

Marina Martynova

Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology N. N. Miklukho-Maklai,
Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow
martynova@iea.ras.ru

Migrants in Moscow: the Everyday Life of a City as a Cultural Dialogue¹

In last two decades Russia and especially its capital Moscow has become one of the leaders of the global migration processes. Many jobs in the consumer services are occupied by recent immigrants. Ethnic Russians remain the predominant group, forming almost 91.6 per cent of the permanent population, but when measured numerically, other ethnic groups number more than 2 million people in the city. Ethnically non-Russian population has increased significantly. More and more people with different cultural backgrounds are becoming new Moscow inhabitants. Paper represents a study of the demographic and cultural processes that are taking place in the city of Moscow and in the Province of the same name during the last two decades. The author speaks about the influence and introduction of new folk cultures and traditions into Moscow community. The paper also pays attention to the process of social and cultural migrants' integration from the point of view of major Moscow indigenous population. The problems related to development of cultures are resolved in different ways. A quite new phenomenon for Russia is an association of the particular ethnic group members in ethnic-cultural organizations striving for the development and propagation of cultural and religious traditions of their people. Young people are being actively involved in this process attending special non-Russian language schools. The Moscow City Government runs a goal-oriented policy in support of development of different cultures.

Key words: migration, migrants, cultural integration, multiculturalism, Moscow, everyday life.

Мигранти у Москви: свакодневица града као културни дијалог

Русија и њен главни град Москва су последње две деценије постали међу лидерима у глобалним миграцијским процесима. Многе послове из области потрошачких услуга обављају рецентни мигранти. Етнички Руси и даље представљају доминантну групу, чинећи готово 91,6 посто сталног становништва, али када се погледају апсолутне бројке, друге етничке групе броје преко два милиона људи у граду. Етничко неруско становништво се значајно увећало, а све више људи различитих културних наслеђа постају нови становници Москве. Овај чланак представља истраживање демографских и културних процеса који се дешавају у граду Москви и Московској области током последње две деценије, у којем се говори о утицају и увођењу нових народних култура

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и традиција у градску заједницу. Такође се обраћа пажња на процесе социјалне и културне интеграције миграната из визуре већинског домаћег становништва Москве. Проблеми повезани са развојем култура разрешавају се на различите начине. Прилично нов феномен у Русији представља удруживање чланова појединих етничких група у етничке и културне организације које настоје да развијају и промовишу културне и религијске традиције свога народа. Млади људи се активно укључују у овај процес и похађањем посебних школа за учење неруских језика. Градске власти Москве воде циљану политику као подршку развоју различитих култура.

Кључне речи: миграције, мигранти, културна интеграција, мултикултурализам, Москва, свакодневни живот.

Sustainable development and cultural diversity

The conception of sustainable development is known to include three mutually related components, those being ecological, social, and economical ones. The social component of the sustainability of development is directed at the maintenance of the stability of the existent social and cultural systems and the reduction of the number of destructive conflicts between people. This includes also its being aimed at maintaining the cultural capital and diversity. Speaking here, I would like to call your attention to the aspect of cultural diversity as a problem pertaining to the society's integration. We often heard during the last several decades that the process of universal globalization, together with historical and technical progress, results in the leveling of ethnic traditions and a sort of automatic cultural integration of the society. However, both on regional and national scale, polyculturality and polyethnicity are by no means diminishing, but rather even growing (as a result of migrations, for example). There are only some ten monoethnic states in the world, with about 0.5 percent of the Earth's population dwelling in them. Polyethnic, polycultural states, multiconfessional societies, multiculturalism are a rule, not an exception. Of course, culture is not something static: the process of different cultures' mutual enrichment, their hybridity, and their integration or assimilation has been evident throughout the whole history of the mankind. But cultural diversity exists, and has negative effect as well as positive, because it often acts as a disintegrating and conflictogenic factor. The standards of international law give material importance to the rights of minorities and to guaranteeing their cultural and language needs, bringing those into correlation with the individual rights.

So, is the ethnocultural diversity of the world, or of a certain regions "something good" or "something bad"? You know that there is no general consensus on that score. Each of the options has its supporters both among individual politicians and among entire state systems. My aim is mostly not to support this or that proposition, but rather to emphasize the existence of multiple key factors that can help both build and level the differences in the society.

I would turn your attention to the evolution and transformation of traditional culture in the modern world in general and in nowadays' Russia especially, focusing on a single aspect of the problem, being the phenomenon of people living their everyday lives in a dialogue between various cultural traditions in a large city.

The ongoing changes in the world are so radical that the everyday life, previously understood as one of the most conservative areas of human activity, is now experiencing the results of global cultural shifts.

There are currently many factors that make the area of everyday life an object of our great attention. The place of everyday life in the system of values is now different. The whole tradition of European rationalism tends to move the world of human's ordinary, day-to-day existence to the background of the hierarchy of values. Modern philosophy's and sociology's recognition of everyday life as a special, meaningful realm discovers social and ethic dimensions in it. More and more often do we encounter the idea of necessity to protect the people's everyday life and to take it into account in the politicians' utterances. Everyday life is gradually starting to be recognized as something of importance.

Cultural differences at the age of migration movements are being played up and accentuated in every way. Across the geographic spectrum, people are now turning to understanding their ethnic and cultural identity as a way of self-mobilization in the struggle for their social, political and economic interests. A most important circumstance that differentiates the social space and stimulates the creation of one's own world in the face of foreign and unfamiliar is the opposition between the "trivial" and the "odd". In addition to attracting our attention to the strangers' habits and manners, it also actualizes our own everyday life and creates incentives for our reflection on it. To my mind, many modern realities make it important to study everyday culture. One of the considerable reasons is the growing intensity of the innovations' penetrating into the habitual, everyday life. These innovations are caused not only by technological progress, but also by the ever-increasing population mixing.

I would like to note that if during the early 1980s it was still difficult to mark any significant influence of the migrants on the everyday culture of the Muscovites, nowadays such influence is an accomplished fact.

New folk cultures and traditions in Moscow

In last two decades Russia and especially its capital Moscow has become one of the leaders of the global migration processes. Many jobs in the consumer services are occupied by recent immigrants. Ethnic Russians remain the predominant group, forming almost 91.6 per cent of the permanent population, but when measured numerically, other ethnic groups number more than 2 million people in the city (Russian census 2010). Ethnically non-Russian population has increased significantly. More and more people with different cultural backgrounds are becoming new Moscow inhabitants. My paper represents a study of the demographic and cultural processes that are taking place in the city of Moscow and in the Province of the same name during the last two decades. I shall speak about the influence and introduction of new folk cultures and traditions into Moscow community. The paper also pays attention to the process of social and cultural migrants' integration from the point of view of major Moscow indigenous population. The problems related to

development of cultures are resolved in different ways. A quite new phenomenon for Russia is an association of the particular ethnic group members in ethnic-cultural organizations striving for the development and propagation of cultural and religious traditions of their people. Young people are being actively involved in this process attending special non-Russian language schools. The Moscow City Government runs a goal-oriented policy in support of development of different cultures.

Moscow is Russia's most dynamically changing region. Migration lists among the most important changes in the social area there. Moscow is a traditional center of attraction for *migration currents*. In the mid-1990s, every fifth inhabitant of Moscow had been born somewhere outside the city. However, in the 1990s and 2000s the geography of migrations has changed significantly. Migrations to Moscow are always selective in the sense that the city "selects" certain groups of the population depending on their age properties, sex, standard of education, family status, income levels, occupation, etc. The structure of migrants is crucially dependent on their motivations. Before the 1990's people were going to Moscow to find a more interesting job or to study there, and a characteristic feature of the migrants' composition was therefore a high percentage of young people.

Another characteristic trait of the migrations to Moscow was the inflow of people there from the Central Region of the Russian Federation, although it was already in the late 1970's and early 1980's that the composition of migrants began to change distinctly due to migrant arrivals from the Union Republics of the USSR.

In the Soviet period the people coming to Moscow to settle here were mostly natives of the larger cities of the Soviet Union, skilled workers and experts with rather high standard of education while lately in connection with the drastically worsened economic situation in the newly independent neighbor countries and in a number of the regions of Russia, Moscow began drawing to itself people of most diverse occupations and pursuits from very different spots of the post-Soviet space.

In the 1990's the motives for migration changed with an inevitable alteration in the migrants' structure. The wholesome country disintegrated and in the period of transition the political and economic situation in many regions of the former Soviet Union aggravated drastically. The motivations and goals of immigrants coming to Moscow have changed, as educational and cultural motivations have given place to economic motivations stimulating new flows of labor migrants.

In the first place migrations of middle-age people (aged 29 to 40) grew predominant with a significant increase in the numbers of migrants of senior ages. Whole families began moving to Moscow, with children appearing among the migrants. The geography of migration connections underwent alteration too. The 1990's were marked with a noticeable downtrend in the population exchanges between the towns of the Moscow Province and the other regions of Russia as well as with an increase in migrations outgoing from the countries of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS). Among the inside Russia migrations predominate inhabitants of the Central Region, the North Caucasian Region and the West-Siberian. As to the former Union Republics an important role in the growth of the population

of Moscow is played by the inflow of migrants from Central Asia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

However, in 2000's there is a sharp increase in labor migrations mostly from the Middle Asia which were extremely labor-excessive even in the Soviet times. Their labor excessiveness is increasing rapidly due to the huge proportion of children in their modern populations.

So what impact did the migration processes have on the everyday culture of the Muscovites? I would like to give several examples of cultural innovations appearing in Moscow.

One of the indicating aspects of the cultural processes taking place in Russia is the introduction of foodstuffs and public catering forms in Moscow that previously could rarely be encountered in the region. The emergence of numerous and stable diasporas in Moscow created the need for their members to reproduce their habitual ways of life there, which also includes their eating habits. For example, since many migrants work at the marketplaces, various Central Asian tearooms (*chaikhonas*), Chinese cafes and so on, focused on immigrants as their main customer group, started to appear at the marketplaces in the city.

The Tajik and Uzbek bakeries (*nonvoykhonas*), baking flatbreads according to traditional Central Asian recipes, could be cited as another interesting example since they started to appear at Moscow's marketplaces during the last several years. Ceramic *tandoors* or flatbread baking ovens for them were brought specially for that purpose from the Central Asia. Such bakeries are usually operated by three persons, the chief baker and his two assistants. However, they do not meet the traditional standards of baking methods and technologies completely. The flatbreads that they produce are considerably smaller than the traditional ones, less varied in form and dough type, and so on. It can be that they are somewhat adapted to the Muscovites' tastes, because, actually, those who buy them are not only Central Asian people but also, and perhaps even more often, native inhabitants of the city. This, in its turn, makes changes in the native Muscovites' diet, because they prefer flatbreads to their traditional rye or yeast wheaten breads.

There are now many restaurants in Moscow that feature Oriental or otherwise ethnic flavor, such as "Hojjah Nasreddin in Khiva", named after a popular Turkic folklore character, or "The Korchma" (Ukrainian for "Tavern", serving Ukrainian food). Another example could be the former "Fisherman's Hut" not far from where I live, that has been serving various fish courses for many years, but now is reshaped as an Azerbaijani cuisine restaurant "The Aubergine". Ethnic foods in the city's streets are another new phenomenon in the Muscovites' life. The fast food industry, previously consisting of snack bars serving patties and *pelmeni* meat dumplings, now includes not just McDonalds but also pizzerias and doner kebab booths.

Acculturation is a two-way process. Native Muscovites, too, adopt many customs introduced by the immigrants. Formerly, a rare Muscovite would buy ramsons, or wild garlic, from a marketplace, but now they are often cultivated at the kitchen gardens. Korean pickled vegetables and salads are produced extensively,

and sold at virtually every marketplace or food store, which means that the vast majority of those who buy them are not ethnic Koreans.

Admittedly, even since the Soviet era, foods originating from the cuisines of various ethnic groups were extensively popular in Moscow. Ukrainian *borsch*, Uzbek *pilaf*, Caucasian *shashlik* or *shish kebab*, Siberian *pelmeni* meat dumplings are known far beyond the limits of cultures that have created them. But now, even more new foods are enriching the Russians' diet.

Something new appears in other areas too. For example, a lady I know hired migrant laborers to build her country cottage and then expressed her indignation: "It's impossible to live there", she said, "instead of a Russian *izba* they've built some kind of a Caucasian *saklya*: the stairs are too steep, the rooms' layout unwonted, and so on". If one compares the living quarters of Muscovites with those of the immigrants, differences will be noticeable in certain elements of the interior, as well as in preferred colors. People coming from the Central Asia, for example, like to sleep on low bedsteads or to spread their feather beds on the floor. For tea they use drinking bowls instead of cups, while the Azerbaijanis drink from small glass tumblers without handles, called *armuds*.

A city dweller's clothes, seemingly depersonalized, in fact proves not to be quite uniform. We can often see women wearing variegated Central Asian frocks in our streets, and headscarves are something new for Russia's capital. Women who appear at Moscow's beaches and even swim in the river without removing their *hijab* clothes can shock the public as yet, but such encounters are no longer exceptional nowadays.

In many public areas, such as cafes, marketplaces, shops and the like, ethnic music can be heard, not for the purpose of creating an exotic ambience but simply because people who work here prefer music of their own. More and more often, one can hear non-Russian languages spoken in Moscow: Tajik, Ukrainian, various Caucasian languages, or Russian spoken with non-Muscovite accents.

New ways to spend one's leisure time have also appeared. The game of backgammon has become very popular. Backgammon is now played even in parks where chess and dominoes players also like to gather, and not only by immigrants but also by old-time Muscovites. As I have already said, acculturation is a two-way process. Azerbaijanis and Tajiks have learned to play dominoes in Moscow; and Tajiks also play football and engage in sports that they haven't been acquainted with before. Georgians and Chinese like to gamble, something that the Tajiks and Vietnamese do quite rarely.

Many immigrants notice that the nature of interpersonal relations is different between them and the Muscovites. A considerable part of the migrants represents Eastern, collectivist-type cultures. That is why, according to the surveys, they see Muscovites as somewhat unsociable and even cold people. For example, Armenian ladies who have recently come to Moscow told me it was confusing for them to find that other women living in the same multistoried house did not associate with them. "Back home", they told, "every morning started with drinking some

coffee together with the female neighbors”. Lack of knowledge of other people’s traditions sometimes causes misunderstanding them and creates in negative assessments of each other. For example, it is not in our custom to visit each other without first being invited, but in the Central Asia it is the new settler’s duty to visit the local dwellers in order to introduce himself or herself. Few people know that in Moscow, that is why when one of the “new Muscovites” baked a pie and rang the doorbell of her neighbors’ apartment, the reaction was one of bewilderment, to put it mildly.

The Central Asians note themselves that they behave differently when coming single or as a group: “When you’re alone, you have to pay more attention to complying with the rules of those living around you. But when there are your own people nearby, you want to boast of your independence, as well as you don’t have to fear anyone”.

The immigrants cannot help losing entire strata of their original cultures. For example, back in their countries, one’s elders’ authority is irrefutable, but in the city this is not always the case. A Muscovite teacher in a school where Afghan children study, has made an interesting observation. She notices that the gender behavior of the children is typical for their culture. The classroom is divided – spontaneously, it could seem, but in fact subconsciously – into male and female halves. Other children laugh at the Afghans’ clothing habits (their girls’ wearing trousers under their gowns, etc.). There have been cases when parents coming from the Caucasus region forbade their daughters to take part in physical education lessons because they were required to put on tight-fitting P. E. uniforms there. Girls are very embarrassed when asked to join hands with boys, and vice versa, because it is not customary in their culture.

Generally, schools can both help the children’s acculturation and, if desired, cultivate their cultural distinctness. Both trends are currently present in Moscow. The city has more than seventy schools teaching elements of ethnic cultures. There are Georgian, Armenian, Korean, Lithuanian, and many other schools. The activities of ethnic and religious associations and ethno-cultural autonomies, of which Moscow has about one hundred and fifty, contribute to the stirring up of the trend aimed at the maintenance of historical and cultural heritage, too. But the problems of the migrants’ adaptation and their integration in the city’s cultural environment are also being solved. The most efficacious and systemic methods here are the educational effects aimed at children and teenagers, for whom grasping the traditions and rules of social life in Moscow is much simpler than for the older generation of the migrants. Tasks like that are being performed both in schools and in preschool institutions that specialize in teaching Russian language to children from non-Russian immigrant families. All this provides for the dwellers of Moscow who represent various ethnic communities to choose between different models of behavior.

It should be mentioned that the Government of Moscow has developed a number of target programs aimed at the integration of all the strata of the city’s populace, which is manifested in providing for auspicious conditions for the cultur-

al development of all ethnic groups that have considerable representation in Moscow. Aiming at integration also means providing for specific interests of the members of ethno-cultural autonomies that work for supporting their corresponding languages and cultures within the city's limits. This way, the internationally recognized principle of "unity in diversity" is implemented while taking into account the specifics of Russia's capital as a polyethnic city with a strongly pronounced Russian dominant.

Perspectives of Russian identity and integration of migrants

How best to combine the idea of integration of a multiethnic society with the strategy of cultural equality? Integration, migratory and social processes in Moscow in the late 1990s and early 2000s have significantly changed the scene. Moscow witnesses the growth of discrepancies between the Muscovites of different nationalities and new groups of immigrants, including diasporas and communities not fully integrated into Muscovite society, which produces noticeable socio-cultural barriers between the long-standing Muscovites and recent immigrants. Some of the new migrants' communities tend to form closed groups based on ethnic traits as a reaction against ethnic discrimination, as the level of tolerance of cultural and religious differences has decreased, leading to a spread of xenophobia which is now approaching extremism (Martynova 2007).

These new trends decrease traditionally high levels of intercultural integration in big cities, destroying the traditional image of Muscovite identity and the values of the unified Muscovite socio-normative culture. For instance, Muscovite identity is set against the identities of ethnical minorities. The majority of "new wave" migrants have a poor knowledge of Russian, while a lot of recently arrived children do not speak Russian at all. People migrating to Russia lack a sufficient knowledge of the basics of Russian legislation, culture, history, traditions, and standards of everyday behavior, which means they are not integrated into Russian society.

According to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of December 19, 2012, the Strategy of the State National Politics of the Russian Federation until 2025 was approved. On August 25, 2013 the Government of the Russian Federation stipulated the federal purpose-oriented program "Enhancing the unity of the Russian nation and ethno-cultural development of the peoples of Russia" for 2014-2020. These documents put forward the following goals:

- a) enhancing pan-Russian civil consciousness and the spiritual unity of the multiethnic society of the Russian Federation (the Russian nation);
- b) the preservation and development of the ethno-cultural diversity of the peoples of Russia;
- c) the harmonization of national and international (interethnic) relationships;
- d) the maintenance of equal human and citizen's rights regardless of race, nationality, language, religion and other circumstances;

- e) the effective social and cultural adaptation and integration of immigrants (Martynova 2013b).

We can state that the most effective ways of adaptation and integration of immigrants into the cultural map of a city can be found in the system of education of children and teenagers who are much more sensitive to the traditions and rules of Muscovite social life. The education system plays a crucial role in promoting national self-awareness and citizens' upbringing. Contemporary educational standards provide for the spiritual and moral development of a young person who recognizes that he belongs to the Russian nation, as well as knowing the traditions of the peoples of Russia and, above all, the traditions of his own people and region. Therefore, after developing programs of education with an ethno-cultural component, Moscow teachers created a network of institutions encouraging complex linguistic and socio-cultural adaptation of migrants' children. In March 2006 the Department of Education approved the "Program of integration of foreign migrants' children into the Moscow educational environment and their socio-cultural adaptation to the conditions of the Moscow metropolis". Its recommendation was the creation of a network of Schools of the Russian Language which would develop methodological foundations for teaching Russian to students of different levels, as well as becoming integrative centers for teaching the basics of Russian legislation, culture and history, helping to shape Russian identity among recently arrived children, providing psychological support, and giving information to parents (Martynova 2013a). The use of this kind of adaptation programs is in line with international standards.

New challenges and trends have stirred up new pedagogical activities. In recent years Russian teachers have been paying ever greater attention to methods of shaping the identity of young people, their civic stance and patriotism. For instance, the Federal Institute of Education Development led by of A.G. Asmolov prepared "Teaching aids on shaping the civic identity of students for teachers at various levels of general education system in the framework of social partnership between families and schools", as well as the "Program of psychological and pedagogical support for parents in relation to shaping the civic identity of students in the framework of social partnership between families and schools". The book by V.A. Tishkov, academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, could be helpful to the teachers of social disciplines. The topic of civic identity formation among young people has been widely discussed in dissertations and scientific papers, as well as in methodological seminars and scientific conferences. In October 2012, the Public Chamber held hearings devoted to "Forms and methods of work with identities: language, education, culture".

To sum up, it should be noted that the latest research carried out by Russian sociologists shows that self-awareness as citizens of Russia among young people appears to be dominant today. Around 80-95% of young people who took part in the survey stated that they consider themselves Russians (as citizens) and feel a connection to Russia; up to 70% replied that they feel bound by close ties to other citizens of Russia. This figure is quite high considering the fact that, according to the survey conducted by the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, in 1992 only

a quarter of Moscow population identified themselves as Russians (Drobizheva 2009, 19).

The sociologists' research also demonstrates that Russian citizens can easily have multiple identities (interpretations of themselves). State, civic and ethnic identities can co-exist for the majority of citizens. The poll conducted in 2011 revealed an almost complete overlapping of state-civic and ethnic identities (95% and 90%) (Drobizheva 2013). Although in reality these identities are differently interpreted and understood by the respondents, it is obvious that shaping the concept of national and civic identities has become an important social factor for Russian citizens. At the same time ethnic identity has not lost its significance, it dominates to some extent national-civil identity. We would agree with the opinion that "State policy devoted to the support and development of ethno-cultural diversity must be aimed not only at strengthening citizens' ethnic self-awareness, but also at enhancing the Russian peoples' sense of inter-ethnic solidarity, at the integration of citizens of different nationalities into a unique co-citizenship, and at the formation of a unique civic identity" (Tishkov 2010, 635).

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