

Evolutionary Mechanisms of National Identity Formation and Globalization Challenges to Gastronomic Culture

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ABSTRACT

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This article demonstrates that Ukraine today, like all leading countries in the world, is fully experiencing the impact of globalization processes, the main goal of which is to unify economic, political, social, educational, informational, and cultural standards, life values, and guidelines, as well as total interdependence between countries. In such conditions, it is extremely important to understand that without a clearly defined identity, it is impossible to create one's own history, preserve unique traditions, and be recognized in various dimensions, including gastronomic ones. It is well known that language identifies a person. The same is true of food, which has never been and cannot be positioned today as just one of the basic means of human existence. It is obvious that the gastronomic culture of each nation shapes its belonging to certain roots and is its individual feature. The relevance of the study lies in making a feasible attempt to investigate the mechanisms that shape our identity through gastronomy, but due to the specific development of our modernity, we risk losing our ability to evolve. The goal of the work (to find out what globalization challenges gastronomic culture faces on the way to forming gastronomic culture) and the main tasks that will help to achieve it have been defined. A rich source base and a set of synthesis and analysis methods helped to form the following research results: globalization is a serious challenge for Ukrainian and any other authentic cuisine, as it can very quickly change the gastronomic preferences of the indigenous population, which have been formed by individual nations over centuries. The continued existence of the concept of cultural diversity also appears doubtful. However, this does not mean that national culture should be isolated at all costs from the influences of globalization. This is precisely why there are mechanisms in place to ensure that new trends do not destroy cultural traditions, but rather, through adaptation, careful selection, and innovation, form a new model of national identity while preserving its continuity.

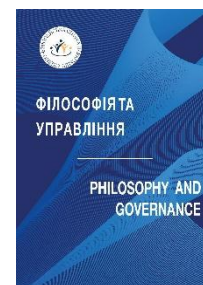
KEYWORDS

identity, evolutionary mechanisms, gastronomic culture, conceptual model, food behavior, globalization.



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Еволюційні механізми формування національної ідентичності та глобалізаційні виклики гастрономічної культури

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СТАТТЯ

АНОТАЦІЯ

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Запропонована стаття демонструє, що Україна сьогодні, як і усі провідні держави світу, вповні відчуває на собі вплив глобалізаційних процесів, основна мета яких зводиться до уніфікації економічних, політичних, суспільних, освітніх, інформаційних і культурних стандартів, життєвих цінностей та орієнтирів, а також тотальної міждержавної взаємозалежності. В таких умовах вкрай важливо розуміти, що без чітко окресленої ідентичності неможливо творити власну історію, зберігати унікальні традиції та бути впізнаними у різних вимірах, у тому числі й гастрономічних. Загальновідомим є визначення, що мова ідентифікує людину. Так само і з їжею, яка ніколи не була та й сьогодні не може позиціонуватися лише як один із базових засобів для людського існування. Очевидно, що гастрономічна культура кожного народу формує його приналежність до певного коріння та є його індивідуальною ознакою. Актуальність дослідження полягає у тому, щоб зробити посильний уклад у дослідження механізмів, що через гастрономію формують нашу ідентичність, але через специфічний розвиток нашої сучасності ризикують втратити здатність еволюціонувати. Визначено мету роботи (з'ясувати, з якими глобалізаційними викликами стикається гастрономічна культура на шляху її формування) та основні завдання, що допоможуть її реалізувати. Багата джерельна база і комплекс методів синтезу та аналізу допоміг сформувати наступні результати дослідження: глобалізація є серйозним викликом для української, та будь-якої іншої автентичної кухні, адже може дуже швидко змінити гастрономічні уподобання корінного населення, які окремими народами формували віками. Так само сумнівним виглядає й подальше існування такого поняття, як культурне різноманіття. Однак сказане не означає, що національну культуру треба за всяку ціну ізолювати від впливів, які несе за собою глобалізація. Саме для цього й існують механізми, покликані слідкувати, щоб нові віяння не нищили культурні традиції, а через адаптацію, скрупульозну селекцію та інновації, формували нову модель національної ідентичності, зберігаючи її тяглість.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

ідентичність, еволюційні механізми, гастрономічна культура, концептуальна модель, харчова поведінка, глобалізація.

1. Introduction

In the XXI century, Ukraine, like all the leading countries of the world, is fully affected by globalization processes, the main goal of which is to unify economic, political, social, educational, informational and cultural standards, life values and guidelines, as well as total interstate interdependence. That without a clearly defined identity, it is impossible to create one's own history, preserve unique traditions and be recognizable in various dimensions, including gastronomic ones. It is well known that language identifies a person. It is the same with food, which has never been and still cannot be positioned only as one of the basic means of human existence. Let's remember how many times we have heard completely true generalizations: "you are what you eat", or "tell me what you eat, I will tell you who you are". It is a pity that the modern world, which is rapidly changing and under the influence of digitalization, builds completely different sets of values for itself than those that our ancestors cherished for centuries. The key goal of the so-called Generation Z ("zoomers" or "digital natives") and Gen Alpha today is to be at the center of the world and events, to integrate into the international space of professions, cultures, and entertainment, and assimilate so as not to feel "different". Under such conditions, the desire to popularize the national cuisine, their traditional food, and ethnic self-identification practically does not arise.

Total globalization has every chance to dissolve local gastronomy in fast food chains (McDonald's and fast food), unless, of course, the problems are seen in time and the unlimited possibilities of globalism are directed in the right direction. It is gratifying that the number of such initiatives in Ukrainian society is constantly growing, and culinary media projects, trendy challenges, and even Instagram boasts of ritual dishes for Christmas and Easter turn our younger generation to face what is their true essence, even if not realized. A great effort is made to restore traditional Ukrainian cuisine by the famous chef, restaurateur and public activist Yevhen Klopotenko, who at one time was active in the framework of the DIGE project, which was implemented in Ukraine by the international organization Slow Food together with the Italian University of Gastronomic Sciences. The goal of the project is to draw attention to those food products that, being part of our cultural heritage, are threatened with extinction. The collective work was crowned with the publication of a colorful atlas, "The Ark of Taste in Ukraine", which contained 85 authentic Ukrainian products ("head porridge, guslianka, vurma, shponder, lekvar, muffins, Hutsul truffle, Berdiansk goby, Yalta onion, etc.), which popularize Ukrainian gastronomic culture at the local and international levels [6]. The relevance of our research, we believe, also lies in making a feasible contribution to the study of mechanisms that form our identity through gastronomy, but due to the specific development of our modernity, we risk losing the ability to evolve.

2. Literature Review

The study of gastronomic culture, its impact on national identity, and the globalization challenges faced by humanity in all corners of the world has been and remains in the focus of attention of leading scientists and practitioners. I. Porciani studies the connection between gastronomic culture and nationalism on the European continent, calls cooking an element of social identity and opposes the process of "McDonaldization" of traditional cuisine in the context of globalism [20]. A. Ichijo studies gastronomic nationalism in the domestic and international context [7]. G. Almerico talks about the eating habits of Italians who follow the Mediterranean diet and is looking for a connection between food and human experience. The researcher calls food discourse an interdisciplinary branch that draws information about its consumers through food [1]. S. Anthony became the editor of a scientific collection, which states that discussions about food in the modern world have gone far beyond superficial perception – as a means of survival – and have become important in the context of the economic, social, political, cultural and ideological spheres [2]. K. Vester studies food in the context of American culture, studying the culinary literature and the role of food in the formation of national, masculine, and queer identities [21]. S. Assmann calls food a marker of culinary nationalism or gastronomic nationalism and argues that the construction of culinary heritage occurs for many reasons, the main among which are the branding of national cuisine, economic opportunities for small enterprises, and maintaining historical ties of the diaspora with their main place of birth [3]. N. O'Brien's research on the change in the food culture of mankind at the beginning of the twentieth century and its description in the modernist literature of that time is also interesting [17].

In domestic science, V. Nikolenko studies gastronomic culture and its influence on the processes of civic identification. Y. Polovinchak argues that social networks disseminate information about gastronomic practices in modern society, demonstrating the links between food culture and civic identification [15; 19]. O. Pliuta comprehends the ways to preserve and protect gastronomic identity in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war and emphasizes that scientific research of this type should go beyond tourism studies, focusing on cultural discourse [18]. K. Lytvynenko argues that modern globalization has such a significant impact on all spheres of human life that it can transform even national gastronomy in such a way that it is transferred from the sphere of consumption to the category of cultural codes, communicative means and tools that represent identity [12].

Despite such an obvious research interest in these issues, there are still many prospects in identifying the impact of globalization on the formation of national identity and gastronomic culture in it [11]. Our article will hopefully contribute to the discourse, which is extremely relevant and timely today.

3. Problem Statement

The purpose of our research is to identify the key mechanisms that shape our identity through gastronomic culture and find a solution to face the challenges of globalism and turn them into an effective tool for rebooting our self-identification. To achieve the goals, it is necessary to investigate the nature of globalism and gastronomic culture, to find out the positive and negative consequences of globalization processes faced by local food traditions, and to develop an effective model that will help preserve national memory and experience and ensure the evolutionary development of gastronomy in the modern world.

4. Methods and Materials

The basis of the study was the scientific works of domestic and foreign researchers studied above, which convinced us of the correctness of the opinion that the folk culinary tradition goes far beyond the boundaries of everyday consumerism and is a marker/code of identity that globalism changes every day. We also applied a set of methods that qualitatively represent gastronomic culture in a nationally identical dimension. The philosophical-axiological and cultural-anthropological method showed that, under the external, the traditions of nations are formed, transmitted by heredity, and transformed; system analysis, to consider the consequences of globalism; structural-functional, to represent how gastronomy translates identity.

5. Results and Discussion

With a clear “bodily” expression and a high emotional tone, gastronomy allows you to literally feel the taste of folk tradition [14]. According to N. Kobzei and S. Mykhyda, taste preferences form human culture, and their complexity and versatility generate interaction between food, society and its culture. According to researchers, food signals a person’s social position, ethnicity and gender, family relationships and acceptance/rejection of globalized cultural phenomena [10]. Scientific discourse symbolizes gastronomic culture, calling individual foods markers indicating the differences of nations. Thus, Canadian maple syrup, Ukrainian borscht and Italian pasta form a collective memory and materialize elements of historical experience, climate, society, political, economic, and mental struggles in it. K. Meyer calls food a key means of cultural research. A joint meal with foreigners, according to the researcher, turns into an important ritual that can bring interlocutors closer. Such a unifying “action” can become a starting point for the formation of international friendship and mutual business, etc. [13]. Through authentic dishes, migrants maintain a connection with their homeland and maintain an identity outside their country of origin. Ethnic restaurants, shops of world cuisines, and “homemade dishes” clearly indicate “their” and “foreign” environment, they stabilize identity and create a sense of emotional comfort in situations that require social and cultural transition.

National gastronomy is evolving thanks to the ability to adapt, renew, prioritize correctly and transmit culinary experience as a legacy. They allow you to fight standardization without rejecting the possibility of qualitatively updating your traditional structure. As a basic evolutionary mechanism, adaptation in the gastronomic culture is associated with adaptation to changes occurring in the external

environment. In material manifestation, adaptation adapted the national cuisine to the climatic, resource, and agrarian conditions of a certain region. For Italians, pasta (durum wheat is grown there), for Brazilians, Feijoada – black beans, etc. In this context, the research of A. Ichijo, V. Johannes and R. Ranta on the ways of emergence of national food is interesting. Scientists address the readership with a rhetorical question: what do Mars chocolate bars, cod and yogurt from Bulgaria have in common? The answer is obvious – all this is symbolic food, specific connotations that indicate belonging to a certain country and even a specific place in it [8].

Effective mechanisms are those that “leave afloat” those local products with which a particular identity is most associated and which can potentially improve the taste, or form a hybrid dish that will become recognized outside the specified location. This is how the selection method works, thanks to which traditional cuisine gets a better chance to strengthen its position in the global world and not assimilate.

Innovations today are mechanisms for cultural renewal of any sphere, including gastronomic. We are talking about technological innovations: heat treatment, fermentation, preservation, kitchen science, molecular cuisine, modern culinary technologies; Cultural and cross-cultural renewal: foreign techniques, ingredients and hybrid dishes that combine local traditions with global trends. This is how the national roots of gastronomy in the space of globalism are preserved.

A fact that is almost impossible to refute is that the most important condition/mechanism that preserves national identity is the heredity of traditions. We mean the processes that allow the transmission of culinary culture from parents to children, from social groups to entire nationalities. These can be old notebooks with long-forgotten recipes, every day and festive breakfasts/lunches/dinners with an appropriate set of dishes, ritual products, ritual food, etc. For the fast-changing digitized space in which we now live, it is very important that the culinary preferences of individual people are preserved within the same generation and even between generations. Then, in a globalized world, national roots will be reminiscent not only of individual foods, but even of their tastes. This will preserve the continuity of cultural development and form the gastronomic memory of the nation.

By bringing the distance between cultures closer, globalization processes dissolve borders and allow “citizens of the world” to interact intensively with each other, actively exchanging cultural/culinary experiences. Conventionally, this is how a global multi-vector space is created, in which, unfortunately, national identities become extremely vulnerable. They either dissolve in external influences, losing authenticity, or are actively updated and, preserving traditions, keep up with the times. Using the example of gastronomic culture, we will show what challenges national self-identification can face and what consequences total globalization leads to.

Thus, any national cuisine is influenced by a variety of internal and external processes that change approaches to the production, consumption and comprehension of food as one of the elements of the cultural representation of the country/people.

On the other hand, the obviously negative impact of digitalization on the national gastronomic identity can be turned into a positive one: support local traditions, popularize regional dishes, develop gastrotourism, and advertise all this in new media. An example of such activity can be the traditional festivals “Poltava Dumpling”; “Borscht in a clay pot” and “Feast of dumplings” in Opishne; the holiday of Hutsul cheese in Rakhiv and the first large-scale gastronomic event in Ukraine “PRO TISTO 2025”, where domestic bakers, pizzaioli, confectioners, restaurateurs and even amateurs became a professional community that will preserve and develop the culture of bread and pastries in Ukraine.

Due to popular mass markets, restaurant chains, the unification of supply chains, when the priority choice of products is price, not quality, and the rethinking of basic nutritional standards, taking into account calories, energy value, certification of the quality of production (proper nutrition, diets, veganism, rejection of fatty foods, etc.), which are contrary to traditional cooking, gastronomic cuisine in the XXI century is standardized. As a result, the gastronomic identity loses its unique features, because large food chains work according to universal recipes and technologies; If local production of products is recognized as unprofitable, it is replaced by global analogues, etc. This is how a universal gastronomic taste is produced (we can often hear the expression “taste of childhood” – nostalgia for products, the taste of which is still remembered by our receptors). M. Dushar confirms that gastronomic heritage is one of the manifestations of identity and argues that for Ukrainians traumatized by wars, famines and shortages, the unification of culinary traditions is too consonant with the “signature” practice of

humiliation through food, the purpose of which is to create a new gastronomic tradition under the slogans of propaganda [5].

The positive side of global mobility is that national cuisines circulate freely and are enriched with new gastronomic experiences [16]. Negative – authenticity is destroyed, which will be even more difficult to revive every year. A vivid example of such a process is the huge queues at McDonald's, in which children and their parents from all over the world are ready to stand for hours behind their favorite hamburgers and French fries. Or KFC chains that attract diners with tempting snacks, onion rings, spicy wings, strips and other unhealthy foods. By the way, in addition to harm to health and national gastronomy, such international fast-food establishments also pollute the environment, throwing away tons of disposable packaging every day, which does not dissolve in natural conditions. But profits here are more important than identity and ecology, and in the near future, of course, no one will actively fight this.

Special attention should be paid to the conversation about food and money. According to A. Baghekari, in 2021, income from gastrotourism in the United States amounted to 2004.57 million dollars, by the end of 2025, 3824.6 million dollars, and in 2033, it should be 13922.5. The gastronomic tourism market is expected to grow at a compound annual rate (CAGR) of 17.528% during 2025-2033 [4]. This is how the processes take place when food products become commercial projects that turn the culturally identical value of gastronomy into a market value. Some national dishes become branded and, with the help of successful marketing, are integrated into successful tourism. How does this manifest itself in practice? Very simple. It is known that in April, Americans celebrate Peanut Butter Sandwich Day, in February, Swedes enjoy almond cake, and there is no need to talk about coffee with cardamom, which you "must" drink every Thursday of the month. The same holidays in different countries have chocolate, cheese, pizza, pasta, empanadas, soups, and maple syrup. No matter how anyone feels about such a mass "honoring" of products, nevertheless, with the help of the gastromarkets and "food" festivals we have already mentioned, forgotten traditions are being revived. Thanks to their holding, the demand for high-value craft products, restaurants of national cuisine, and gastro tours is growing. Local manufacturers get a chance to successfully advertise their products, find profitable markets, introduce consumers to their own assortment and even compete with similar enterprises of large and small businesses. However, in the pursuit of recognition and fame, as well as brands and profits, it is important not to lose your head and follow the rules so that food identity does not suddenly turn from a folk symbol into cheap advertising.

The basic characteristic of global culture is globalization. The gastronomy in it is made up of a set of local cuisines, integrating specific techniques and formats from them. This is how fusion cuisine appeared, which can be conditionally compared to cooking outside the recipe rules. In other words, it is a mix of traditions, spices and flavors. Or a popular hybrid or cross-cultural model of a seemingly familiar dish. Note that in excessive quantities, such practices can harm culinary authenticity.

We consider that national culinary traditions are a resource that is modified, preserved, or disappears due to selection, updated by innovations, but leaves roots that fit with the native home. Media technologies illuminate the gastronomic identity of the people, allow representatives of different nations to try/test something new and unknown in cooking, and incorporate into their gastronomic culture everything that will appeal and will not go against authentic tastes. Thus, the gastronomic space expands, food becomes standard, and individual products become craft and commercialized. New flavor models are also being hybridized, modernizing local culinary masterpieces. Therefore, ice cream with the taste of salted caramel has not surprised anyone for a long time.

6. Conclusions

The study has confirmed that meta-consciousness is a recursive system integrating cognitive, somatic, and spiritual aspects. It is realized through the interaction of neurophysiological mechanisms, subjective experience, and mystical practices, allowing for holistic self-reflection. The analysis of philosophical, cognitive, and supernatural sources has shown that meta-consciousness possesses a fractal character: each level of self-observation reflects other levels, creating an infinite recursion. Both neurophysiological data and mystical concepts support this conclusion.

The combination of analytical philosophy, cognitive neuroscience, and mystical traditions allows for the formation of a systemic model of meta-consciousness that accounts for its ontological, cognitive,

and existential nature. This model simultaneously ensures logical rigor, empirical reliability, and phenomenological depth.

The research demonstrates that practices of self-observation and presence, characteristic of Sufism and Zen Buddhism, can be juxtaposed with neurophysiological processes of metacognition, opening new perspectives for the interdisciplinary study of consciousness.

For the first time within a single analytical article, philosophical, cognitive-neurophysiological, and mystical approaches to the study of meta-consciousness have been combined, allowing it to be viewed as a holistic recursive system.

A conceptual fractal model has been proposed that describes the recursive nature of meta-consciousness, integrating cognitive, somatic, and spiritual aspects. The model explains the relationship between neural activity, subjective experience, and mystical awareness.

For the first time, a methodology has been employed that combines analytical conceptual analysis, neurophenomenology, and the hermeneutic interpretation of mystical texts, opening new pathways for the scientific investigation of consciousness and meta-consciousness.

The developed integrative model can serve as a foundation for:

- Research in cognitive science and neurophilosophy;
- The development of methodologies for self-reflection and mindfulness in psychology and education;
- Comparative studies of spiritual practices and modern mindfulness methods.

The article demonstrates that meta-consciousness is not limited to cognitive or mystical descriptions but is a holistic phenomenon combining the recursive structure of consciousness, bodily experience, and spiritual presence. The integrative paradigm proposed in the study ensures a new theoretical and methodological approach to its study and opens perspectives for interdisciplinary research.

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