

**BULGARIAN RESTAURANTS AND SHOPS
IN GERMANY AND THE USA AND THEIR FUNCTIONS
AS MIGRANT INSTITUTIONS**

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Abstract: This article is focused on Bulgarian catering establishments as shops, cafés, restaurants, etc., opened by Bulgarian migrants in Germany and the USA. On the one hand, they satisfy the food nostalgia of the Bulgarian migrants caused by the phenomenon of food conservatism. On the other hand, as places for communication they contribute for the social networking of the Bulgarian migrant community. Furthermore, as migrant institutions they bring to the table Bulgarian food outside Bulgaria and together with the interior (and sometimes with the exterior), the Bulgarian music and the used Bulgarian language they contribute for the preservation and maintenance the Bulgarian cultural heritage. The menus of the restaurants are analyzed to see which categories of Bulgarian catering establishments there are in the USA and Germany and which Bulgarian dishes and specialties are offered to the guests.

Key words: Bulgarian restaurants, shops, food nostalgia, Bulgarian migrants

The following text is composed to reveal information about Bulgarian shops and restaurants in Germany and the USA, more exactly: what kind of Bulgarian dishes Bulgarian restaurants serve; in which categories the Bulgarian catering establishments could be classified; how their menus satisfy the Bulgarian migrants' food nostalgia and what other functions the Bulgarian restaurants as migrant institutions fulfill. For the realization of these research tasks I applied the methods of participant observation, semi-structured and online interviews with Bulgarians living in the USA and Germany. Further methods used are the analysis of the contents of the menus of the Bulgarian catering establishments as well as the analysis of photos posted in the internet or taken during fieldwork. The data about the restaurants in Germany is taken from the most informative brochure about Bulgarian institutions in Bavaria [Kamenova, 2015: 144-148], establishments' web pages, web platforms such as Facebook and internet forums, and during a fieldwork in Germany in June 2015 in the frames of the project "Cultural heritage in migration. Models of consolidation and institutionaliza-

tion of Bulgarian communities abroad“ (№ DFNI K 02/19).¹ Information about the Bulgarian restaurants and shops in the USA is obtained through mail-in-interviews and internet research as I had no possibility to work personally in the United States.

On the one hand, the nutritional habits are deeply imbedded in the individual's personal characteristics [**Krasteva-Blagoeva, 2009**] because the gustatory sense forms in childhood as a consequence of the initial socialization and enculturation. According to P. Bourdieu the wish to keep the nutritional habits is in fact the result of the unconsciously inherited *initial capital* of the personality [**Bourdieu, 1990**]. As a consequence each person has his own nourishing preferences and tastes which he tries to satisfy his whole life independent of his place of residence [see also **Krasteva-Blagoeva, 2009**]. On the other hand, the taste personal preferences are determined culturally, example by the added spices which are specific for each ethnic or national cuisine. This means that the personal food habits are also formed by the values of the corresponding ethno-cultural system and could be used by the actors as instruments for ethnocultural identification [**Tolksdorf, 1976**].

In emigration, in a foreign-cultural environment the food conservatism manifests in situations when the emigrant, stimulated by nostalgic feelings and memories of his childhood, cooks for himself something native and familiar or visits a restaurant, serving the corresponding national (or close to it) cuisine. The food conservatism and the nostalgic feelings are closely connected with the migrant's memory [**Sutton, 2001; Holtzman, 2006**], respectively with the memory of the birthplace and the homeland. Thus, dishes of the native cuisine could symbolically “recall the whole homeland” [**WeiB, 1946**: 132-133] of the migrant and calm his “food nostalgia” [**Karamihova, 2004**: 193].² Furthermore, the consumption of certain food contributes to his identification and self-representation in a foreign-ethnic environment [**Matter, 1991**], i.e. food is one of the instruments to express the ethnocultural belonging of the migrant person.

It is believed that Germans eat fast and do not take time for conversations at the table, Americans can eat while mechanically doing something else and that for Bulgarians eating is a part of the communication as they could sometimes seat around the table for hours, if they have to talk with friends or relatives [**Krasteva-Blagoeva, 2009**]. Such statements could be seen as stereotypes which are unstable, relative and could refer to a certain people but not to each of its members.³ So, for the individual's identification and self-representation in a

¹ The fieldwork data is archived in the Bulgarian National Centre for Intangible Heritage at the Institute for Ethnology and Folklore studies with Ethnographic Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences with archive numbers FnAIFN№ 2748, FAIFN№ 1431, PV № 974 and AIF I № 487.

² According to U. Tolksdorf the commitment to the homeland and the nostalgia towards it cannot be preserved in any cultural system but in the “system of the cuisine” connected with the culinary objectivations, in which are kept the social actions and cultural models for explanation and interpretation” [**Tolksdorf, 1978**: 361].

³ Further, the Synovate's study on food consumption [2009] shows that 68 % of the interviewed Bulgarians prefer the fast food in comparison to 44 per cent of the Americans [see. <http://www.vsekiden.com/?p=52095>, [Accessed: 2.04.2015].

foreign-ethnic environment it is more important what kind of food a person consumes and not how he eats it.

Outside the home the Bulgarian restaurants are very suitable gathering places. Thus, the Bulgarian restaurants are not only crucial for the dissemination and the marketization of the Bulgarian cuisine, but are also important social places and institutions [see **Krasteva-Blagoeva, 2009; Kassabova, 2008**].

Bulgarian restaurants

According to B. Popova the catering establishments are crucial social places of the urban space: “A Bulgarian spends a great part of his leisure in the pub, the restaurant, the beer-garden, so that the history of each town would be incomplete and inexact without their unique atmosphere, their constant heroes, their unforgettable goodies” [**Popova, 2010: 230**]. Similar histories are “written” in some of the cities in Germany and the USA in Bulgarian cafés and restaurants.

While for Bulgarians in Bulgaria the catering establishments give a chance for a rest and simultaneously, in workdays and holidays, an opportunity for contacts with close persons, for Bulgarians abroad the restaurants function also as bridges to Bulgaria. Further, there are many bread-houses, bio and other healthy shops in Bulgaria, but for their fellow-countrymen it is more important to have a Bulgarian shop, offering their favourite Bulgarian products.

As of 15th of June 2015 there are twenty seven restaurants, offering Bulgarian cuisine in Germany⁴ (their number changes all the time as some are closed and others are opened) and three **cafés**, offering also different Bulgarian dishes.

Café *Thrakia* (Hamburg)⁵ sells everyday *banicas*⁶, sandwiches, pancakes, waffles, fresh salads, ice-cream, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks but also has a lunch menu, including often *kebapcheta*⁷, *sarmi*⁸, *moussaka*⁹, *kavarma*¹⁰, *guveche*¹¹, *Panagurski eggs*¹² and so on. Similarly, the Café-Bistro-Bar *Varna* (Rostock) offers lunch menu with Bulgarian and German dishes, warm and cold drinks.

⁴ – The term “national cuisine” is avoided because its conception is as much invented and constructed as the term nation and the modes of cooking definitely overleap the national boundaries [see Krasteva-Blagoeva, 2010]. In this sense the defined as Bulgarian and other dishes are more proper to be seen as examples for regional, but not national cuisines whereas the region could be a part of a state or include territories, belonging to more states [**Bradatan, 2003; Mintz, 1996**].

⁵ During a field work in June 2015 is found out that the café is closed since 6th of June 2015 [see **AIF I № 487**, a. u. (= archive unit) 1, 4].

⁶ Banica – pastry with feta cheese

⁷ Kebapche – grilled oblong rissole meat

⁸ Sarmi – stuffed cabbage roulades

⁹ Moussaka – traditional meat-and-vegetable hash on the Balkan peninsula

¹⁰ Kavarma – dish of highly seasoned fried meat

¹¹ Guveche – food cooked and served in a ceramic pot

¹² Panagurski eggs – poached eggs with feta cheese, red pepper in Bulgarian yoghurt with a hint of garlic.

They welcome their guests with “No matter you come for only a glass of wine or a fresh salad, we welcome you with Bulgarian hospitality”.¹³ The small family café *Pri Maria* (Berlin) enjoys a good visit thanks to the offered homemade ice-cream, biological tea and coffee, *Shopska* and other salads, “the legendary potatoes”¹⁴ (potatoes in butter and garlic, topped with shredded feta cheese), *guveche*, Bulgarian wine and *pelmeni* (typical for the Ukrainian and the Russian cuisine).

The layout and the content of the menus shows the owner’s preferences for the restaurant’s clientele. For example, the menu of *Balgaran* in Berlin comprises of only Bulgarian dishes, the names of which are translated into German, but on the whole they look like the menus of Bulgarian restaurants in Bulgaria. In other restaurants as *Lena’s Küche* (Potsdam), *The Old Bar* (Blankenburg), *Ch-evermeto* (Chemnitz) the Bulgarian dishes are described with details only in German, which could mean that the catering establishment has interest not only in Bulgarians but also in other ethnic guests.

According to the served dishes the restaurants could be divided into four categories preparing only Bulgarian cuisine – *Balgaran* (Berlin), *Sofia Bar* (Berlin); Bulgarian and local/ German dishes – *Restaurant Wanja* (Löknitz), *Zur Kanone* (Bad Wurzach), *Thrakia* (Gardelegen); Bulgarian and other Balkan cuisine, i.e. Greek – *Mittelpunkt der Erde* (Berlin), *Balkan* (Schönebeck Bad Salzemen), Serbian – *Rila* (München), *Mittelpunkt der Erde* (Berlin), Macedonian – *Restaurant Bulgaria* (Bad Oyenhausen) and Bulgarian and other Slavic cuisine – *Pri Maria* (Berlin), whereas in all cases the cooks are of Bulgarian origin.

Because of the unclear boundaries between the different categories (exception are the soups and the desserts), the dishes are not analyzed by categories. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, fish dishes and seafood remain also unanalyzed.

Present at 100% in all 17 menus (I have found in the internet) and in one of them described as the “most-popular” (*Lena’s Küche*, Potsdam), in another one as “the most liked” (*The Old Bar*, Blankenburg), and in a third as “THE Bulgarian”¹⁵ (*Sofia Bar*, Berlin) is the *Shopska salad*.¹⁶ Other often mentioned salads are the “*Snejanka/ Snow White salad*”¹⁷, described also as “a Bulgarian Tzatziki” (*Thrakia*, Gardelegen), the “Country salad”, the “Shepherd salad” or “the salad as the shepherds like it”¹⁸ (*Sofia Bar*, Berlin). One could also find salads “*Rila*” (*Sonne*, Assamstadt), “*Varna*”, “*Plovdiv*” and “*Bulgaria*” (*Sofia Bar*, Berlin).

Regarding the **soups**, *tarator*¹⁹, chicken soup and bean soup, labeled also “Balkan” (*Balkan*, Schönebeck), “*Monastir*”²⁰ (*Nessebar*, Leipzig) are served every-

¹³ „Ob nur ein Glas Wein oder ein frischer Salat, wir erwarten Sie mit bulgarischer Gastfreundlichkeit!“ (<http://www.warnarostock.de/>. [Accessed: 2.04.2015].

¹⁴ <http://www.iwanowski.de/blog/2011-01-17/europa/restaurant-tipp-fur-berlin-bulgarisch-essen-in-friedrichshain-bei-primaria.html>. [Accessed: 2.04.2015].

¹⁵ See www.sofiabar.de. [Accessed: 2.04.2015].

¹⁶ See S. Dechev (2010) for a history of the “Shopska salad”. [Dechev, 2010].

¹⁷ *Snejanka* – salad made of strained yoghurt, cucumbers, dill and touch of garlic and walnuts.

¹⁸ See www.sofiabar.de. [Accessed: 2015].

¹⁹ *Tarator* – cold cucumber soup.

²⁰ *Monastir* – authentic form of the contemporarily used word “manastir” with the meaning of a “monastery”.

where. In some restaurants one can also order *shkembe*²¹, *kurban*²², meatball soup and other meat soups.

In addition to salads, some of the most popular **appetisers** are *mish-mash*²³, *sarmi*, breaded cheese and feta, pepper *burek*²⁴, “Country” style liver²⁵, sausages and feta “*Shopski*” style, presented also as “feta Shopi” (*Rila*, München).²⁶ In other restaurants some of these appetisers are placed in menu categories as “Bulgarian Food”, “Traditional Bulgarian dishes” or “The food from my homeland” together with different popular Bulgarian main dishes, including the clay pot, *kavarma*, *moussaka* and grilled or hot-plate food.

The Bulgarian eating house in Blankenburg explains that the clay pot *guvech* preserves the nutritional qualities of the diverse products in them (*The Old Bar*, Blankenburg). *Chevermeto* (Chemnitz) sees the *kavarma*, named also “a *sapid goulash*”, “a part of the native cuisine for many Bulgarians”.²⁷ *Restaurant Bulgaria* (Bad Oyenhausen) characterises the *moussaka* in its Bulgarian version as an “oven baked spicy dish”, cooked in a pot (*Tangra*, München; *Balkan*, Beelitz), only of “potatoes and mince meat” (*Mittelpunkt der Erde*, Berlin) or of “potatoes, mince, onion and tomatoes”, on the top with an egg (*Sofia Bar*, Berlin) or with a yoghurt covering (*Balkan*, Beelitz), “serried with flour” (*The Old Bar*, Blankenburg).

Furthermore, the Bulgarians’ favourite *kebabche* and *kufte*²⁸ are served in every Bulgarian restaurant. The restaurant *Chevermeto* in Chemnitz explains that the Bulgarian *kufte* differs from the mince balls of other countries in Europe, Africa and Asia by the added summer savory and the *kebabche*, widespread on the whole Balkan peninsula – by its form and added cinnamon.²⁹

All **grilled** meat products – pork, chicken, turkey, veal, lamb; *karnache*³⁰, *kebabche*, *kufte*, skewer, chop, escalope, loin, etc. – are served separately as well as in a meat platter in different combinations and with various names. Thus, a person can order a “Bulgarian grill” (*ZurKanone*, Bad Wurzach), “Boyar grill”, “Monastery grill” (*The Old Bar*, Blankenburg), grill “Bulgaria” (*Rila*, München; *Restaurant Bulgaria*, Bad Oyenhausen), “Balkan” (*Rila*, München; *Nessebar*, Leipzig), “*Voyvodi/ Leaders*” (*Rila*, München). Other combinations are named after Bulgarian towns and regions: “Rila”, “Plovdiv” (*Restaurant Bulgaria*, Bad Oyenhausen), “Ruse”, “Obzor” (*Balkan*, Beelitz), “Sofia” (*Sonne*, Bad Wurzach). Res-

²¹ Shkembe – beef tripe soup.

²² Kurban – clear meat soup traditionally cooked as a ritual offering on religious feasts.

²³ Mish-mash – dish of roasted peppers, tomatoes, onions, feta cheese, scrambled with eggs.

²⁴ Pepper burek – roasted breaded peppers stuffed with feta cheese and egg, served with yoghurt dip.

²⁵ Country style liver – dish usually made of chicken liver, pickles, carrots, roasted peppers, onion, mushrooms, tomatoes, wine and spices.

²⁶ Feta “Shopski” style – feta cheese, tomato, butter, green onions, red pepper and eggs cooked and served in a clay pot.

²⁷ <http://www.chevermeto.de/>. [Accessed: 15.05.2015].

²⁸ Kufte – meat ball with added savory.

²⁹ <http://www.chevermeto.de/>. [Accessed: 15.05.2015].

³⁰ Karnache – Bulgarian link sausage

restaurant *Thrakia* in Gardelegen offers “Balkan platter”, “Pirin platter”, “Rhodopi platter”, “Strandja platter” and “Thracian Platter” which refer to the names of Bulgarian mountains and regions.³¹

The *sach*³² impresses visitors with its form and ability to keep warm longer dishes of tasty vegetables, pork, chicken or other meat. As an addition to the main dish the restaurants very often offer home baked (round or flat) *pita* bread (*Sofia Bar*, Berlin; *Lena’s Küche*, Potsdam a. o.).

With regard to the **desserts**, in addition to the ice creams, yoghurt (natural, with fruits, jam or honey with walnuts) and pancakes with marmalade, jam and cheese, banana and chocolate, with ice cream are popular choices. Some of the restaurants serve also crême caramel, homemade cake, *tikvenik*³³ and *baklava*. The restaurant *Chevermeto* (Chemnitz) explains the latter as “belonging to the traditional desserts of the whole Middle East and Balkan Peninsula, whereas each country considers its recipe as the original”.³⁴

I visited personally (together with other colleagues) the restaurants *Tangra* in Munich (May 2012)³⁵, *Bingelsstube* in Frankfurt on Main (June 2015), *Sofia Bar* and *Balgaran* in Berlin (June 2015).³⁶ Everywhere I was “welcomed” by a Bulgarian ambience but with a different touch.

Restaurant *Tangra* (started in July 2011; opened also for lunch since June 2014) advertises itself as one offering traditional Balkan cuisine. However, its decoration includes not Balkan but only Bulgarian objects as costumes, dried maize-cobs, cow-skin, cart-wheels on the walls, traditional table clothes, hand woven carpets on the floor, etc.³⁷ Its clientele features Bulgarians who celebrate their birthdays and Bulgarian holidays there, Romanians who commemorate their Romanian events and of course many other foreigners impressed by the tasty food and the friendly atmosphere of the restaurant.

In *Bingelsstube* (opened in September 2014) even though I came some minutes before the working hours the friendly Bulgarian personnel served me shortly everything I ordered. The restaurant is decorated with Bulgarian traditional blue hued costumes and embroidery. A Bulgarian ensign but also Turkish slippers and amulets³⁸ could be seen on the walls.³⁹ In contrast to *Tangra* in Munich *Bingelsstube* in Frankfurt had to reduce its working time because of the

³¹ See <http://www.bei-kiro.de/>. [Accessed: 15.05.2015].

³² Sach – slow roasting ceramic plate.

³³ Tikvenik – pumpkin pie.

³⁴ <http://www.chevermeto.de/>. [Accessed: 15.05.2015].

³⁵ Visited during a field work in the frames of the youth project “Institutions of the Bulgarians abroad. The church – orthodox values, national identity, institutional engagement” (№ DMU 03/95).

³⁶ Visited during a field work in the frames of the project “Cultural heritage in migration. Models of consolidation and institutionalization of Bulgarian communities abroad” (№ DFNI K 02/19).

³⁷ See also <https://www.facebook.com/Ethno-Restaurant-TANGRA-M%C3%BCnchen-239042729440257/?fref=ts>. [Accessed: 23.06.2015].

³⁸ See FtAIFN № 1431, a. u. 38-47.

³⁹ These symbols (blue colours, slippers, amulets) areshow that the owners are Bulgarian Turks or Bulgarian Mohammedans.

few visitors, but it opens on occasions when Bulgarians want to celebrate their birthdays, name days or Bulgarian public holidays such as Easter, St. George's Day, New Year's Eve and others. As it could be seen from its Facebook page⁴⁰ the orchestra *Variant* plays Bulgarian folklore and pop music every Saturday which, as photos in internet show, move the Bulgarian guests to dance *horo*.⁴¹ In other words, this Bulgarian soundscape together with the Bulgarian arrangement of the space make the people feel like in a Bulgarian restaurant in Bulgaria, like in a "small Bulgaria" in Frankfurt.

The two mentioned Bulgarian catering establishments in Berlin in Sofia – *Sofia Bar* and *Balgaran*– differ from each other in some aspects. Firstly, they determine themselves as different types of catering establishments; secondly, they use different things for the arrangement of the interior; and thirdly, they differ in their entertainment programme for their clientele.

Sofia Bar is defined as a bar and *Balgaran*– as a *mehana*. While a man associates the "bar" with a place with a more neutral atmosphere and a counter, the "mehana" should be a kind of a small restaurant which corresponds to the German "*Schenke*", the Greek "*tavern*" and is concerned to be a catering establishment with a tap-room and a homely interior.

These differences could be well seen in the symbols and materials chosen for the decoration of the rooms. In *Sofia Bar* (opened in July 2007) one can see maps of Bulgaria, pictures of treasures from Bulgarian lands, Bulgarian old banknotes, small Bulgarian ceramic and wooden souvenirs, photos of a Bulgarian dancing group, the Rila monastery, the cathedral St. Alexander Nevski and other symbols, which are more national than folk-traditional.⁴² A clear distinguishing mark is the national ensign, presented as a white-green-red flag on the front of the bar⁴³. Established in September 2012 by Bulgarian Turks *Balgaran* opened a second filial – *Balgaran 2* – in December 2014. The first filial has an authentic atmosphere, presenting the Bulgarian spirit, achieved through the combination of different objects of the Bulgarian living and culture – traditional national costumes, red and green embroideries, ceramic souvenirs, cart-wheel lampshades, a cart-wheel table – and an interior of wood, stone and metal.⁴⁴ *Balgaran 2*, which I visited, offers another hook of Bulgaria in a more decent style, achieved through the use of beige and brown colours and cotton and wood materials together with show cases with Bulgarian wines, Bulgarian guns, and Bulgarian pottery and souvenirs.⁴⁵

Concerning the ways the owners attract their clientele could be said that *Sofia Bar* organises Bulgarian parties on holidays and sometimes also day-parties on Sundays. When I was there (with a colleague of mine) the owner of

⁴⁰ See <https://facebook.com/bingelsstube.frankfurt>. [Accessed: 23.06.2015].

⁴¹ *Horo* – ring dance performed when Bulgarian folk music is played.

⁴² See FtAIFN^o 1431, a. u. 78-89 and FtAIFN^o 1455, a. u. 426, 433-438.

⁴³ See FtAIFN^o 1455, a. u. 420.

⁴⁴ See <http://balgaran.de>. [Accessed: 23.06.2015].

⁴⁵ See FtAIFN^o 1455, a. u. 500-509.

Sofia Bar came at the table⁴⁶ and explained that: “On every New Year’s Eve Bulgarians come here. I put a big TV on the wall and also Bulgarian music. We do not listen to *chalga*⁴⁷ here... On our last Sunday Bulgarian party in the end of May there were at about 100 people. It was organised by the Bulgarian student organization. One of the two Bulgarian folk dance groups in Berlin came too and we all danced different *horos*”.⁴⁸ In comparison to it, in *Balgaran* (2) there is live *chalgamusic* played in the evening every week from Thursday to Sunday by Ivan Tanev and Zara Band. Their clientele includes “predominantly Bulgarian Turks and gypsies”⁴⁹ who prefer to listen to *chalga* and not to Bulgarian national, traditional and pop music. I was there not in the evening but during the day when no music was played. The waiter was a friendly Bulgarian, dressed in a *Balgaran*-waiter uniform, i.e. he wore a shirt with a stamp of the emblem of the restaurant on his back.⁵⁰ Here, as in all other restaurants I visited, the freshly cooked dishes were served in Bulgarian ceramic plates. The clientele included no gypsies but Bulgarian Turks and other Bulgarians. However I was disappointed with the state of the toilet which was not clean and the doorknob was broken as after an evening punch-up of drunken people. In contrast to *Sofia Bar* in *Balgaran* are celebrated not only Bulgarian holidays but also weddings and birthdays.⁵¹

In other Bulgarian restaurants in other towns in Germany the owners organise at least once a year Bulgarian evenings which are seen “as a tradition and [are] well accepted by the guests” (*Restaurant Wanja*, Löcknitz). The eating house *Sonne* (Assamstadt) organises every autumn a Bulgarian week. An excellent example for the commemoration of Bulgarian events is the (already closed) café *Thrakia* in Hamburg. Even though it was only a café it always found enough place for the Bulgarians visiting it on different occasions. There happened to be a workshop for Bulgarian children learning to make felt flowers.⁵² Sometimes the women of the Bulgarian formation for hand work “*Zdravec*” in Hamburg also met at the café to practise and exchange different Bulgarian traditional fancywork techniques.⁵³ A Bulgarian spring ball with a contest for “The most beautiful Bulgarian woman in Hamburg” and completions for Bulgarian humour, music and dances took place in café *Thrakia* in March 2013.⁵⁴

⁴⁶ This confirms the statement of the Bulgarian ethnologist A. Kasabova that “the heartiness and the willingness of the owners to sit at the table of the guests and to talk with them in their native language” belong to the “‘specific’ Bulgarian atmosphere” [Kasabova, 2008: 38]

⁴⁷ *Chalga* – in Bulgaria it is one of the most popular labels for the contemporary ethno pop music, which since the mid-90s of the 20th century is used with a negative connotation [for more information see Dimov, 2001; Dimov, 2009; Statelova, 2008]

⁴⁸ AIF I N^o 487, a.u. 5.

⁴⁹ AIF I N^o 487, a.u. 5.

⁵⁰ See FtAIFN^o 1455, a. u. 532.

⁵¹ See also <http://balgaran.de>. [Accessed: 23.06.2015].

⁵² See AIF I N^o 487, a.u. 1.

⁵³ See. AIF I N^o 487, a.u. 1.

⁵⁴ <http://www.rodinabg.net/?action=news&id=2074> [Accessed: 15.05.2015].

Food shops

In Germany migrants open Greek, Russian and (most often) Turkish groceries⁵⁵ which Bulgarians visit to find something native or at least Balkan food.⁵⁶ As a consequence of the increasing Bulgarian (e)migration, in cities with higher numbers of Bulgarians more and more Bulgarian food shops are opened (predominantly by Bulgarian Turks).

The newest Bulgarian shop in Mannheim opened on the 11th of March 2015. On the shelves there are – like in other Bulgarian shops – rows of Bulgarian wines, brandies, *boza*⁵⁷, plenty of jars of *lutenica*⁵⁸ and other Bulgarian goodies. Its opening was an occasion to bring together two Bulgarian migrant institutions in the city, after it was sanctified by the local Bulgarian Christian Orthodox priest, members of the folklore group *Folklore Fabrik* of the student association *BajGanio* played Bulgarian traditional dances in the newly created Bulgarian ambience. When I visited the shop in June 2015 the Bulgarian owners welcomed me with Bulgarian friendliness and told me about the experience they have with their customers: many Bulgarians come to them in order to buy different high quality Bulgarian meat products, Bulgarian alcohol, lutenica and sweets but Bulgarian gypsies also enter the shop to buy sunflower seeds or waffles.⁵⁹ The owners, family Nikolovi, also shared the problems they have with the translation of the Bulgarian labels in German as almost none of the Bulgarian goods they import from Bulgaria have labels in German.⁶⁰

There are Bulgarian food shops in most of the cities in Germany. There is information in the internet about nineteen Bulgarian shops that either import directly from Bulgaria or via the online store (and situated near Stuttgart) *Malincho.de*, whereby the latter are known as a store which offers some low quality Bulgarian products what move owners of Bulgarian shops buy their Bulgarian products directly from Bulgaria.⁶¹ *Da hapna* opens in August 2015 in Munich – a store for Bulgarian food and drinks which are sold in bulk or in small quantities. Every Bulgarian grocery sells Bulgarian sausages, dairy products, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, waffles, chocolate pastes, teas, etc. *Vera's Laden* in Berlin offers even homemade salads and homemade cakes.⁶² Online Bulgarian stores also successfully function, such as *bulgariashop.de*⁶³, *mainzbgshop.com* or the online wine-shop of Bossevi brothers *Bulgaria-Wines*.⁶⁴

⁵⁵ Bulgarian products are distributed in ca. 90 Turkish shops in Germany (see <http://www.malincho.de/de/index.php?p=partner>. [Accessed: 2.04.2015].

⁵⁶ It confirms A. Kiossev's observations that "The Turkish shop [...] sells white brine cheese, vine leaves, khalva, kashkaval, and boza, as well as the beloved gherkins – real sour ones, unlike the sterilised insipidness they sell in German, French, or Czech supermarkets" [Kiossev, 2003:3].

⁵⁷ Boza – wheat or sorghum drink.

⁵⁸ Lutenica – roasted vegetable spread.

⁵⁹ See FtAIFN^o 1431, a. u. 48-60.

⁶⁰ See FnAIF N^o 2748, a. u. 17.

⁶¹ See FnAIF N^o 2748, a. u. 17.

⁶² <https://www.facebook.com/groups/verasluden/?fref=ts>. [Accessed: 2.04.2015].

⁶³ <http://www.malincho.de/index.php?p=partner>. [Accessed: 2.04.2015].

⁶⁴ See www.bulgarien-weine.de. [Accessed: 15.05.2015].

While most of the Bulgarian restaurants have Bulgarian elements and symbols predominantly in the interior – as in *Bingelsstube* in Frankfurt⁶⁵ or *Sofia Bar* in Berlin⁶⁶ – to attract clientele the Bulgarian groceries often have the national ensign on shop windows.⁶⁷

The name of each food place could be considered also as an emblem of the Bulgarian. Although some of the Bulgarian owners keep the name of the restaurant given by the previous owner(s)⁶⁸, they use more often their first name⁶⁹ or the name of a Bulgarian town or location, such as Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Nessebar, Rila, Thrakia, etc. to name the restaurant. Sometimes the choice of these names could be influenced by the region of origin of the owners. There are sometimes also names with religious, mythological or historical background, e.g. Saint George, Saint Nicolai, Thracians, Kubrat, Tangra, etc. Names including the word “Balkan”, “Bulgarian” or “BG” and the geographical names such as Bulgaria, Dobrich or Serdika are more frequent among the food shops.

Bulgarian catering establishments and shops in USA

What could be said about the Bulgarian food in the US?

There are functioning twelve Bulgarian restaurants and cafés in California, Nevada, New York and Illinois are functioning but most of them are in and around Chicago, the city with the most numerous Bulgarian migrant community. They could be classified as offering only Bulgarian food (*Mehanata*, IL a. o.), Bulgarian and other Balkan food (*Café Mirage*, IL), Bulgarian and other European food (*Mama Mia's Pizzeria*, IL; *Rodopa/ Mona Lisa*, IL; *Touch of Europe*, CA; *Tasty World*, IL a. o.) and of course Bulgarian and American menu (*Tasty World*, IL; *Eagle*, IL). A good explanation about this is given on the internet site of *Chicago by Night*: “Chicago by Night was created with the intent to fuse cultures together and caters to both Americans and Foreigners by introducing new foods to some while providing others with a taste of home. The cuisine served at Chicago by Night focuses on American, Bulgarian, Latin, and Polish food. Additionally, there are a wide variety of vegetarian dishes available”.⁷⁰

From all Bulgarian catering establishments the menus of the restaurants *Balkanika*, *Avenue BG* and *Mehanata* (IL) include traditional dishes which cannot be found in other Bulgarian cafés and restaurants. All of them offer *mekici*.⁷¹ *Balkanika*, have summer promotional lunch menu prices, whereby on different days one can try *kurban*, beef stew, chicken “Gardener” or “Hunter” style,

⁶⁵ FtAIFN^o 1431, a. u. 38, 43-47

⁶⁶ See FtAIFN^o 1431, a. u. 78, 81, 83-85, 88-89.

⁶⁷ See FtAIFN^o 1431, a. u. 34-37, 48, 53.

⁶⁸ It could be sometimes influenced by the fact that the restaurant has already won the recognition during its previous owners and in other cases it means too much stress for its pre-registration.

⁶⁹ In comparison to the Italian restaurants in Germany [See **Möhring, 2012**], the female names of the Bulgarian restaurants, speak for a female dominance in the Bulgarian gastronomy there.

⁷⁰ <http://www.chicagobythenight.net/aboutus.html>. [Accessed:31.07.2015].

⁷¹ Mekici – Bulgarian donuts served with powder sugar, feta, honey or jam.

chicken with rice, rice with mushrooms, pork with peas, pork with sour cabbage, liver *sarma*, baked beans with *karnache*, roll “*Stefani*”⁷², wine kebab, kuftes “*Chirpanski*” style, stuffed peppers, etc. Furthermore one can sense the authentic taste of Balkan and other European cuisine by trying something from the rich menu a la carte (written in Bulgarian and English), i.e. Easter salad⁷³, country salad⁷⁴, *katak*⁷⁵, beef tongue (in butter or breaded), beef tripe, *kavarma*, lamb shank, meat skewer, fried zucchini, chicken strips, Italian pasta and flatbreads, *mitch*⁷⁶, etc. The restaurant-bar *Avenue BG* – advertising itself as the top Bulgarian restaurant in the USA – offers “distinctive Bulgarian cuisine featuring fresh locally grown ingredients prepared in old Bulgarian tradition. Experience our authentic and delicious Bulgarian food around, attentive service, offering exclusively Bulgarian wine selection and a friendly atmosphere”⁷⁷. Its menu distinguishes itself from the other Bulgarian restaurants by dishes like pork bone fillet “*Chorbadjiiski*” style⁷⁸ and “*Strandjanski*” style⁷⁹, “*Shopski*” *sach*⁸⁰ and “*Tarikatski*” *sach*⁸¹, chicken “*Vreteno*”⁸², “Macedonian” chicken⁸³, pepper *burek*, guveche “*Mosaic*”⁸⁴, beef medallion with mushrooms⁸⁵, etc.⁸⁶ Part of these dishes could also be ordered in *Mehanata*(IL) in addition to its specialties such as lamb soup and lamb chop, *drusan* kebab⁸⁷, pork shank⁸⁸, chicken country style⁸⁹, “*Kasapski*” *sach*⁹⁰, *pra-*

⁷² Roll “*Stefani*” – meat roll with pickles, carrots, onion and spices with whole boiled eggs inside.

⁷³ Easter salad – salad made of romaine lettuce, cucumbers, green onion, radish, olives and boiled egg.

⁷⁴ Country salad – salad made of tomatoes, cucumbers, red onion, parsley and crushed cheese.

⁷⁵ *Katak* – feta and yoghurt spread, mixed with garlic, walnuts and dill served with roasted peppers.

⁷⁶ *Mitch* – traditional Romanian grilled sausages served with french fries and pickles.

⁷⁷ <http://bgavenue.com/>. [Accessed: 3.03.2015].

⁷⁸ Fillet “*Chorbadjiiski*” style – pork tenderloin cast iron grilled with onions, bacon, pickles, croutons and toasted with Bulgarian yellow cheese.

⁷⁹ Fillet “*Strandjanski*” style – pork tenderloin cast iron grilled with onions, ham, mushrooms, tomatoes, spices and toasted with mix of cheese and eggs.

⁸⁰ *Shopski sach* – dish cooked from pork or chicken, onions, carrots, tomato, mushrooms, peppers, mozzarella cheese, pickles, spices on a ceramic hot plate.

⁸¹ *Tarikatski isach* – dish cooked from pork and chicken, onions, mushrooms, ham, pickles, potato, mozzarella cheese, spices on a ceramic hot plate.

⁸² Chicken “*Vreteno*” – rolled fried chicken breast, pickles, mozzarella, ham, mushrooms, roasted peppers, mushrooms and sauce.

⁸³ Macedonian chicken – grilled chicken breast with bacon and mozzarella.

⁸⁴ *Guveche “Mosaic”* – clay pot dish of two types sausages, mozzarella, mushrooms, corn, cheese, tomato, butter, green onions, red pepper and eggs.

⁸⁵ Beef medallion with mushrooms – grilled beef steak with mushroom sauce, French toast and breaded mozzarella.

⁸⁶ As a Bulgarian visitor comments “the menu offers plenty of Bulgarian dishes and from the sound systems comes such a *chalgata* that a person from another nationality would not withstand it.... There is a dancing and a huge screen inside, where are played video clips of all Bulgarian *chalgasingers*... [Bakalov, 2012]

⁸⁷ *Drusan kebab* – pork cuts stir fried with onions and mild spices.

⁸⁸ Pork shank – slow cooked pork shank with mushroom sauce, pickles and green onions.

⁸⁹ Chicken country style – sautéed in wine sauce with bacon, pickles, peppers and carrots.

⁹⁰ *Kasapski sach* – pork, chicken, sausage, bacon, onions, peppers, mushrooms and pickles cooked on hot clay pan.

*jki*⁹¹, crème caramel, Bulgarian yoghurt with honey and nuts and many others.⁹² The Bulgarian-American restaurant *Eagle* offers to its clientele crème caramel too but also other desserts like *baklava*, *ekler*⁹³, *kadaif*⁹⁴, cookie cake and others.⁹⁵

Half of the catering establishments cannot be clearly classified as a restaurant, a bakery or a bar. *Chicago by Night* invites its visitors to watch their favourite NBA and NFL games and other sports from around the world throughout that are broadcasted on five plasma TVs⁹⁶ in addition to music nights with Bulgarian singers. Taking a look at the menu of Café “*Mirage*” (describing itself on its Facebook profile as “a café, a family restaurant with actual European cuisine”⁹⁷) you can see not only coffee, cake and sandwiches but also Bulgarian soups, hot and cold appetisers as beef tongue (breaded or in butter), “Country” style chicken liver, *lukanka*, *sudjuk*⁹⁸, *pastarma*⁹⁹, fillet *Elena*¹⁰⁰, *Shopska* salad, green salad, shepherd salad and other Bulgarian dishes as *mish-mash*, *Panagurski* eggs, schnitzels, steaks, *kebapche*, kebabs, different *kufte* types and so on.¹⁰¹ Actually except for the “Gyro dinner platter” and a sandwich named “European hamburger-Pleskavica” no other European dish could be seen on the menu, in which almost every dish is written with its not translated but transliterated in Latin Bulgarian name. At *Nick’s Grill* (IL) you can order everyday not only fresh cheese and sausage filled pastry and boza but also chicken soup, *Shopska* salad and lamb. In *Mario’s Café* – “for the longest time the only Bulgarian restaurant in the Midwest” [LCP, 2004: 154] – now *Avantgarde BG*, one can be served *kyopolou*¹⁰², breaded cheese, “meatballs, sausages, and Bulgarian salami. For dessert, there’s *baklava*, *tolumba*¹⁰³” [LCP, 2004:155]. On Friday and Saturday evenings the café welcomes DJs, Bulgarian Folk and Hip-Hop singers.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, *Rodopa*, now a Bulgarian-Italian *Mona Lisa Restaurant and Lounge* is half a nightclub and half a restaurant “that appeals to families as well to fun seekers”.¹⁰⁵ In Astoria (NY)

⁹¹ Prajki – deep-fried seasoned pork cuts.

⁹² Information about the content of the menu of *Mehanatais* gathered from photo materials taken from N. Vukov and M. Borisova during a field work in the frames of the project “Cultural heritage in migration. Models of consolidation and institutionalization of Bulgarian communities abroad” (№ DFNI K 02/19).

⁹³ Ekler – cream puff.

⁹⁴ Kadaif – baked strand noodles with syrup.

⁹⁵ See www.aeglesvk.com. [Accessed: 2.08.2015].

⁹⁶ See <http://www.chicagobythenight.net>. [Accessed: 29.07.2015].

⁹⁷ See. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cafe-Mirage/116094425082043?fref=ts>. [Accessed: 23.06.2015].

⁹⁸ Sudjuk – dried beef sausage.

⁹⁹ Pastarma – dry aged beef fillet with spices.

¹⁰⁰ Fillet Elena – dry cured pork loin fillet with spices.

¹⁰¹ See www.cafemirageny.com or www.cafemiragechicago.com. The Bulgarian dishes in the menu are very similar to the Bulgarian specialties of “Chicago by Night” (see <http://www.chicagobythenight.net/menu.html>). [Accessed: 29.07.2015].

¹⁰² Kyopolou – roasted eggplant and bell peppers spread with garlic and parsley.

¹⁰³ Tolumba – fried dough with syrup.

¹⁰⁴ See its facebook profile.

¹⁰⁵ See <http://chicago.metromix.com/venues/mmxchi-mona-lisa-restaurant-and-lounge-venue>. [Accessed: 3.08.2015].

there is the *Déjà vu Bar and Lounge Romantica*, where “you will be conveyed into romance of small, magical cozy, Mediterranean style Bar. In delightful atmosphere you will enjoy Happy Hour, Hookah, Eats and Cocktails”.¹⁰⁶ Its menu includes Bulgarian but also “invented” Balkan dishes such as the “Mediterranean *Shopska Salad*” which actually combines the ingredients of the Greek and the *Shopska* salads or the “*Déjà vu Humus*” – a kind of a lutenica spread with added feta cheese.¹⁰⁷ The Bulgarian Bar *Mehanata* in Manhattan (NY) is also not only a bar, which has DJ and band (dance, klezmer, gypsy music a. o.) parties, birthday and graduation parties¹⁰⁸ but offers Bulgarian *banica*, appetisers and different types of grilled meats too.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, fulfilling its function “to generate a path to the hearts of the Bulgarians for everything Bulgarian” [Ivanova, 2006: 182] organizes Bulgarian concerts inviting famous musicians “as Theodosii Spassov, Kristina Dimitrova, Orlin Goranov, Georgi Kaloyanchev, Stoyanka Mutafova” [Ivanova, 2006: 182] and others.

Another example is the restaurant at celebration hall of the St. Sofia Bulgarian Church which on holidays welcomes the Bulgarian migrants with traditional Bulgarian food specialties.¹¹⁰

Some of the Bulgarian restaurants contribute to the preservation and dissemination of the Bulgarian cultural heritage also through the preparation or celebration of public and family feasts. For example, in the Bulgarian restaurant *Magurain* Las Vegas (NV) on the 1st of March 2011 a woman dressed as Baba Marta¹¹¹ gave visitors *martenicas*¹¹² and in the garden of *Mehanata* in Des

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.dejavunewyork.com/>. [Accessed: 3.08.2015].

¹⁰⁷ <https://locu.com/places/deja-vu-new-york-astoria-us/#menu>. [Accessed: 3.08.2015].

¹⁰⁸ Some postings on the website of the restaurant of a foreign visitor informs that in the *Mehanata* Bulgarian dances are also played on such parties: “It’s ok if you don’t know how to dance it, simply do it. No one cares how you dance it. If you’re looking for live music, they have it too!”; “Oh my lord. I thought the Soviet Union had dissembled in the 90s but clearly it lives on in this Bulgarian Bar! I can’t even say how refreshing it is to actually hear people say ‘opa!’ after their shot, and dance around in a circle”. [<http://www.mehanata.com/>. Accessed: 22.08.2015].

¹⁰⁹ See www.mehanata.com. [Accessed: 3.08.2015]. The Bulgarian ethnologist R. Ivanova gives a very good description of the personnel which she compares successfully with the characters of the Ivan Vazov’s drama “Hashove” [Ivanova, 2006, 178-179]. Ten years later the same people are chosen also as characters for the Bulgarian film series “Seven hours difference”, transmitted on the Bulgarian channel “bTV”, which tells the stories of two Bulgarian families living in Sofia and New York [Darakov, 2011].

¹¹⁰ Information is received from M. Borisova, who personally visited it during a field work in the frames of the project “Cultural heritage in migration. Models of consolidation and institutionalization of Bulgarian communities abroad” (№ DFNI K 02/19).

¹¹¹ In the Bulgarian folklore *Baba Marta* is an old woman with a changing spirit. Some Bulgarians believe that because of it the March weather is alternating too: when she is smiling – it is warm and nice and when she is angry – the weather is cold. However she is well-disposed to people wearing *martenicas*.

¹¹² See <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100000725910728>. [Accessed: 26.08.2015]. *Martenicas* are a kind of an amulet traditionally made from white and red wool, silk or cotton, usually woven by young women. It is given to relatives and friends on the 1st March. Depending on the region in Bulgaria they could include also silver coins, garlic, snail shells, horse mane hairs, etc.

Plaines one can see a tree full of hung *martenicas*. In comparison, on the 3rd of March 2012 *Tasty World* welcomed its guests with *pita* bread and honey [**Charakchiev, 2012**]. For St. George day (6th May) the cook grilled whole lambs and for traditional weddings he also prepares Bulgarian *pogacha* breads.¹¹³ In contrast to Germany in the USA, in the frames of the Bulgarian spring and autumn festival “Bulgarian Days in Chicago” a culinary exposition-show called “Bulgarian Taste in Chicago” is organised since 2010. It could also be seen as “little Olympic games for the Bulgarian restaurants, cafés, fast food, shops, Bulgarian import companies, pizzerias, in other words catering establishment serving Bulgarian food in Chicago... with golden medals for all participants”.¹¹⁴ So in 2011 the Bulgarian shop *Mladost* participates with *kebabche* “Chicago’s secret”, the restaurant *Mehanata* (IL) – with chicken specialties in a cabbage, *Mama mia’s pizzeria* prepares giant pizzas and the restaurant to the St. Sofia Bulgarian Orthodox Church – perfect tasty sandwiches [**Bulgaria Segal, 2012**].

A very interesting example of a multifaceted establishment is the café-shop *Touch of Europe* (CA) which appeals to a Bulgarian as “a clear Touch of Bulgaria” [**Matanova, 2015**]. Further described as a shop and a café “there is also a section where they serve food. But I would not say it is a restaurant. I was there with a Russian friend and ate sandwich with *lukanka*.”¹¹⁵ One girl prepared my sandwich and was changing the TV channels with different Bulgarian programs... In a mailing list I have read also about concerts, lessons in Bulgarian folk dances and other events organised there” [**Matanova, 2015**]. Besides, in this deli/ café/ store there is a bookshelf section full of Bulgarian (predominantly old) books which every client could take and read.

As already mentioned in the US there are not as many Bulgarian stores as there are in Germany probably due to the greater distance from Bulgaria but also due to the lack of concentration of Bulgarian migrants. In addition to the Bulgarian shop *Balkan flavor* and *Mladost* in Chicago, there are the chain stores *Malincho* and *Serdika BG* each of which also having an online store. After *Malincho International’s* establishment in 2001 *Malincho* stores are opened in Chicago (IL), Atlanta (GA) and Egg Harbour (NJ). They have almost fifteen departments with products from fifty one brands (most of them Bulgarian, but also Turkish, Greek, German and a white label) of: cheese, meats, spreads, grains, pasta and cereals, snacks, candies and other sweet products, spices, fruit jams and honey, juices and Bulgarian water, coffee and tea, frozen food and even detergents, cosmetics, Easter egg dye coloring kits, cooking pots and so on. It offers a really big choice of Bulgarian products and thus brings its customers “a taste of home”.¹¹⁶ *Serdika BG* is a family owned and operated

¹¹³ Pogacha – ritual round bread. See <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Tasty-World/208503602514383?fref=ts>. [Accessed: 26.08.2015].

¹¹⁴ The Bulgarian Media Portal in Chicago – EuroChicago. Българският вкус в Чикаго – есен 2010. Available from: <http://www.eurochicago.com/2010/10/balgarskiyat-vkus-v-tchikago>. [Accessed: 26.08.2015].

¹¹⁵ Lukanka – dried pork and beef sausage.

¹¹⁶ www.malinco.com. [Accessed: 30.07.2015].

business – with two delis only in and around Chicago – with fewer products than *Malincho*. Since 2011 it provides high quality imported Bulgarian and Balkan products in the USA such as “Bulgarian cheese, herbal tea, spices, ready to bake frozen pastries, spreads, sweets, souvenirs and more than 300 other items” and even an own “line of Balkan style smoked and cured meats, made in the USA and USDA certified”.¹¹⁷ Another company importing and producing Bulgarian food since 2005 is *Hebros Foods*. On the one hand, it offers a wide variety of high quality imported products such as coffee, herbal tea, non-alcoholic beverages, spices, vegetable and fruit spreads, chocolate, snacks, spring water and much more. On the other hand, it produces Bulgarian feta cheese and dried meats according to authentic family recipes.¹¹⁸ As in Germany, there is a separate company – *BulgarianWine* – for import of Bulgarian wines in the USA, which however ships beer, *rakia*(grappa) and other non-Bulgarian wines too.¹¹⁹

Although many Bulgarians have access to Bulgarian food far away from their homeland from Bulgarian markets or online stores, when Bulgarians need to satisfy their food nostalgia and do not have a Bulgarian market nearby, they buy Bulgarian or Balkan food from Russian or Greek markets, selling such products.

The names of the Bulgarian restaurants in the US, unlike the establishments in Germany, have seldom a Bulgarian word but only “BG” or a name of a Bulgarian geographical place such as *Rodopa*, *Serdika*, *Magura*. In result, it is more difficult to find them out in the internet and without correspondents on-site.

Conclusion

The menus of the studied restaurants confirm the observations of R. Ivanova that in Bulgarian restaurants are served popular Bulgarian specialties mainly from the urban cuisine of big Bulgarian restaurants from the second half of the 20th century, i.e. the time when the taste habits of the Bulgarian migrants were formed [See **Ivanova, 2006**: 180]. They include original Bulgarian folk names of the dishes, with a predominance of the meat dishes over the vegetarian and fasting food as it is typical for Bulgarian restaurants in Bulgaria [See **Kassabova, 2008**: 41].

Independent of the name, the Bulgarian food institutions in the USA and Germany play a very important role in the life of the Bulgarian migrants. They not only connect them culinary with Bulgaria but give them also the possibility to be in a Bulgarian ambience with family and friends away from the homeland. Thus, they function as a social topos, as a place where social relationships and activities are developed, where “the served dishes, the interior and the personnel-client relationships follow certain rules” [**Kassabova, 2008**: 34] or in other

¹¹⁷ http://www.serdikabg.com/about_us. [Accessed: 30.07.2015].

¹¹⁸ For more information see www.herbosfoods.com. [Accessed: 30.07.2015].

¹¹⁹ See www.bulgarianwine.com. [Accessed: 30.07.2015].

words the catering establishments could be seen as “a complex social phenomenon and an important institution” [Kassabova, 2008: 34].

In the US, as well as in Germany, the Bulgarian catering establishments make it possible for Bulgarian migrants to go to a place with an atmosphere which reminds them of Bulgaria. Almost every place has some Bulgarian symbols in its interior – pictures of Bulgaria, wine barrels, Bulgarian flags, Bulgarian embroidery and traditional costumes, Bulgarian clay sets, cart wheels, etc. – “which represent touristic but also migrant places of nostalgia” [Möhring, 2012: 258] and symbolically replace the faraway homeland Bulgaria [Roth, 2001: 569].

In summary, it could be said that in the most of the cities with a high number of Bulgarian migrants there are Bulgarian catering establishments¹²⁰ which consolidate the Bulgarian local community. On weddings and other celebrated public and private feasts besides the Bulgarian food there is Bulgarian (sometimes live) music and Bulgarian dances. At the table, to relax from the busy lifestyle in their new place of residence, the Bulgarians sing sometimes different national songs they learned before their emigration. Thus, the organised events not only on private holidays but also on Bulgarian national and folk holidays contribute to the preservation and spreading of different elements of the Bulgarian folklore, culinary, cultural and historic heritage abroad.

Furthermore, they communicate in Bulgarian with old and new Bulgarian friends in this way maintaining and extending the Bulgarian migrant social network which includes representatives of several generations, living in the local place or region. This is much more essential for the young generation and the offspring of mixed marriages, because very often in their everyday life they have few fellows to talk to in Bulgarian (excluding the internet communication), which threatens the sustainment of their Bulgarian ethnocultural identity. For their parents the Bulgarian restaurants are places where they can “recover their (ethnocultural) identity” [Ivanova, 2006: 181]. In other words, on the one hand, the catering establishments are places for pleasant meetings with relatives and friends, where guests could satisfy their food and cultural nostalgia. On the other hand, as bearers of the native, of the Bulgarian they function also as mediators “between ‘the native’ and the ‘other’, between the neat world of the own identity and the unknown foreign order” of the land of residence which could make the adaption of the Bulgarian migrants to the new environment more painless [Ivanova, 2006: 181].

¹²⁰ In the capitals and other big cities there are even different establishments for Bulgarians with different music interests.

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