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**CULTURAL EVENTS IN THE CREATIVE SPACE OF VELIKY**  
**NOVGOROD**

Natalya Prokofieva (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University, Veliky Novgorod, Russian Federation  
Natalya.Prokofieva@novsu.ru

**Abstract**

The event industry in the world is becoming the driving force needed to revitalize the creative space of cities. Therefore, the problems of the formation of the urban event industry in recent years have attracted close attention from researchers. The important role of cultural events in the process of integrating urbanized landscapes into the sphere of the economy of experience is noted. An analysis of Novgorod historical, ethnographic and gastronomic festivals as a form of event tourism that ensures the development of “cities with a rich history” that use events strategically to improve the quality of life. It is important to identify the conditions when such historical festivals can become the main creative centers, generating innovative tourism products. In particular, it is necessary to determine the role of event projects in the development of creative strategies, as well as in the creation of cultural products in the field of economics and event tourism. It is argued that through effective planning and selection of events, urban events are being updated as a resource that connects the local community with the creative sector and tourists.

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*Keywords:* City festivals, cultural heritage, cultural events, creative industry, event tourism



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## 1. Introduction

Historical festivals are open-air events organized in historic places of cities and districts, usually lasting two to three days. The organizers of the festivals use the surrounding natural and architectural landscape, which creates a special atmosphere. In this special space, stage platforms are set up where events take place. The tent camp of warriors, which is a reconstruction of the life of the camp of the Varangian squads of the 10th-11th centuries, is used as theatrical scenery of the historical festival “Knyazh'ya bratchina” and the early Middle Ages on the territory of Ancient Rus, and organized residential areas of the X-XI centuries. Historical sites and cultural heritage are central themes and major attractions here. Within the boundaries of the festival, a certain historical period is recreated, historical correspondence is established, and authenticity is formed. Historical festivals are a type of event tourism. One of the brightest historical festivals in Russia is the festival of musical antiquities “Slovisha”, which was first held in August 2017, and has been held annually in Veliky Novgorod since then. Another festival of medieval music, martial arts and crafts “Knyazh'ya bratchina” in 2015–2018 was held in the city of Staraya Russa. Since 2019, the festival, as conceived by the organizers, has returned to Veliky Novgorod to the Rurikovo Gorodishche. The deployment of the festival events in the historical location of the Rurikovo Gorodishche in 2019 attracted more than 5 thousand visitors. The most common historical period represented within the framework of these cultural events is the medieval period of the history of the ancient Russian city (“Knyazh'ya bratchina”, 2019a).

During the festival various event forms of tourism are organized, such as concerts, master classes, fairs, excursions, theater performances and seminars. One of the goals of the festival events is to popularize the historical and cultural heritage of the city, area and state. Cultural festivals are able to reach a diverse audience, spreading knowledge about the history of the country through educational, entertainment and celebratory events.

A key element of the historic festival is the practice of reconstruction, during which viewers can observe the daily life of the medieval city. The project is based on the “idea of immersion in historical realities”. Representations of medieval life, crafts, weapons of the early Middle Ages, games, costumes, traditional cuisine and music are interpreted by theater and historical reconstruction groups. The festival begins with a procession of military squads, the main plot of the festival “Knyazh'ya bratchina” is a symbolic theatrical performance, the meeting of the prince at home after long wanderings (Military-historical festival “Knyazh'ya bratchina”, 2018). A number of theatrical and musical performances traditionally perform an “entertainment” function, form the audience's impressions, decorate the festival, while event forms in the form of exhibitions, military battles and master classes are educational and convey performances based on historical research and specific archaeological data.

The costumes and items used by the military-historical reconstruction clubs are reproductions of the original archaeological artifacts. The military history festival “Knyazh'ya bratchina” in 2018 was held in the city of Staraya Russa, Novgorod region with the support of the Russian military history society. The 2019 festival was attended by representatives of 30 clubs for historical reconstruction of the North-West (130 warriors) (“Knyazh'ya bratchina”, 2019a). Reconstruction of the historical past is carried out by local communities, for example, as part of the annual large-scale Tarraco Viva festival in Catalonia (Rojas, 2012).

Social networks, websites, Internet resources contribute to the promotion of such communities and the intensity of contacts between representatives of the international movement of reenactors.

In the Novgorod region, many different event projects are annually implemented, differing in the subject of events, the scale of the project, the audience involved, the number of spectators (tourists / excursionists). The increase in the number of cultural events is primarily due to their ability to attract many participants. From the most “modest” interregional festivals to large-scale international projects with more complex organization, the number of visitors often exceeds the organizer's expectations. Promotion of historical festivals becomes part of the overall strategy of the city and tourism organizations to increase the number of tourists, helps to popularize local history and traditional culture.

The strategies for the implementation of cultural events are approved in the tourism development programs prepared by the administration of Veliky Novgorod. The city administration, tourism committees promote and support the historical heritage in the framework of tourism programs. Thus, the Spanish municipality of Tortosa, in the form of cultural events, actively refers to the artistic and cultural heritage of the Catalan Renaissance. Due to its cultural activities, the city has become a laureate of national tourism awards, receiving the award for “Best Cultural Entertainment Initiative”. According to the results of the Russian Event Awards 2018, the national award in the field of event tourism, the Slovisha festival of musical antiquities took first place in the nomination “Best travel event for popularizing folk traditions and crafts” and entered the top 200 festivals in Russia. The festival of medieval music, martial arts and crafts “Knyazh'ya bratchina” took first place in the final of the 2019 competition in the nomination “The best tourist event of a historical orientation” (“Slovisha”, 2019).

We see that city councils, travel agencies and regional governments use events as a way to promote cultural products for Novgorod tourism. Thus, the scientific and educational forum-festival of musical antiquities “Slovisha” is organized with the help of the government of the Novgorod region, the tourist office “Rus Novgorodskaya”, the Center for Musical Antiquities of V. Povetkin, the administration of Veliky Novgorod, the Novgorod State United Museum-Reserve. In 2017, the festival was held with the support of the State Center of Russian Folklore of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, the Novgorod company “Medovyy dom” was the general partner of the festival. The organization of historical festivals is understood as a way to attract tourists and increase economic activity; local authorities, as a rule, provide broad support, investing large financial investments in the development of urban infrastructure and territories. These actions, for example, contribute to the preservation and use of cultural heritage monuments in historical programs in order to attract a tourist flow to the city. (Rojas, 2010).

Cultural events in the form of historical festivals contribute to the popularization and promotion of striking historical events and eras, everyday and material culture. The legacy of the past includes archaeological evidence, landmarks, traditional crafts and trades, traditional cuisine, as well as intangible cultural heritage, oral traditions, etc. Planning cultural events based on the appeal to cultural heritage stimulates educational activities, as well as intensifies tourism activities, activities to revive the economy. (Rojas, 2012).

## 2. Problem Statement

Cultural events shape the activity and development needed to revitalize the city's creative space. Therefore, the problems of the formation of the urban event industry in recent years have attracted close attention from researchers. Thus, the Edinburgh Festival is seen as a form of “creative tourism”. Richards and Palmer (2010) characterize “cities with a rich history” in which the strategy of promoting historical dates is implemented, among other things, to improve the quality of life of residents. Through careful design and selection of events, events are said to act as a link between the local creative community, tourists and city residents. So, Jakob (2012) analyzed the process of “leveling” the districts in New York and Berlin, in which event elements lead to the development of gentrification processes.

Research data prove that events are the driving force behind various urban processes. The event industry as a complex of creative spaces is considered in the work of Larson (2009) in the case of the Danish Roskilde, as well as in the example of Warsaw and Stockholm (Johansson & Kociatkiewicz, 2011). It indirectly reveals the relationship between creative events and the formation of urban cultural landscapes as part of the creative economy.

Often, cultural events can become the main creative centers, generating new cultural products, as happened, for example, in Barcelona with the festival of avant-garde music. The Sonar Festival is also currently taking place in Sao Paulo, Tokyo, Cape Town, and the festival's outing tour of American cities took place in 2012. The wide scale of the festival opens up opportunities for additional income and advertising promotion.

Aalst and Melik addressed the issue of transferring the North Sea Jazz Festival to Rotterdam in 2006, highlighting the problem of city interaction with a big event (Van Aalst & van Melik, 2012). In previous years, the venue was The Hague. Their research showed that festival goers as a result became more committed to the creative event than to the venue. This emphasizes the importance of events in the functioning of the space or city where they are organized. Lange (2011) notes that festivals “play an important role in the creation of special markets, as well as in the creation of symbolic and cultural values in these industries”. World creative events such as the Cannes Film Festival, Paris Fashion Week, Edinburgh Festival can set up a creative environment, bring creative people together for discussion and form a creative space for work and communication. Art festivals are involved in the process of cultural branding of the image of cities and territories (Johansson & Kociatkiewicz, 2011). At the same time, using the example of a regional festival in Loule in Portugal, researchers have found that, although cultural and creative events can be successful in the process of revival space, individual events alone are not enough to form an effective brand (Carvalho et al., 2016).

In addition, the authors analyze and develop a classification of events for the perception of history and historical events held within the framework of the festivals. Based on these data, for example, features of the tourism industry during the current economic crisis are revealed (Richards, 2013). Within the framework of events, many social contacts take place: common interaction leads to the transformation of a place into a territory of social participation. The organizers of the festival assume the spatial dimensions of the event, and visitors themselves begin to interact with spatial possibilities in a special way, forming their “own program” (Lange, 2006, p. 27).

Cultural events are included in the process of creative interaction between participants and representatives of local creative forces, bringing together significant urban groups and communities. Thus, new social and cultural ties are created in the city, as happens, for example, during the Prague Fringe Festival (Hollands, 2010). Olsen analyzes the process of interaction between the festival movement, creativity and city politics (Olsen, 2012). The researcher suggests ‘Rethinking festivals as heterotopies with high potential for experiments with urban spaces’ (Olsen, 2012, p. 18). The City is committed to organizing creative festivals in a city to implement wider cultural policies, such as the development of creative industries, the example of Liverpool (Campbell, 2011), or cultural tourism, an example of city art festivals (Quinn, 2005). The organization of thematic festivals, fairs and markets in Catalonia is a traditional activity in the context of urban tourism development. Cultural events on the topic of history reconstruction are based in part on the concept of living history or reconstruction. These events take many forms: street markets, fairs, historical festivals or celebrations. Even in the crisis year of 2008, the number of fairs only increased. The analysis of the reasons for the growth in the field of organizing cultural events is given (Rojas, 2012).

### **3. Research Questions**

The role of urban cultural events as creative elements has come under intense scrutiny in recent years. The important role of cultural events in the process of integrating urbanized landscapes into the sphere of the economy of experience is noted. The commodification of intangible cultural heritage is a new development trend in the tourism market (Basik, 2018). Given the mobility of the creative class, the question of how to embed and harness the creativity of events remains a key issue for cities around the world. It is important to identify the conditions when cultural events can become the main creative centers, giving rise to innovative tourism products. In particular, it is necessary to determine the role of event projects in the development of creative strategies, as well as in the creation of cultural products in the field of economics and event tourism. According to sociological research, events can become a way of creating new social ties and forms of spatial interaction between participants, representatives of local authorities and the urban community (Olsen, 2012). In this regard, it is proposed to analyze historical festivals, using the example of Novgorod festivals with elements of reconstruction “Slovisha” and “Knyazh'ya bratchina”, as special forms of the event industry, which has a resource of interaction with urban spaces.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

An analysis of Novgorod's historical, ethnographic, gastronomic festivals as a form of event tourism that ensures the development of “cities with a rich history” in which the strategy of promoting historical dates is implemented, among other things, to improve the quality of life of residents. It is argued that through elective planning and selection of events, urban events are being updated as a resource that connects the local community with the creative sector and tourists.

### **5. Research Methods**

The work is based on culturological and sociological research methods, the ideas of modern urban theory are also used, in particular, the concept of cultural industries in urban studies.

To fulfill the goals and objectives of the study, data were collected to determine the features of the organization of Novgorod festivals dedicated to historical reconstruction. The identification of institutions and organizations that act as organizers or sponsors of the festival movement was also carried out.

Historical festivals “Slovisha” and “Knyazh'ya bratchina” were analyzed using the following methods:

1. Review of the official web pages of the festivals, the tourist information internet portal “Visit-Novgorod”.
2. Studying programs and concepts of festivals.
3. Analysis of the municipal program of Veliky Novgorod “Development of tourism and tourist activities on the territory of Veliky Novgorod” for 2017-2023, aimed at promoting the tourist product of Veliky Novgorod on the Russian and international tourist markets (Municipal program, 2017).

In addition, within the framework of cultural events, photographs and other information related to the organization and management of the festival were collected. This approach makes it possible to directly observe cultural events.

## **6. Findings**

Federal and local governments believe that it is necessary to transform the policy of economic activity, supporting certain economic sectors. The budgetary expenditures for financing social and cultural events are often revised with a view to their possible reduction. Therefore, city councils are now proposing creative ideas and projects (Richards & Wilson, 2006) that expand the scope of cultural tourism and present local products.

According to the municipal program “Development of tourism and tourist activities on the territory of Veliky Novgorod” for 2017–2023, the budget of Veliky Novgorod was the source of funding for the festival programs, and extra-budgetary funds were also attracted (Municipal program, 2017). In order to facilitate the formation of a competitive tourist product of Veliky Novgorod, the program assumes information support for the promotion of the tourist product of Veliky Novgorod, in particular, administration, modernization, updating of language versions and promotion of the tourist information Internet portal VisitNovgorod (performed by the tourist information center Krasnaya Izba), production and distribution of image and information printed and electronic publications about the tourist potential of Veliky Novgorod.

Activities to promote cultural heritage and historical sites are designed in the context of the formation of new tourist routes. Historical reenactment festivals are certainly becoming an “anti-crisis” cultural event (Rojas, 2012). The marketing strategies of tourism organizations are also changing, there is a diversification of the tourism offer, new management methods and new activities aimed at attracting a wider audience. The third international festival of musical antiquities “Slovisha” 2019 is characterized by a large scale of the project and a wide audience. The number of spectators (tourists / excursionists) was supposed to be from 1000 to 5000 people. The audience involved included both professionals in the field of folk music and representatives of the general audience, city residents, tourists, adults and children. The participants of the festival were, first of all, specialists (archaeologists, ethnomusicologists, instrumentalists) who study and popularize the true folk instrumental tradition. Also, as guests of the

festival, musicians who use ancient and traditional musical instruments in their concert activities, folklorists involved in traditional culture took part (Slovisha, 2019).

The main location of the festival was Yaroslav's Court and Torg, a historical architectural complex on the Torgovaya side of Veliky Novgorod. Novgorod residents and guests of the city were able to take part in 14 lectures and master classes. 17 groups performed at the festival venues. The total number of participants (scientists, musicians, performers) is 130 people from Norway, Latvia, Estonia and Russia (Veliky Novgorod, Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Petrozavodsk, Kolomna, Yekaterinburg, Irkutsk, Nizhny Novgorod). Lectures at the Center for Musical Antiquities were attended by at least 300 people, master classes were given on the jew's harp and traditional dance. Concerts in the "Sadko" street theater on 23 and 24 August were attended by at least 1000 people. The fair was attended by at least 2,000 people (The results of the "SLOVISHA", 2019). Admission to all festival events was free, which also helped to attract a mass audience.

The organizers of the interregional festival of medieval music, martial arts and crafts "Knyazh'ya bratchina", the government of the Novgorod region, the Novgorod regional theater and concert agency and the tourist office "Rus Novgorodskaya" planned that in 2019 about 6,000 spectators would attend the festival. In 2019, the festival was attended by more than 5 thousand people ("Knyazh'ya bratchina", 2019b). The venue then was the Rurik's Settlement, located near the historical center of Veliky Novgorod, the residence of the ancient Russian princes. The official website of the project emphasizes the historical theme of the festival, while at the same time declares its entertaining nature. Thus, the festival is characterized as a "musical battle show", "a unique show, the mass audience is invited to make a" journey into the legendary Middle Ages" (Official site "Knyazh'ya bratchina", 2019). Free travel on special buses from the city to the venue of the festive show was organized. To enter the festival territory, tickets were valid, which could also be bought online, on the official website of the project. The pricing policy of the festival organizers was flexible, social tickets were in effect, for children from 7 to 14 years old, pensioners, disabled people.

The urban community perceived cultural events as a way of social integration of residents, acting in the context of restoring the historical past of the Novgorod land. As for direct economic profit, the income of organizers and city residents from festivals and holidays is usually insignificant. Nevertheless, organizing events has an economic effect for the city. During the festivals, local artisans sell their products. The festival "Knyazh'ya bratchina" traditionally has a fair, which is divided into two parts: an authentic bargaining with objects of the historical past and an inauthentic bargaining where souvenirs are sold. Visitors are invited to choose a product, take part in a master class on making household items of the ancient Slavs and create their own product. In August 2017, a honey and apple auction was opened at the "Slovisha" festival sites, with the participation of representatives of farms of the Novgorod region. Products related to the theme of the festival are also traditionally sold. In many cases, festival fairs represent an exhibition and sale of local products that also contribute to the formation of the social and cultural identity of the urban community.

In accordance with the concept and program of the festivals, events for children are interactive. At the interactive sites of the "Slovisha" festival, master classes were held on playing traditional musical instruments, on traditional dancing, interactive sites for children and parents were organized (National Event Calendar "8lovisha", 2020). A special playground with Slavic games, street performances, and pets was

opened for the family guests of the "Knyazh'ya bratchina" festival. The festival program includes: a music platform (familiarization with ancient Russian musical instruments, lessons on playing ancient instruments, lessons in ancient dances), a platform for tournament battles (stories about ancient types of weapons, methods of making, an opportunity to try to master the skill), a playground (participation in ancient games, which were ancient Russian toys) (National Event Calendar "Knyazh'ya bratchina", 2018).

An important social factor of such festivals is that, as a rule, representatives of the local community take an active part in their organization. Cultural events certainly contribute to the social cohesion of the city's residents. Direct introduction of citizens to the urban community as a whole in the context of a historical festival performs no less important function than an introduction to festive everyday life.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the organization of festivals is profitable for several sectors of the economy, such as traditional local commerce, craft trade, specialized companies associated with the city where the event is held. Each project was carried out with financial support from major brands. For example, the partners of the "Knyazh'ya bratchina" festival in 2019 included well-known Novgorod manufacturing companies Akron, Novgorodkhele, Lactis, etc. Annual large-scale projects have a positive impact on the city's brand image. It should be emphasized not only the cultural and tourist orientation of the festivals, but their economic effect.

Another factor that contributes to the increase in the scale of festivals is associated with low organizational costs for local governments. The general condition for designing and organizing events is that the necessary infrastructure is already in place. In the process of organizing the festival, city objects and territories, architectural monuments, objects of material heritage, archaeological finds, as well as existing infrastructure, museums, historical reconstruction clubs, etc. can be used. This condition is relevant for cities where economic resources are not enough (Rojas, 2012).

In addition, historical and folklore festivals provide a wide range of cultural and educational opportunities for the urban population. Through participation in events, the community of townspeople comes into contact with the historical past, national cultural traditions and values. The territory of festivals is a place where a local resident or tourist gets acquainted with various cultural, historical, social, economic components of city life: traditions of oral culture, cuisine, traditional crafts and trades, handicrafts. Cultural events, as exemplified by historical reconstruction festivals, are a generator of impressions (Rojas, 2012). The tourist offer is available on weekends. Cultural events are festive and in many ways entertaining, which means that tourists and guests of the city can spend their free time in a special, playful interactive space.

Historical reenactment festivals serve as a tool for the economic, social and cultural development of the region. Such projects can be useful at the educational, cultural, social and economic levels. Festival practices are directly related to activities for the preservation of cultural heritage (Moskvina, 2016). The promotion of cultural heritage in the context of the event industry has a positive effect in many aspects of daily life in the region.



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