way of attracting the residents' interest in the Dutch culture and in maintaining their parents' landscape is agrotourism that is organised in old Dutch farmsteads, e.g. the agrotouristic farm *Chata pod Żurawiem* (Cottage under the Crane) in Glinno, which maintains a 19th-century style through and a wooden house with a 200-hundred-year history. In the village of Nowa Róża the agro-touristic farm *Różanka* (The Rose) has an old barn that was restored to serve as a new facility. Similarly, another place that should be mentioned is *Dom, który kocha ludzi* (A home that loves people) in Boruja Nowa which offers two options of accommodation a house from

1842 and a barn. However, even if the original construction of the building was kept the arrangement design does not follow that of the original style.

In principle, so far nothing about the local authorities' involvement has been pointed out in the case of HTRL protection. And since the local government plays a key role in the future development of the rural landscape, its meaning in preserving the cultural landscape is substantial. This concerns the:

1. creation of suitable guidelines regarding landscape planning and management,
2. establishment of necessary limitations to protecting against harmful investments (Ustawa 2003b), while simultaneously,
3. actively supporting the maintenance of the landscape's cultural contexts. In fact, as was indicated during conversations with city council representatives, protection of the HTRL is not the main goal of municipality investment plans.

This is not because the local government does not see the need to protect the Dutch law settlement landscape but rather financial issues constitute the main obstacle. As one of the town's council members explained:

Every year we put forth a lot of applications to the provincial government [which manages the budgets in communes] to co-finance various activities under the idea of modernising the countryside. But all of them are various kinds of 'material benefits' to improve the comfort of living – new roads, a new gas infrastructure and renovation of public property. Of course, we would like to help keep the Dutch houses, but there are no funds dedicated to 'soft works' like this. And, on the other hand, there is the crucial issue of whether or not the owners of the houses really want their houses to be legally protected? They're afraid of this because they know their hand would be tied.

Another aspect concerning the region's future landscape is a change in the area's main rural function. Generally, the natural conditions are not favourable to continue agricultural development because of the poor soil quality, which makes it possible to implement non-farming functions. In addition, it is not surprising that the area is under the pressure of the investment sector. Also, the cultivation of hops, which used to

be a typical plant grown in the area, is becoming less profitable, and cereals are being planted instead. Finally, increasingly more farmers are of retirement age while the younger generation is not necessarily interested in continuing the work of their parents.

Concluding remarks

Taking all of the above into account, in this paper the following question was formulated: *Are individuals' approaches to the landscape and their attachment to their place of living essential in terms of landscaping and future landscape changes?* The research revealed that how rurality and the HTRL were perceived varied among different groups of interviewees. Nevertheless, for most of those, who had spent their lives in the countryside and who had strong feeling towards patrimony, losing the beauty of the landscape was a traumatic experience and destructive landscape changes were difficult for them to accept. Conversely, for other respondents the HTRL presented less important values, so the observed destruction of the local heritage induced less painful feelings in them. These inhabitants were satisfied with their place of living, although they felt no deeper bond with it and had no relations with their neighbours.

Rural landscapes have changed throughout history and will continue to do so in the future. Yet particularly recently we are becoming witnesses to the tendency of replacing traditional forms and values with new phenomena, i.e. locality must submit to globalisation, involvement to alienation and integration to separation (Vos 2000). This state of affairs obviously contributes to the changes that are taking place in the landscape, and the question remains as to how significant the influence of these changes will be in the context of maintaining the cultural heritage of the HTRL (see Harrop 2007, Plieninger, Bieling 2013, Sobala, Myga-Piątek 2016).

As for the future of the HTRL in Europe, it does not seem optimistic, e.g. there is little interest in keeping the HTRL in the strategic documents of rural areas, such as in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (Farming the Holistic Landscape 2017). Although some supported financial instruments in agro-environmental

programmes exist, they are still insufficient in protecting the landscape in a comprehensive manner. Nonetheless, the law, policy system and financial assistance are not the only solutions for preserving the HTRL, as its condition depends on other key factors that threaten the existence of valuable cultural landscapes, namely globalisation, technology, modern agricultural practices, and urbanisation and dissemination of the urban lifestyle throughout the countryside (Vos, Meekes 1999, Janssen et al. 2017, Špulerova et al. 2017). It should be added that, on the local scale, i.e. at the farm level, farmers are the main actors of landscaping. Thus the farmers' role in landscape management is invaluable, which was emphasised frequently in this paper. Similar results were achieved by Calvo-Iglesias (2006) and Domon (2011).

Finally, preserving the heritage of the HTRL constitutes a huge challenge, as specific steps should be taken to save the landscape. The law is not and will not be an efficient tool in protecting the landscape if it is not with social acceptance and the involvement of the local authorities. However, without external support, including financial assistance, it will not be possible to stop this old Dutch law settlement landscape from falling into oblivion.

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