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## Formation of the Vision Alimentary Culture of the Region among Migrants as the Method of Their Integration

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### Abstract

The problems of the successful integration migrants due to the fact of recent political and economic events have acquired special political, socio-economic and cultural significance for Russia. Ensuring stable living of representatives of various ethnic groups and newly arriving migrants in a common society is a serious problem for each multi-ethnic territory. It requires the development of its own adaptation scenarios that take into account the peculiarities of regional national cultures. One of the ways to solve this problem, on the one hand, is to form functional knowledge about the features of the culture of migrants in the host country and, on the other hand, is to host ethnic groups in the culture of migrants. In this process, one of the means of successful integration can be the joint holding of national rites and celebrations. One of the important components of rituals and holidays is the culture of food consumption. The multidimensional phenomenon of the culture is particularly evident in elementary culture, the culture of food consumption, which includes the ethnic, religious and mental specifics of representatives of all traditionally living ethnic groups. The food code is one of the elements of an alimentary culture. Being a basic part of any ethnic or national culture and representing a system of cultural codes, around which the rest of the culture is built, it helps to realize oneself in the world, successfully communicate and avoid conflicts.

*Keywords:* alimentary culture, migrants, multicultural society, formation of the vision alimentary culture.

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## **Introduction**

The involvement of more than two hundred countries in migration turnover explains the relevance of research related to the search for an optimal model of socio-cultural integration of migrants in host countries. At a time when migration was not so widespread, integration problems had simpler solutions. Most immigrants were forced to adapt and adopt the customs and traditions of the recipient countries, and the number of those who did not seek to assimilate was small. They did not claim high status positions. It was enough to stick to their socio-economic niche. Under the influence of global economic processes, the constant growth of migration expands the cultural mosaic of society, turning it into a multicultural one. This leads to the risk of increasing social tension, which can be removed through the formation of ideas about the elements of culture, both of the host country and of migrants. One important element of culture is alimentary culture, which “represents the culture of consumption and production of food that is the basic part of an ethnic or national culture, functioning in society through a system of food codes that include general principles defining the diversity of food system options (preparation and consumption of food), as well as mechanisms of meaning making in the field of nutrition. The study of elementary culture allows us to consider food not only as an element of material culture, but also as a certain value behavior” (Palatkin, 2019, p. 2). This increases the importance of the searching pedagogical tools to form migrants’ ideas about the alimentary culture of a multicultural region for their successful integration.

## **Purpose and objectives of the study**

The purpose of the study is to analyze approaches and principles of integrating migrants through the formation of representations of the alimentary culture of the receiving party.

## **Literature review**

*Models of integration migrants in a multicultural society.* Most researchers identify two most acceptable models of socio-cultural integration: assimilative and multicultural (Shchedrina, 2004). Both in the first and second cases, the goals are the same – building an integrated society in which conflicts based on inoethics and foreign culture are minimized or, ideally, completely absent. However, the differences between these models lie in the ways of achieving goals and the principles of constructing interethnic and intercultural interaction. Thus, the assimilation model was the dominant integration strategy of most immigrant societies until the mid-twentieth century. However, after the influx of immigrants, which increased after the liberalization of legislation regulating immigration flows in the 60s, this model lost its effectiveness and was replaced by a multicultural integration strategy based on the adaptation of foreigners to the

immigration society mainly as carriers of another culture. The advantage of multiculturalism is usually explained by the failure of the American and French assimilation models (Schnapper, 2008; Beaudouin, 2019). According to Osipov (2008, p. 109), terminological discourse within the concepts of “culture” and “multiculturalism” made it possible to discuss immigration without encroaching on the ideological foundations of the national state”. Multiculturalism, in this case, can act as a veiled means of excluding minorities who are artificially isolated from the general discussion and are allowed to discuss only those issues “that can be interpreted in terms of ethno-cultural requests” (Osipov, 2008, p. 109).

From the point of view of conceptual differentiation, multiculturalism, on the one hand, acts as a model of migration policy and, on the other hand, is one of the principles of public organization. In the latter case, not a multitude of different cultures should serve as a basis, but the cultural diversity of society and personality, which actualizes the problems associated with multicultural education. This “presupposes taking into account the cultural and educational interests of different ethnic groups and provides for adaptation of a person to different values in a situation of coexistence of a multitude of different cultures, interaction between people with different traditions, orientation to the dialogue of cultures, renunciation of the cultural and educational monopoly in relation to other nations and cultures” (Palatkina, 2015, p. 32).

*Formation of positive interactions of migrants in a multi-cultural society.* Social and cultural discomfort is felt both by the representatives of the local, old-age population and by the migrants themselves, therefore, a necessary condition for the peaceful living of people in a multinational environment is the formation of a culture of interethnic interaction, which is defined as “a set of special knowledge, beliefs, skills, as well as the actions and actions adequate to them, manifested in interpersonal communication between representatives of different ethno-cultural groups” (Kubyshko, 2009, p. 52), which is especially important in multi-confessional border regions.

The nature of interethnic interaction between traditional residents and migrants in a multicultural society depends on the historical past of the people, the socio-political situation in a particular region, and the socio-economic and cultural living conditions. The defining reaction of interacting people is based on tolerance, which is defined as “resistance to manipulation, deception, pressure from others, goodwill, protection of their dignity and their interests while respecting the interests of another person” (Kusarbaev, 2010, p. 18).

The culture of interethnic interaction, based on the priority of universal values of education, respect for people regardless of their national, religious and racial affiliation, history and culture, languages and traditions, tolerance, is understood as “a system of general cultural norms and skills of human

behavior, which characterizes the harmonization of interethnic relations at the personal level” (Kusarbaev, 2010, p. 17).

Since every person has typical ways of interacting with the world around them, which are stable patterns of behavior most preferred by an individual when communicating with others, Bibler’s approach, defining the content and essence of culture as “communication of individuals as individuals”, is important for the study (Bibler, 1997, p. 82). Culture, in this case, is considered as “patterns of behavior learned and transmitted through symbols, and patterns that provide this behavior” (Bibler, 1997, p. 83), where patterns are understood as a set of stereotypical reactions or a sequence of actions.

In a broad sense, the culture of interethnic interaction is defined as “multicultural consciousness” (Omarova, 2013), that is, a correct understanding of the ongoing national and interethnic processes, self-regulation of interethnic relations. In a narrow sense, it is “the ability to behave in interpersonal contact of people of different nationalities” (Omarova, 2013, p. 28) in the spirit of respect for life, language, traditions, without imposing the style and mores of their nation as a standard or pattern of behavior for other peoples and cultures.

The culture of interethnic interaction implies functional knowledge of the ethnic specifics of the rules governing relations between representatives of different peoples, including knowledge of the alimentary culture of migrants and the host country.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of the research is to analyze approaches and principles of integration of migrants through the formation of representations of the alimentary culture of the receiving party.

In accordance with this goal, the study used interpretive, structural-functional and comparative research methods.

Using the interpretive method, the authors analyzed the sources and studied the works of scientists on the issues of inter-community interaction, identified the main problems and possible solutions proposed by the researchers.

Using the structural method, we studied the features of the formation of alimentary culture as one of the basic elements of integration of migrants into the multicultural space.

The comparative method was applied when comparing the value orientations of alimentary cultures in a multicultural regional space.

The functional method is aimed at determining the role and functions of national holidays and holiday food as elements of alimentary culture in the formation of a culture of interethnic communication.

## **Results**

### 1. Food rituals as elements of traditional culture

French researcher, the author of the book “Physiology of Taste” Brillat-Savarin noted that the fate of nations depends on how they eat (Brillat-Savarin, 2011). Perhaps he exaggerated the role of food, but one thing is certain: food is an integral part of the traditional culture of any people. Traditional culture in a broad sense includes all human activities: religion, philosophy, morality, politics, economics, society, history, literature and art, that is, everything that is preserved and transmitted in a given community or group over a long period of time. Traditional culture functions as a system that ensures the reproduction in modern culture of those samples that have stood the test of time and have been tested in similar socio-cultural conditions. Traditional culture is based on rituals that convey an original and unique spirit of originality directly related to food. Products that are used in cooking grow in the immediate place of residence, folk recipes are a matter of pride and are part of the cultural heritage of the peoples of the world.

Living of peoples for a long time on the same territory led to the emergence of common (multicultural) values that are important for the population of the region.

### 2. Features of the multicultural regions of the south of Russia

A region, in this case, is “a cultural community, a dense network of cultural interactions, mutual influences that result in the formation of a certain unity, called regional culture, the cultural space of the region” (Zakharova, 2012, p. 54). Each region has its own characteristics defined by historical, geographical, climatic, demographic, and socio-economic conditions. The most significant for regional development are socio-cultural and ethno-historical features. The history of multicultural regions is formed on the basis of the interaction of several ethnic groups living on this territory, which over a long period of joint life, were able to develop common elements in economic activities and shared cultural values. That is why special forms of cultural life are formed on the unified territory of Russia, but in different regions of it. These conditions form a special regional culture that is distinguished over time from the unified Russian culture, but is closely interrelated with it. In general, regional culture can be defined as supra-ethnic and supra-

confessional, which is formed during residency and continuous interaction of various ethnic and social groups living on a common territory.

### 3. Traditional ethnic and religious holidays as basic elements of the Astrakhan regional culture

The population living in a multicultural region refers to the carriers of various cultures: “ethnic, regional, all-Russian” (Zakharova, 2012, p. 55). An identity formed in this way helps to resolve ethnic and cultural conflicts. “Belonging to a regional culture creates conditions for overcoming ethnic contradictions through supranational identity and regional self-identification of people of different nationalities” (Murzina, 2004, p. 7).

For example, a special regional culture has been formed in the Astrakhan region. This territory is the home for “more than a hundred ethnic groups, three world religions have historically formed, and traditions of peaceful co-existence have a long history” (Romanova, 2010, p. 19). Traditional ethnic and religious holidays of peoples living on the territory of the Astrakhan region, for many centuries, formed their own, special mentality of ethnic groups, due to joint festive events. First of all, it affected the culture of food consumption. For example, the culture of the peoples of the Lower Volga region is represented by 27 actively developing national and cultural societies. These societies see their main purpose in cultural and educational work, the revival of the identity of traditions, language, history of the people, and the reproduction of traditional holidays. Regional societies of national cultures do not exist in isolation, they actively cooperate with each other and take part in the celebration of not only their national holidays, but also attend festive events related to the culture of another ethnic group.

In Astrakhan, since 1994 the annual regional holiday of friendship, peace and good neighborliness “Nowruz” has been celebrated, which symbolizes the beginning of the New Year for the eastern peoples. It is organized by regional national-cultural associations such as: “Şatlyk” (Turkmens), “Duslyk” (Tatars), “Dagestan” (representatives of the ethnic groups of Dagestan), “Zholdastyk” (Kazakhs), “Kyrgyzstan” (Kyrgyz), “Azerbaijan” (Azerbaijanis), Uzbekiston (Uzbeks), Vainakh (Chechens) and others organize several sites at which it is possible to taste national cuisine.

At the same time, you can try traditional treats as part of an acquaintance with the national alimentary culture at such revived holidays as the Russian Maslenitsa and the Kalmyk Tsagan – SAR.

Maslenitsa is an East Slavic traditional holiday celebrated during the week before Lent, which has preserved a number of elements of Slavic mythology in its rite.

In the folk calendar of the Eastern Slavs, the holiday marks the border of winter and spring, as well as meat-eating and Lent being an analog of carnival in European countries. Shrovetide is akin to “Fat Tuesday” and meatballs. In the calendar of the Russian Orthodox Church, this period is called Cheese week. The name Shrove Tuesday, the Week of cheese-fare and cheese week in Russia was used only in the calendar as “the Church”.

The date of Maslenitsa changes every year depending on the date of Easter celebration. The main traditional attributes of the national celebration of Maslenitsa – stuffed Maslenitsa, fun, sledding, festivities. In Shrovetide week, pancakes, cheesecakes, fritters, sbitni, dumplings, as well as various sweets, and cheesecakes are most often prepared.

The Tsagan SAR festival dates back to the religious traditions of the Mongol nation. It is a symbol of renewal of man and nature, openness and purity of thoughts, hope and good expectations. The name of the holiday comes from the Mongolian words Mong. Tsagaan – white and Mong. SAR – month. “White month” was originally considered a holiday of dairy products and was celebrated in autumn. At this time, the preparation of future dairy products, which were consumed on holidays, was over. Tsagan SAR is one of the Buddhist ritual holidays with elements of ancient shamanism.

The evening before the onset of Tsagaan SAR is dedicated to saying goodbye to the passing year, for this purpose, tables are set in the houses, where traditional dishes must be present. To begin with, this is “idee” or “tavgiyn idee” – a large dish with layers of “ul boov”, cookies or cakes of an oblong shape laid on it. Layers must be an odd number, at least five or nine or eleven... On top, they are decorated with various sweets, dairy products, such as “aarul” - pieces of dried sweet curd. An important neighbor of “idee” - boiled lamb rump “uutz”, in the middle of the holiday, the eldest in the family will cut it into pieces and distribute it to all gathered.

In the Astrakhan region, the holiday “Tsagan SAR” is mainly celebrated by Kalmyks who lives near Volga. The Volga Kalmyks are a common name for a part of the Western Mongol or Oirat tribes that moved to the Lower Volga region in the 17th century.

It can be noted that one of the elements that unites all the above-mentioned events is to treat the guests of the holidays with dishes of national cuisine. This is no accident.

#### 4. The role of alimentary culture in the identification process

For modern society, food is not just an item, it is a part of the structure of culture, expressed in the collective imagination, reflecting the preferences of various segments of the population, representatives of ethnic groups and religions. This was reflected in the growing interest in the field of nutrition, the history of the origin of dishes, the peculiarities of their preparation in different cultures, ways of serving and eating rituals. Food is a unique means of forming a person, his/her image, well-being, status, place in society. Folk art, which expressively emphasizes the importance of food in human life, allows one to find answers to a number of significant questions related to the principles of functioning of traditional cultures.

Food accompanies absolutely all key aspects of human activity. Alimentary culture is a culture of consumption and production of food - the basic part of ethnic or national culture, functioning in society through a system of food codes, which include general principles that determine the diversity of options for the system of nutrition (cooking and consumption of food), as well as determine the mechanisms of meaning making in the field of nutrition. The study of nutritional culture allows considering food not only as an element of material culture, but also as a certain value behavior. For example, festivals, religious ceremonies, weddings, funerals, housewarming is accompanied by eating rituals based on the traditional set of foodstuffs, customs of their preparation, and ways of eating. The ethnic specificity of the attitude to food and its consumption determines “the cultural potential of food as a process that can become the basis for a dialogue between representatives of different cultures and faiths. Joint eating (feast) has always been an act of consolidation and identification of individuals as a certain community” (Antyuhina, 2015, p. 247).

At the same time, it should be noted that in modern conditions, the expansion of intercultural dialogue is very active, as a result of the general process of globalization. Different participants in this process constantly exchange food brands, and other people’s food traditions are included in our diet. Alimentary culture responds to the demands of time, but at the same time it forms “reality” itself, being part of the identification process, which makes it a powerful cultural, political and social tool (Yakushenkov & Song, 2015).

#### 5. The value of the alimentary dialogue for the multicultural Astrakhan region

Alimentary dialogue with other nationalities is very important, because through it different nationalities try to protect resources and at the same time expand their range. This is especially evident in the example of the Astrakhan region, where the centuries-old history and interaction in the daily life of representatives of various ethnic groups have formed a special ethnic cuisine. For example, the Nogais brought milk drinks: ayran from cow’s milk, diluted with water, and tkzhe kumyz from mare’s milk. The Tatar cuisine of

Astrakhan is very rich in products made of pastry and sweet dough, which are served with tea. A special dish of Tatar cuisine is *kainars*, which are always present on Kazakh tables in the Astrakhan region. All groups Astrakhan Tatars distributed the Kazakh *boursaks*, which Kalmyks called “*Borsig*”. A popular dish among Astrakhan Kazakhs “*besbarmak*” is prepared in different places in Astrakhan in different ways, adding something of their own.

In the daily diet of Kalmyk people, pressed green tea was widely used, which was brewed with the addition of oil, salt and milk. This tradition also passed to the Russian population with the name Kalmyk tea. Astrakhan Armenians brought their own cuisine with them. *Lavash* is mandatory on the table, and “*Armenian baklava*” is also popular.

German cuisine is equally appreciated and loved by both guests and locals. German cuisine is characterized by a wide variety of dishes from various vegetables, meat, poultry and fish. Vegetables are consumed in large quantities, mainly string beans, cauliflower, carrots and especially boiled potatoes. Sandwiches with butter, cheese, fish and sausage are very popular among Germans. Of soups, broths with eggs, dumplings, pea soup puree are popular. The cuisine of Astrakhan Jews is spicy, using a large number of spices and herbs, nuts and olives.

As can be seen from these examples, the alimentary dialogue in Astrakhan has been established for a long time. The regional national holidays inherent in the Astrakhan region, which constant attribute is the numerous dishes of national cuisines of local peoples, help migrants not only in forming an idea of the alimentary culture of the region, but also in adapting, since they also serve as platforms for the exchange of traditions and form scenarios of tolerant behavior in a multicultural region.

In this regard, migrants who arrived from the historical homeland of an ethnic group living in the region face new customs of alimentary behavior of their ethnic group. And in order to understand and accept them, they need to first get acquainted with them. Inclusion in the holiday culture through alimentary accelerates the integration process.

## **Discussions**

As already noted above, there is more than one holiday on the Astrakhan land, where in one way or another guests, including immigrants, have the opportunity to get in touch with the multinational traditions of food preparation. Indeed, on the territory of the region, national religions and rituals, customs and traditions, legends and tales, and of course cuisine are combined in a bizarre way. And it is the national food, prepared according to all the rules and traditions of serving dishes, that is the bridge that helps to connect the present

and the past, adjusts to the correct perception of a particular culture, its attractions and features, which, in general, is a powerful tool for migrants' adaptation. The ability to touch the source that forms the energy of a particular nationality allows one to become familiar with another culture and its carriers for a while, to become more tolerant towards each other.

After all, in its broad sense, the word "tolerance" (by the way, comes from the Latin *tolerantia*, i.e. patience), means tolerance for other people's opinions and actions, the ability to treat them without irritation. A tolerant person respects the beliefs of others, not trying to prove his or her exceptional right (Antyuhina, 2015). Proceeding from the knowledge about the history of settlement of the Astrakhan region, which lasted more than one hundred years, we can confidently say that the Astrakhan region is peaceful and stable because there is a high level of tolerant consciousness of the local population. This shows that the Astrakhan people are able to live in peace and harmony, listen to and respect the opinion of their neighbor, and, therefore, these people are used not only to teach but also to learn new things, to learn elements of the alimentary culture of new immigrant neighbors and, if possible, integrate them into their experience.

The results show that the use of the cultural food code as an element of alimentary culture during festive events in multicultural regions not only helps immigrants maintain an internal connection with their ethnic group, in a multicultural community, continuing to recognize themselves as part of the history and culture of their people, but also it is a tool for preventing social tensions and conflicts, as well as helping to maintain tolerant relations at the level of regional communities.

## **Conclusion**

Having moved to a new place of residence, faced with a new socio-cultural environment, with different people and culture, migrants inevitably face the problem of accepting a new one. In this process, one of the means of successful integration can be the joint holding of national ceremonies and holidays. One of the important components of rituals and holidays is the culture of food consumption. Food traditions that define unique markers of ethnic identity are among the most stable elements of cultures that can maintain their integrity in the modern unified world. In the context of the constant transformation of modern society, food is not just a food item, but also serves as part of the structure of culture, expressed in the collective imagination and encoding the preferences of various segments of the population, representatives of ethnic groups and religions. The food code is one of the elements of alimentary culture, which, being a basic part of any ethnic or national culture and representing a system of cultural codes around which the rest of the culture is built, helps to realize oneself in the world, successfully communicate and avoid conflicts.

Thus, based on the fact that alimentary culture, as a very powerful cultural, social and political tool that aims to preserve the cultural landscape, it is necessary to study the successful experience of stabilizing social practices based on the maintenance of cultural patterns. One of the successful solutions for the successful integration of migrants is the holding of national holidays. For example, “Nowruz”, “Sabantuy”, “Tsagaan Sar”, “Maslenitsa”, celebrated together, provide mutual enrichment of cultures. One of the forms of alimentary identification of the alien and unknown is learning about their cuisine. In relations with other peoples, food, being the most important resource, is always one of the main aspects of communication, and it can also serve as a marker of tolerance. Each of these festivals has its own gastronomic identifier, as it is steadily associated with one or the other type of national dishes: Maslenitsa with pancakes, Nowruz with chak-chak and pilaf, and Sabantuy with kaynars. In part, this approach allows leveling the sharp edges in the problem of “One’s own – Alien”. Treats with national dishes unite the present and the past, representatives of different ethnic groups, help to tune in to the correct perception of this or that culture, its features and mentality, allows for some time to get similar to this culture and its bearers, to become more tolerant to each other without losing your own identity.

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