

# GROUPS OF FESTIVITIES MOST EXPOSED TO COMMERCIALIZATION PROCESSES: OPINIONS OF RESIDENTS IN LATGALE AND PSKOV REGION

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## ABSTRACT

The paper is based on the survey (questionnaire and interviewing) of residents in Latgale (south-eastern region of Latvia – the major object of the research) and residents in Pskov region (part of the north-western federal province of Russia – the minor object of the research). The survey was conducted between January 2018 and June 2019 with the aim of detecting the views of the local population on contemporary festive culture and ongoing changes in this sphere.

The survey, which included 906 people, revealed that nowadays almost all groups of festivities are exposed to commercialization processes. Adopted, state, calendar (traditional), and religious festivities are affected the most (in Latgale these festivities are Christmas, Easter, Līgo/Jāņi, and St. Valentine's Day; in the Pskov region, they are Easter and Christmas). Family festivities (birthdays, weddings, and jubilees) are less affected. However, the materials show that these indicators are increasing with time.

At the same time, the intensity of commercialization processes differs significantly in both statistical regions, namely, in Latgale it is significantly higher.

Residents of Latgale either become accustomed to the status of consumers of festive products over time, or criticize the changes that have occurred in the festive culture under the influence of commercialization processes. As a result, they are increasingly thinking about the need to preserve cultural and moral values in a modern consumer society. In turn, the residents of the Pskov region who participated in the survey over time observe the problem identified in the research, although in most cases they still refrain from commenting on this topic.

**Keywords:** festive culture, commercialization, Latgale, Pskov region, survey

## INTRODUCTION

In the present-day shifting socio-cultural environment, researchers' attention is more and more frequently attracted to festivities and their transformations and genesis (Djomina 2011, 103). On the one hand, research literature traditionally defines festivity as one of the most stable forms of spiritual culture (Filatova 2013, 143; Vasil'ev 2003, 51) that entails folk mythological thinking, features of ancient cults and rituals, social order modelling, daily and family life standards, psychology and morality (Burmenskaja 2009, 246; Medvedeva and Romah 2007, 69). On the other hand, none of the world cultures is thinkable as a completely frozen, static phenomenon. In real life situation, culture, including festivities, manifests a certain dynamic of traditional culture forms and innovations (Kencis 2008, 128).

In the reality affected by the model of globalization and consumerist society, there are transformations concerning various festive culture levels:

- festivities are gradually losing their initial exclusiveness, i.e., massive expansion of their elements is observed in the sphere of daily life;
- hyperfestive reality provokes the change of the initial content of festivities;
- under the impact of globalization and multiculturalism, there happens borrowing and adopting of foreign festive culture realia;
- the segment of festivities is constantly subjected to the impact of commercialization processes – more and more frequently festivities and festive events are turned into commodities that need to be sold with a maximum profit.

The present paper, on the basis of the materials of the survey of residents in Latgale (south-eastern region of Latvia – the major object of the research) and Pskov regions (part of the north-western federal province of Russia – the minor object of the research) conducted in 2018–2019 with 810 questionnaires processed and 96 interview records, singles out and characterizes the groups of festivities most exposed to commercialization processes according to the views of residents from both countries, considering also the amount of the demand for these festivity attributes.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

A growing number of scholars acknowledge that nowadays the commercial sector actively exploits the readiness of consumers to spend huge sums of money during festivities that is not characteristic of other, non-festive time periods (Popelková 2017, 183). The trend of commercialization of festive culture is regarded in European and world scientific literature in various possible perspectives, three whereof can be singled out as dominant.

The scholars focus on festivals (mostly – those of art, music, and sports) characterized as demonstrations of the brightest contemporary culture achievements and financially profitable products. This problem scope is studied by Anderton 2011; Jaeger and Mykletun 2013; Jordan 2016, and other scholars.

Many scholars characterize the significance of festivities and festivals in the context of tourist industry development and location branding. In this respect, the contribution of Diederling and Kwiatkowski 2015; Herstein and Berger 2014; Karabağ et al. 2011; Prentice and Andersen 2003 and other experts in diverse (sub)branches of science must be mentioned.

Recent scientific literature regards festive advertising as an independent and rapidly developing branch of advertising industry. The greatest number of such studies are dedicated to television festive advertising – its content (Çetin 2019), symbolical and attributive code (Kurochkina 2015), and techniques of impacting, mostly on the example of the trade of production targeted at children and young people (Buijzen and Valkenburg 2000; Pine and Nash 2002; Pine et al. 2007; Holiday et al. 2018); much more rarely there occurs characteristics of festive advertising available in social networks (Fotis et al. 2012; Fernández-Gómez and Díaz-Campo 2015) and press editions (Popp 2012).

From the above-mentioned trends, the latter has been studied in the scientific discourse of Latvia most widely. This is approved by the research by L. Stašāne and M. Zitmane (2014), where festive advertising is regarded as an indicator of consumption development and reflector of identity. Another study by S. Murinska-Gaile (2016) is dedicated to the semantic and discursive analysis of festive advertising, placing special emphasis on the colour, symbolical, and verbal code. Furthermore, M. Zitmane, S. Kalniņa, and L. Stašāne (2016), in their paper, have analysed publications (including advertising items) dedicated to the subject matter of Christmas in the popular

news portals of Latvia. However, it must be emphasized that there is still a lack of studies of the outlined trends based on the material of Latvia and particularly the region of Latgale, especially taking into consideration the state of festive culture in neighbouring countries. This refers also to the most detailed study of festivities and festivity groups most prone to the processes of commercialization in the context of Latvia (Latgale).

The idea that under contemporary conditions festivities gradually become an object of consumption is expressed by Russian scientists as well. Their attention is focused on the activities of the organizers of festivities and festive events (Tihomirova 2016) and on the closely related phenomenon of *pseudo* festivities (Filatova 2013; Medvedeva 2007), as well as perspectives of exploiting festivities for the purpose of advertising (Popelenskaja (Lopahina) 2012; Shamsutdinova and Turhanova 2010). Significantly, in these research works the Pskov region as a part of Russia is considered important in respect of material and non-material culture legacy that is to be promoted for attracting additional financing by means of festivals, fairs, exhibitions, and other similar activities (Eshina 2005), thus facilitating the development of regional event tourism (Hadimullina and Zhukov 2017). It must be noted that festivities and festivity groups most exploited for commercial purposes are not characterized either.

## RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY

The present paper is based on the anonymously conducted survey in the territory of Latvian – Russian borderland from January 2018 to June 2019, with the aim of detecting the views of the local population on contemporary festive culture and ongoing changes in this sphere. The survey was conducted within the framework of the project “Transformations of Festive Culture in the Borderland: The Case of Latgale and Pskov Regions” financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The first stage of the survey constituted a questionnaire with twenty closed and open type questions available in both paper format and electronic version on the Internet. The questionnaire made it possible to specify the most current nuances of the perception of festivities in the territory under analysis, most popular festivities there, the intensity of participation of the local population, degree of knowing and observing traditions, changes of festive culture and their provoked risks, the impact of festive advertising, the most demanded festivity

attributes and other information valid for the topic under study. Within the first stage, responses provided by 467 residents from Latgale and 343 residents from Pskov region were selected and summarized. The received questionnaire forms were assessed and selected not only by their quality but also according to the diversity of respondents' social and age groups.

The Latgale's and Pskov region's questionnaire responses were statistically analysed using the SPSS program. The survey data were weighed according to the main lines of stratification: gender, age, ethnic origin, place of residence.

In Latgale questionnaire base the deviation of the sample parameters from the parameters of the overall total after correction did not exceed  $\pm 5\%$ . The interval of distribution assurance/significance was at the level of 0.03-0.1. 49% of respondents from Latgale comprised females, and 51% – males; 45.7% comprised Latvians, 35.9% – Russians, 5% – Poles, 3.5% – Belarusians, 2.6% – Ukrainians, 0.3% – Lithuanians, 7% – other; 80% of respondents were in the working age from 15 years of age and 20% – above the working age (retired people); 11.6% obtained basic education, 46.1% – secondary education and 42.3% – higher education; 40.5% of respondents were urban residents and 59.5% – rural residents.

In Pskov region questionnaire base the deviation of the sample parameters from the parameters of the overall total after correction did not exceed  $\pm 5\%$ . The interval of distribution assurance/significance was at the level of 0.2–4.4. 40.8% of respondents from Pskov region comprised females, and 59.2% – males; 82.2% comprised Russians, 3.1% – Ukrainians, 0.7% – Belarusians, 14% – other; 76.8% of respondents were in the working age from 15 years of age and 23.2% – above the working age (retired people); 0.4% obtained basic education, 42.3% – secondary education and 57.3% – higher education; 69.4% of respondents were urban residents and 30.6% – rural residents.

Within the second stage – interviewing (10 questions) – replies with argumentation of 73 interviewees from Latgale and 23 interviewees from Pskov region were recorded with dictaphone for deeper characteristics of the topic under analysis. Interview recordings were transcribed and saved in Microsoft Word format.

The present paper, on the basis of the materials of the above-mentioned survey carried out in two stages, singles out and characterizes in a comparative perspective the festivity groups most exposed to commercialization in the opinions of respondents and interviewees from both countries.

Summarized information relates to Question 17 in the questionnaire: "To what extent, in your opinion, is this festivity [1] adopted [festivities and holidays; 2) family festivities; 3) calendar traditional / religious festivities; 4) state holidays] related to commerce?" that was offered three reply options: 1) fully related; 2) sometimes related, 3) not related at all. In addition, extended responses were considered provided by respondents during the interviews to Question 10: "To what extent are festivities nowadays related to commerce? Which of them, in your opinion, are subjected to market laws and have become a commodity?"

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITUATION IN LATGALE

Survey data reveal that respondents of Latgale consider the *adopted festivities and holidays* as most related to commerce (80.1%). These festivities have entered the Latvian culture environment in various historical periods – in the Soviet period (e.g. March 8) as well as nowadays (e.g. St. Valentine's Day and Halloween). It is noteworthy that this opinion is expressed by respondents of various age groups, but especially younger and older generation representatives ("20–24 years of age" – 94.74%, "65–69 years of age" – 91.80%, "70+ years of age" – 100%); Latvians (86.85%); people who do not live in official marriage (those living in unmarried cohabitation – 89.13%, the widowed – 93.88%); residents with no children under age in their family (83.58%). The opinion of the close relatedness of adopted festivities to commerce in Latgale is not significantly affected by the respondents' gender, education, and place of residence [1].

Significantly, in the opinion of interviewees, it is exactly St. Valentine's Day [2] that is stably associated with intrusive advertising and abundance of thematic products in shops, e.g.:

"People make a good profit on this, especially, well, I don't know, how it's with me, say, I enter a shop and see the counter, say, recently, too, it was 14 February, and everything is decorated with hearts, various notebooks and candles, what not. You enter and get interested in that, you look at it and you like all that. Bright and attractive at once, an all." (female, 18, Russian, Daugavpils/Krāslava)

"14 February now it was, which means again buy-buy, then yes, advertising annoys you." (male, 32, Latvian, Daugavpils)

"[...] because there are such sales, as if sales there are, but those are best selling goods for those festivities." (female, 46, Russian, Rēzekne region, Zahariha)

Indeed, according to the questionnaire data, the indicators of the demand for the attributes of the respective festive day in the region are rather high (goods are regularly purchased by 32.2% of the total number of respondents), and this situation is not affected by the respondents' gender, number of children under age in family, or place of residence [3]. Most active buyers of the attributes of St. Valentine's Day are people aged between 45 and 49 (51.11%), local Ukrainians (76.92%), respondents with secondary education (42.99%), people living in unmarried cohabitation (50%).

The festivity of March 8 that was introduced in the Soviet period and has recently experienced a new wave of popularity is stably associated in the region with commerce as well. Interviewees emphasize that flowers and candies are bought in mass on this date, while indecisive customers are attracted in shops by seemingly good offers of thematic products:

"[...] for March 8 there are always a huge lot of flowers, cards." (female, 46, Russian, Rēzekne region, Viļāni)

"Well, strong festivities, especially March 8, commerce gives a lot of flowers and people make money on this." (female, 65, Russian, Rēzekne region, Kruķi)

It is surprising that, according to the results of questionnaire, second larger festivity group after adopted festivities regarding the impact of commercialization processes in Latgale is *state holidays* (52.1%). Within the mentioned trend, attention is attracted by a group of residents opposing this opinion. It entails respondents of medium and older generation ("45–49 years of age" – 55.56%, "70+ years of age" – 68.75%), Latvians residing in Latgale (33.02%), people having basic education (59.26%), married respondents (39.16%), people with no under age children in family (33.13%), and rural residents (40.07%). However, if the remaining part of respondents has intuitively defined state holidays as commercial in their questionnaires, interviewees avoided commenting this situation, with some exceptions:

"[...] all state holidays, sports festivities, political festivities – all is related to commerce, advertising, and market [...]." (female, 40, Latvian, Riebiņi region, Galēni)

"Well, commodities here, of course, state commodities. These are state holidays [...]." (male, 73, Russian, Daugavpils)

Notwithstanding the diversity of opinions, it must be noted that state holiday attributes available in the region are gradually entering modern festive industry. Certainly, these attributes are purchased more seldom than New Year, Christmas, etc. products



that are much more diversified, yet the trend of commercialization is growing obviously also on the state festivity level.

Questionnaire data testify that 21% of the total surveyed people regularly purchase attributes of the Proclamation Day of the Republic of Latvia and 13.5% – those of Lāčplēsis Day. Admirers of the attributes of the Proclamation Day are female residents of Latgale (25.99%), people aged 65 to 69 (52.46%), Latvians (33.96%), respondents having higher education (36.04%), the widowed (35.29%); the same category of respondents (people aged 65 to 69 (44.26%), Latvians (23.94%), respondents having higher education (25.51%), the widowed (22%)) is more attracted also by the attributes of Lāčplēsis Day. In both cases, intensity of purchasing does not depend on respondents' place of residence and the number of under age children in family; in the case of Lāčplēsis Day, respondents' gender is not decisive either [4].

Next group of festivities noted as commercial by respondents from Latgale comprises *calendar traditional and religious festivities* (45.7%) [5]. It must be emphasized that, in relation to this group, on the whole there is a sharp distinction among opinions of the surveyed female (54.39%) and male (36.97%), younger ("20–24 years of age" – 73.68%, "30–34 years of age" – 69.23%), middle ("45–49 years of age" – 28.89%), and older generation ("70+ years of age" – 3.13%), with lower (basic education – 11.11%) and higher education level (secondary education – 43.46%, higher education – 57.65%), urban (61.38%) and rural (35.02%) residents. The position of Latvians (49.06%) and Russians (47.90%) from Latgale in this issue is not essentially different; the number of children under age in respondents' families has not determined the distribution of the above-mentioned opinions [6].

It is important that the surveyed residents of the region during interviews agreed on particular examples of festivities to be identified as part of the contemporary festive culture most related to commerce.

Firstly, this is Christmas. Interviewees specify that they mean "Catholic" ("Polish") Christmas that is "very much", "definitely", "most of all" exposed to the market rules nowadays. In other words, this is the time when commerce revitalizes, the shop assortment expands (dwarfs, Santa Clauses, angels, etc. products), and the sales system becomes active which, in turn, makes people powerless in the face of this huge festival of trade:

"Well, certainly Christmas, because all those, all these things with presents, and it's so much insisted by those traders: "Buy that, and that!" Christmas is coming, and those sales, those grand sales that are on in shops online [...]. And yes, it's really very much related

to market, and so it goes. We can do nothing about it anymore.” (male, 19, Latvian, Daugavpils)

“Well, nowadays festivities, yes, they are somewhat related to commerce, because as we are waiting for some festivity, all shops are re-planned, and all goods are offered just, just with such a festive air. [...] if it’s Christmas – then with Santa Clauses, Snow-whites, and dwarfs [...].” (female, 35, Latvian, Rēzekne region, Kruķi)

Respectively, this concerns the common decommercialization trend; however, its extent, intensity, as well as correlation to the commercialization processes analysed in the present paper and their perception in the society ought to be regarded in a separate study. It must be pointed out that such a position is mostly espoused by Latvian interviewees of diverse age groups residing in the region, for instance:

“So, Christmas, [...] about those presents, material values, that come up, the spiritual ones and fellowship then, I don’t know. [...]. Then everybody knows at once, what is there, what they want to buy – this and this, but I don’t know... It is maybe not so maybe negative, evil side, but then, but nowadays it usually happens like that.” (female, 16, Latvian, Preiļi/Daugavpils)

“[...] everybody goes crazy, especially at Christmas, well, everybody is buying things and forgets such true values, they think more: “Oh, I’ve bought presents for everyone!” rather than, maybe, sparing an hour and meeting people, not so to say... Not presents, presents – this is not the main thing or purchases.” (female, 24, Latvian, Daugavpils)

“Our Christmas has been commercialized to the utmost probably, that in essence is a very light festival and with a totally different idea, not just Santa Claus, expensive gifts and like that.” (female, 48, Latvian, Rēzekne region, Pustinka)

According to the questionnaire data, respondents of Latgale purchase Christmas attributes very often (regularly – 70%); this indicator is surpassed only by New Year (80.4%). More actively Christmas produce in the region nowadays is purchased by female respondents (77.19%), people aged “30–34” (84.2%), “35–39” (81.82%), and “65–69” (100%), equally often – by Russians residing in Latgale (67.86%) and Latvians (67.14%), respondents having higher education (73.60%), widowed respondents (86%) and, surprisingly – people having no under age children in families (72.62%). The above-mentioned opinion has not been directly determined by respondents’ place of residence [7].

Secondly, Easter is characterized as related to commerce. Interviewees generally deal with the attributes available in shops (eggs, rabbits, confectionary, etc.), their insistent advertising, as well as

real opportunity to do without them, if a person genuinely prefers observing the traditions of this religious festivity:

“A hundred years ago nobody would have thought of buying for Easter plastic decorations for Easter eggs produced in China or any other oriental country that has no relation to Christianity. Eggs at that time were dyed exclusively by natural dyes, but now all shop counters are packed with this kind of products before Easter and they sell well, are on high demand.” (female, 48, Russian, Rēzekne region, Kruķi)

“Well, we have now all related to commerce, they sell dyed eggs in shops, ready-made kuliches [Easter yeast pastry bread], I’m not saying it’s bad, but it’s new. It is actually much more pleasant to eat a home-made kulich, to try paskha [sweet dish from cottage cheese]. Well, I think that modern festivities are still related with non-festive culture, they don’t make you somehow better, don’t charge with that brisk energy that our ancestors had.” (female, 49, Russian, Aglona region, Grāveri rural municipality)

“Today you can buy eggs and paskha, all in the shop. [...]. Well, those who are lazy to dye eggs themselves. [...]. Well, those who find it easier to buy than to dye. But we are collecting onion-skins; I put them in advance into a box. [...]. People buy, they display more then. Of course, they get rich.” (female, 56, Russian, Daugavpils region, Koroļevščina)

It must be added that Easter attributes concerning their popularity at the moment in the region rank third: they are always bought by 64% of the total respondents of Latgale irrespective of their gender, education level, and number of children under age in families [8]. Respondents’ correlation according to other demographical criteria yielded surprising results, taking into consideration the fact that preservers of festive traditions are mostly people of older age residing in the rural environment. To wit, Easter products are nowadays actively purchased by respondents of various age but especially people over 70 years of age (sic!) (84.38%), including Latvians (65.57%), but also Russians residing in Latvia (56.89%), people living in unmarried cohabitation (82.61%), rural residents (sic!) (68.23%).

Thirdly, the relatedness of the present-day festive culture to commerce is foregrounded in interviewees’ accounts of the procedures of Līgo/Jāņi [midsummer solstice] festivity:

“For every festivity – Easter, Christmas, Līgo – the same traditions, just slightly modernized. Everything remains the same. Well, ok, if modernized, say, at Līgo they drink beer and buy, previously people brewed their own beer, now they buy it in the shop, but the idea remains the same. Traditions... people made their home cheese,

everybody had a farm, now we buy everything. But the idea remains, that's most important." (female, 36, Polish, Daugavpils)

"[...] like Jāņi previously – all you need for celebrating you had to prepare at home, such as cheese or beer, and observing all traditions and doing all works. Now it's all reduced to one trip, a trip to a shop." (female, 40, Latvian, Riebiņi region, Galēni)

It must be added that Līgo/Jāņi attributes are constantly bought by 41.7% of the total respondents of Latgale (in popularity it ranks as position 4 in the region), irrespective of gender and place of residence [9]. Most often these are representatives of younger ("20–24 years of age" – 66.47%) and older generation ("65–69 years of age" – 60.66%), equally active – Latvians (48.11%) and Russians residing in Latgale (46.11%), respondents having higher education (48.73%), residents of the region living in unmarried cohabitation (63.83%), people with three and more under age children in families (54.55%). Hence, one may conclude that this festivity in the region has a unique, consolidating character: they equally well unite people of different age and ethnicity that are ready to pay for this nice opportunity of being together.

However, notwithstanding the common statistics, some interviewees consider that Līgo/Jāņi is not to be regarded as the most striking example of commercial festivity due to the limited assortment of the available attributes, that stands out against the background of other festivities and festive holidays (adopted, calendar, religious), for instance:

"Other festivities – less (related to commerce). For example, nothing really to buy for Jāņi. Just making cheese, buying snacks and going outside, somewhere in the open air." (female, 19, Latvian, Preiļi region)

Another trend that was spotted in the course of questionnaire is commercialization of *family festivities* (29.7%). It is mostly noted by the females surveyed in the region (37.72%), representatives of age groups "20–24" (52.63%), "35–39" (50%), and "70+" years of age (100%), Ukrainians residing in Latgale (66.67%), respondents having basic education (53.70%), the widowed (52%). The above-mentioned notion has not been directly determined by such demographical indicators as respondents' place of residence and the number of children under age in their families [10].

Though residents of Latgale point out that this festivity group is least exposed to commercialization, the development of contemporary entertainment industry and the broad range of services offered (scenarios of weddings, animators for organizing and conducting birthday parties, jubilee celebrations, and wedding parties, etc.)

facilitate gradual growth of its impact also in the private festivity segment:

"I think, you can't do without it. Like they are trying to make profit, so do we. For instance, with presents. [...]. Birthday parties." (female, 16, Latvian, Daugavpils)

"Well, anyway, some Birthday parties, probably." (female, 18, Russian, Daugavpils)

"Well, probably, not the state festivities, not the popular festivities, but the private, probably, festivities, those, like weddings, birthday parties, jubilees. Here they are, one needs, probably, to think about it." (female, 47, Russian, Aglona region, Grāveri rural municipality)

Finally, the last major trend: the questionnaire conducted made it possible to specify festivities that take a leading position as regards the demand for festive attributes in the region. That is the New Year celebration that is hard to relate to a particular festivity group at the moment. Respectively, this festivity stands apart (at some time it had been adopted, in essence – both state and private, family festivity), yet it is extremely popular and demanded not only in the statistical region under analysis but in the country on the whole.

According to the questionnaire data collected in Latgale, the New Year produce is regularly bought by 80.4% of the total surveyed residents. Most active in buying are representatives of all three generations ("20–24 years of age" – 88.89%, "45–49 years of age" – 82.22%, "65–69 years of age" – 100%, "70+ years of age" – 84.38%), Ukrainians residing in Latgale (83.33%), Russians (84.52%) and Latvians (74.53%), respondents living in unmarried cohabitation (93.48%) irrespective of gender, education, the number of children under age in families, and place of residence [11].

In interviews, the idea of the commercial character of New Year has been expressed most broadly by interviewees of Latgale who analysed particular festive attributes (fir-trees and their decorations, presents, alcoholic beverages, etc.), for instance:

"It's definitely New Year: fir-tree decorations, artificial fir-trees, candles, and such. Like, before New Year basically there is advertising of alcohol." (male, 16, Latvian, Daugavpils)

"Probably it's New Year, when they really, just make money. The very greatest, I think, the greatest festivity." (female, 18, Russian, Daugavpils)

"But I think this is all related to commerce: New Year – there's a fir-tree market, to buy a fir-tree, all those decorations." (male, 46, Russian, Daugavpils region, Saliēna)

This leads to a conclusion that the attitude of respondents from Latgale to the commerce of New Year is generally neutral or positive.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITUATION IN PSKOV REGION

It must be admitted that the results of the survey of residents in Pskov region on the whole demonstrate a situation that is very similar to that in Latgale region, yet there are some essential nuances.

Like respondents from Latgale, the respondents of Russia express the opinion that festivities most closely related to commerce are *adopted festivities* (80.6%). This opinion is more insistently expressed by respondents of older generation in the region ("65–69 years of age" and "70+ years of age" – 100%), titular Russians (76.87%) and even more – representatives of other ethnicities (98.04%), people having secondary education (86.18%), divorced respondents (87.18%) irrespective of gender, the number of under age children in families, and place of residence [12].

On the whole, this statistics is justified by a negative attitude towards the adopted culture segment in the country in general; as a result, interviewees were laconic in their statements about this issue – sales dedicated to these festivities in the region – or refused to comment on it, for instance:

"Sales – they are profitable, let it be a festivity each and every day. Generally, I've saved so much money due to those sales at festivity time." (female, 15, Russian, Opochka region, Glubokoye)

This is also approved by rather low indicators of the demand for produce of recently adopted festivities in Russia (St. Valentine's Day and Halloween), as compared to the information provided by residents of Latgale.

That is to say, Valentine's attributes are regularly purchased only by 11.2% of the total respondents of Pskov region. Mostly those are females (13.70%), younger generation representatives ("15–19 years of age" – 40%), Russians (13.27%), respondents living in unmarried cohabitation (18.60%), people having one or two children under age in their families (17.17%). This trend is not directly affected by such demographical indicators as respondents' education and place of residence [13].

Thematic produce of Halloween in the region is demanded even less – only 1.2% of the total number of respondents buy it on regular basis. It is noteworthy that, judging by the questionnaire data, this is never done by the males, whereas active female buyers of Halloween produce in the region constitute only 2.74% of the total number of respondents. A small group of regular buyers includes respondents between 15 and 19 years of age (20%) as well as people having three and more children under age in families (10%). These

indicators are not determined by respondents' ethnicity, education, marital status, or place of residence [14].

Second group of festivities identified by respondents from Pskov region as greatly related to commerce is *calendar traditional and religious festivities* (55.3%), followed by narrow margin by *state holidays* (54.4%). As stated above, in Latgale the characteristics of the degree of commercialization of both of these festivity groups differs. The survey revealed a closer bond of state festivities with commerce.

The exposedness of calendar traditional and religious festivities to the rules of commerce is most often accentuated by male respondents from Pskov region (65.57%), respondents of age group "30–34 years of age" (79.49%), respondents who identified their ethnicity as "other" (92%), people having secondary education (66.23%), respondents having several children under age in their families (88.89%), urban residents (62.10%). This opinion is not directly determined by respondents' marital status [15].

Regarding festive attributes, this group is dominated in the region by Easter (in Latgale – Christmas), the thematic goods are regularly bought by 44.5% of the total respondents. In most cases these are female respondents (67.81%), people aged from 60 to 64 (74.29%), Russians (48.30%), respondents with higher education (50%), the widowed (70%) irrespectively of the number of children under age in families and the place of residence [16].

Availability of Easter attributes and the use of this festivity for commercial purposes are characterized also in interviews:

"Sure, sure. People make money in all possible ways. These are shops, first and foremost. Need something – go and buy, don't need – pass it by, pass by. I don't force you to buy things. Things are offered – many would buy them – eggs, like presents, those, those, all kind of, for presents..." (female, 59, Russian, Opochka region, Opochka)

"Well, if it's commerce, like stark commerce, then it's, of course, before Easter, all that. [...] Yes, most strongly. Those eggs, say, all the rest. [...] You know, all those expensive ones, nothing like that is needed for Easter, so." (female, 66, Russian, Pskov region, Zagorici)

Also in Pskov region Christmas attributes are on high demand: they are regularly bought by 33.3% of the total respondents, most actively by females (47.95%), people aged from 50 to 54 (60%), Ukrainians residing in the region (81.82%), people having higher education (36.10%), the widowed (65%), respondents having one – two under age children in families (42.86%) irrespectively of their place of residence [17]. However, as pointed out by the residents

during interviews, the region and the state on the whole are not comparable as regards the consumption at this festival to Western Europe where, in their opinion, Christmas has become much more commercialized:

“[...] Christmas abroad, yes, we know western environment, they have all those Christmas sales, discounts and all, we don't have it.” (female, 66, Russian, Pskov region, Zagorici)

It must be noted that the demand of other traditional calendar festivities in the region on the whole is very low. For instance, Kupala Night symbols and attributes for celebrating it are regularly bought by just 5% of the total respondents of the region, though the festivity as such is mostly characterized by them as something interesting and even exotic. Other festivities of the above-mentioned group were not specifically highlighted in the context of commercialization.

Identical to respondents from Latgale, a large number of participants of the questionnaire conducted in Russia are certain that nowadays *state holidays* are also greatly related to commerce. Reply “fully related” was chosen by 54.4% of the total surveyed residents of Pskov region. Most often these were representatives of both the younger (“20–24 years of age” – 78.95%, “25–29 years of age” – 79.17%) and older generation (“65–69 years of age” – 88%), Russians (59.18%) and local Ukrainians (91.67%), people having secondary education (55.63%), unmarried respondents (73.91%), respondents having three and more children under age in their families (81.82%). In this respect, two demographical indicators are not determining – respondents' gender and place of residence [18].

However, as shown by the questionnaire results, the thematic produce of this festivity group is rather little demanded in the region. Hence, attributes of Russia Day are regularly bought by 4.7% of the total surveyed, most often people aged between 25 and 29 (20%), Russians (3.74%), single respondents (13.04%), urban residents (6.02%) [19]; the same concerns the produce related to Unity Day that is regularly bought by the same group of respondents: 4.3% of the total number of the surveyed, mostly people aged between 25 and 29 (20.83%), Russians (3.4%), single respondents (13.04%), urban residents (5.62%) [20]. During interviews this fact was not commented.

Identical to respondents from Latgale, residents of Pskov region state that family celebrations have recently become exposed to processes of commercialization – 28.7% of respondents expressed the opinion that this relatedness is full. This opinion is more insistently defended by younger respondents from the region (“15–19 years of age” – 54.55%, “25–29 years of age” – 54.17%) and opposed by older



generation people ("65–69 years of age" – 73.08%, "70+ years of age" – 100%). This opinion is mostly held by the Russians (29.49%) and local Ukrainians (75%), single respondents (44.68%), people having three and more under age children in their families (40%), urban residents (34.54%) irrespective of gender and education level [21].

Finally, the trend that unites both statistical regions is the popularity of New Year and the great demand for its attributes. According to the questionnaire data, in Pskov region this produce is regularly bought by 68% of the total number of respondents. The group of regular buyers of it includes females (88.44%), both younger ("20–24 years of age" – 84.21%), medium ("40–44 years of age" – 87.50%), and older generation ("60–64 years of age" – 100%) representatives, Russians (76.19%) and local Ukrainians (100%), people having higher education (79.02%), single respondents (91.30%), those who have one or two under age children in families (77.78%). These opinions are not determined by respondents' place of residence [22].

By interviewees from Pskov region New Year is characterized mostly in the context of advertising industry.

## CONCLUSION

Commercialization of festivity culture as one of the major forms of contemporary festive culture transformations was determined not only by the scientific validity of this topic but also the ideas of interviewees and respondents, that is, their certainty that festivities are constantly turning into commodity, that is defined as a serious condition to be taken into consideration.

As stated by the surveyed residents of Latvia and Russia, currently there are on-going processes of commercialization in the festivity segment in these countries that concern all groups of festivities: to a greater degree – adopted, state, traditional calendar and religious festivities (in Latgale those are Christmas, Easter, Līgo/Jāņi, and St. Valentine's Day; in Pskov region – Easter and Christmas), less but growing obviously – family celebrations (birthday parties, weddings, jubilees). Extremely popular and commercially profitable product in the whole border territory under study is New Year – a public festivity form with a status hard to define. At the same time, the intensity of the processes of commercialization differs significantly: in Latgale region, the same as in Western Europe on the whole, it is stronger. An important argument in this respect is the fact that, among the consumers of festive produce, the number of older age people and rural residents is constantly growing (it is clearly revealed in

the example of Easter). The same can be stated concerning the reaction of the local residents to the on-going processes in contemporary festive culture: residents of Latgale have had a closer connection with festivity commercialization, they grow accustomed to these conditions and gradually feel better in the role of the consumers of festivity produce. A counter-reaction to these trends in the region is the trend of decommercialization that is not yet as broadly manifested as the former (the surveyed Latvians were those who mostly reflected on the need for preserving culture and moral values under the conditions of consumerist society), yet it is to be analysed in a separate study as an intrinsic part of contemporary festive culture perception and development.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

- [1] Gender: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.008, p-value = 0.878; MWUT: p-value = 0.878; education: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.088, p-value = 0.076; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions; place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.083, p-value = 0.093; MWUT: p-value = 0.093.
- [2] For instance, in opposition to St. Valentine's Day, Halloween's attributes are bought by the surveyed respondents much more seldom (just 2.1% from the surveyed total number of residents from Latgale do it on regular basis); they are mostly young people ("15–19 years of age" – 8.70%), Polish residing in Latgale (4.35%), respondents living in unmarried cohabitation (4.35%), urban residents (3.70%). So low indicators are accountable for by the fact that the survey did not include children younger than 15 years of age.
- [3] Gender: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.063, p-value = 0.206; MWUT: p-value = 0.205; number of children in family: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.060, p-value = 0.224; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions; place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.062, p-value = 0.207; MWUT: p-value = 0.207.
- [4] Proclamation Day of the RL: number of children in family: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.045, p-value = 0.359; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions; place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.036, p-value = 0.471; MWUT: p-value = 0.470.  
Lāčplēsis Day: gender: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.071, p-value = 0.150; MWUT: p-value = 0.150; number of children in family: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.032, p-value = 0.521; MWUT:

- p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions; place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.088, p-value = 0.076; MWUT: p-value = 0.076.
- [5] This joint group is singled out because sometimes it is impossible to clearly define the status of a particular festivity – religious or calendar.
- [6] Number of children in family: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.042, p-value = 0.400; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions.
- [7] Place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.001, p-value = 0.979; MWUT: p-value = 0.979.
- [8] Gender: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.084, p-value = 0.091; MWUT: p-value = 0.091; education: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.021, p-value = 0.669; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions; number of children in family: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.076, p-value = 0.122; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions.
- [9] Gender: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.061, p-value = 0.220; MWUT: p-value = 0.219; place of residence: MWUT: p-value = 0.049, p-value = 0.322; MWUT: p-value = 0.322.
- [10] Number of children in family: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.039, p-value = 0.432; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions; place of residence:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.010, p-value = 0.847; MWUT: p-value = 0.847.
- [11] Gender: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.068, p-value = 0.170; MWUT: p-value = 0.169; education: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.009, p-value = 0.850; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions; number of children in family: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.075, p-value = 0.130; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions; place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.072, p-value = 0.143; MWUT: p-value = 0.143.
- [12] Gender: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.042, p-value = 0.475; MWUT: p-value = 0.474; number of children in family: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.020, p-value = 0.738; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions; place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.083, p-value = 0.162, MWUT: p-value = 0.161.
- [13] Education: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.038, p-value = 0.525; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions; place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.026, p-value = 0.660; MWUT: p-value = 0.659.
- [14] Ethnicity: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.044, p-value = 0.459; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions;

- education: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.071, p-value = 0.230; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions;
- marital status: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.078, p-value = 0.188; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions;
- place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.054, p-value = 0.366; MWUT: p-value = 0.365.
- [15] Marital status: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.096, p-value = 0.107; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions.
- [16] Number of children in family: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.029, p-value = 0.625; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions; place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.025, p-value = 0.676; MWUT: p-value = 0.675.
- [17] Place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.024, p-value = 0.689; MWUT: p-value = 0.688.
- [18] Gender: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.027, p-value = 0.650; MWUT: p-value = 0.649; place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.115, p-value = 0.053; MWUT: p-value = 0.053.
- [19] This opinion is not fully determined by respondents' gender (SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.000, p-value = 0.997; MWUT: p-value = 0.997) and education (SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.032, p-value = 0.590; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions).
- [20] This opinion is not fully determined by respondents' gender (SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.003, p-value = 0.966; MWUT: p-value = 0.966), education (SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = 0.030, p-value = 0.618; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions), number of children in family (SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.064, p-value = 0.279; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions).
- [21] Gender: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.092, p-value = 0.122; MWUT: p-value = 0.122, education: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.098, p-value = 0.097; MWUT: p-value more than 0.05 in all comparable positions.
- [22] Place of residence: SRCC:  $\rho$  (Spearman) = - 0.082, p-value = 0.165; MWUT: p-value = 0.165.

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