



КУЛЬТУРА И КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ СВЯЗИ

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PIZZA “GRANDIOSA” AND NORWEGIAN CULINARY TRADITIONS

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When it comes to the harmful effects of globalization on Norwegian traditional values, one often draws on the example of the pizza “Grandiosa” phenomenon. Not only the daily assortment of dishes, but also traditional Christmas fare gave way to the “Grandiosa.” Experts in the field of culture and cultural heritage show much interest in this phenomenon; it is also addressed in Norwegian fiction, mostly as something ignoble. The change in Norwegian tastes that happened with this pizza is called the “revolution in eating habits.” Researchers render it impossible to find a rational explanation of this phenomenon. However, the traditional Norwegian cuisine is rather ascetic, with preference to universal dishes, which is easily explained by difficult natural conditions. And in our days, the lack of time dictates the extra need for universal dishes that combine components of the first and the second, as well as a side dish, and which do not require much time for cooking. Frozen pizza is perfect in that regard, and kebabs, tapas, and tacos followed it to the Norwegian table. Pizza was just the first to announce the era of food globalization, and it served as a conduit of globalization in Norwegian cuisine.

Keywords: Norwegian cuisine, culinary traditions, universal foods, pizza, globalization.

When it comes to the harmful effects of globalization on Norwegian traditional values, one often draws on the example of the pizza “Grandiosa” phenomenon. In some families “Grandiosa” has supplanted not

only the everyday assortment of food, but also traditional Christmas dishes: already in 2003, 3% of Norway's adult population ate pizza on Christmas Eve. On average, sales of "Grandiosa" grow by 40% in December [Rognerud, 2018]. The purely quantitative side of the penetration of pizza into the everyday life of Norwegians is also impressive. Norwegians consume 47 million frozen pizzas per year, half of which are "Grandiosa" pizzas [Gordon, 2018]. An article titled "Yes, We Love Frozen Pizza" — a pun with the first line of the Norwegian national anthem "Yes, we love this country" [Larsen, 2019] — published on the eve of Norway's National Day celebrated on May 17th, states that the popularity of this simple dish is constantly growing. In the first quarter of 2019, Norway imported 3,581 tons of pizza (and this with a population of only 5,334,762, according to the statistics office of Norway as of May 20, 2019!). Frozen pizza sales grew with 45% over this period compared to the last quarter of 2018. The same article mentions that "Grandiosa" is also popular among Swedes and Finns. But still, they are far behind Norwegians: the choice of frozen pizzas in Norway is three times higher than the choice in Sweden, although the Swedes are ahead in other types of food [Myklebust, 2019].

Pizza is an object of study by an ethnologist of the NEG (Norsk etnologisk granskning — Norwegian ethnological studies) group, sponsored by the The Norwegian Museum of Cultural History [Bolstad Skjelbred, 2004]. From the 1920s to the end of the 1980s the most popular Sunday dish of Norwegians was meatballs, which on weekdays shared the first place with sausages; pizza was not mentioned at all. By 1999 more than 20,000 tons of frozen pizza was sold in Norway. This figure does not include pizza eaten in pizzerias and other food establishments or homemade pizza [Bolstad Skjelbred, 2004, s. 4]. As has been mentioned, many people eat pizza at Christmas; pizza has recently started competing with sausages, a traditional food on Norway's national day, May 17th.

The fact that pizza as a phenomenon is of interest not only to cultural experts is evidenced by the fact that it is often referred to in fiction, usually in an attempt to characterize something low-quality. For example, in a novel about the morals of the publishing industry, the title of which can be roughly translated as *You Are Unbelievable*, the protagonist describes the impressions of visiting the tradition-steeped *Theater Café* in Oslo: "Grandiose? Absolutely! (I almost made a slip of the tongue and, out of habit, blurted out "Grandiosa," because it was this pizza that

I used to treat myself to when my mother went to dinner with one of her friends in the church circle. Just think how nice it would've been — the writer is sitting at the exquisite Theater Café and ranting about frozen pizza!)” [Freihof, 2009, s. 264].

Another writer, Olav Løkken Reisop, used the name “Grandiosa” as a title to his entire novel about the modern life of the wealthy and seemingly elite residents of Oslo [Reisop, 2015].

Reisop uses the name of this unsophisticated dish metaphorically to refer to other phenomena of modern Norwegian life, which he finds vulgar, ethically and aesthetically opposed to traditional values. These phenomena are imposed by globalization and designed to be successful among a wide range of undemanding public. As an example of such phenomena, the author names the Barcode-rekken architectural ensemble in the Norwegian capital, otherwise called “The Opera Quarter” (*Operakvarteret*), and detective novels by Jo Nesbø, which are also very popular among Russian readers. One of the book heroes addresses the character who embodies such base tastes with the following words: “You are making fun of the *Pizza Grandiosa Original* — I took the trouble to utter the entire original designation — but you don't understand that your bookshelves are full of ready-made pizza, frozen pizza, disgusting semi-digested semi-processed product” [Reisop, 2015, s. 313].

Meanwhile, “the disgusting semi-processed product” has taken a firm place among the culturally significant Norwegian phenomena. In the educational online interactive game kahoot [*kahoot.it*], recommended for Norwegian language teachers during summer courses at the University of Oslo in 2019, the following question was included in the quiz on the knowledge of Norwegian culture: “Where is pizza ‘Grandiosa’ made?”

This cringe-worthy ready-made dish gets a separate chapter in the book by the influential journalist and writer Per Egil Hegge, *The Soul of the Norwegian People*, with the subtitle *Words That Tell Who We Are* [Hegge, 2016, s. 83–85]. A total of 65 such words are described in the book, which speaks of the important place that Grandiosa occupies in the minds of modern Norwegians. Hegge calls the change in Norwegians' addictions that happened when this pizza manifested itself, “a revolution in eating habits,” and insists on the impossibility of a rational explanation of this phenomenon. Perhaps, this is one of the cases when “lookers-on see most of the game.” We believe that it is quite possible to explain the popularity of pizza “Grandiosa”.

It is no secret that Norwegians are traditionally ascetic and not spoiled when it comes to nutrition. Norwegian cuisine is not characterized by a variety of dishes; preference is given to all-in-one dishes, easily explained by the arduous conditions of existence. For centuries, staple foods for the majority of the inhabitants in this harsh northern region was fish, lamb, barley, and northern root crops. For several months a year, Norwegians consumed mainly goods meant to be preserved for a long time. They were harvested for future use in summer and autumn: dried and salted fish, cured mutton, dry unleavened flatbreads. Preparation of such food required considerable amounts of time, of which the villagers who made up the majority of the population had plenty during winter months. After all, it was impossible to engage in agriculture, thus only crafts and cooking remained. And, finally, their food was supposed to go well with beer, which was and is the most widespread alcoholic drink in the region. Also, beer served as a source of vitamins. The descendants of the Vikings were not accustomed to fruit; even now many of them don't know fruit very well and consume it only in small amounts.

But what do ascetic and unspoiled Norwegians eat nowadays? The well-known writer Eric Fosnes Hansen characterizes a girl named Siri in this, somewhat exaggerated, way: "Siri doesn't know much about cooking. All her life she has only been eating Findus frozen fish sticks and frozen pizza" [Fosnes Hansen, 1996, s. 58]. And this is same old fish and flatbreads, the only difference being that now they are preserved in the freezer and not in the barn!

Already in 1993 we can read following in one of Norwegian leading newspapers: "The Norwegian food culture is being supplanted. The national dish is no longer lamb ribs, but Pizza Grandiosa" [Omdahl, 1993, s. 22]. In 2004 20% of the Norwegians called Grandiosa their unofficial national dish [Gordon, 2018].

In 2017, the website of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation published a recipe for the Danish national dish, fried bacon with parsley gravy. The text contained the following passage, which was deleted after a short time: "For the Swedes, the national dish is meatballs and crayfish. And the national dish of the Norwegians is 'Grandiosa' pizza. Just kidding. For Norwegians it is lamb with cabbage" [*Stekt flesk med persillesaus*].

So why is it so popular and at the same time a target for so many attacks? We have already briefly characterized the phenomenon of Gran-

diosa [Livanova, 2010, p. 563]. In particular, it was mentioned that the lack of time typical for working city people in developed countries dictates the need for universal dishes that combine the components of the soup and main course, as well as a side dish. At the same time these dishes do not require much time and effort to prepare for serving. Pizza “Grandiosa” was mentioned as an example of such a dish. It is not surprising that the opponents of pizza are often older Norwegians living in the countryside: they have a lot of time on their hands and profess preparing their meals from scratch [Bolstad Skjelbred, 2004, s. 7].

The “Grandiosa” pizza was put into the spotlight by traditionalists as a symbol of the onset of alien habits precisely because of its popularity, especially among children and young people. Lamb and cabbage (*fårikål*) has officially been considered the national dish of the Norwegians since 1972. The next survey on this subject was carried out 42 years later, in connection with the bicentennial anniversary of the Norwegian constitution, which was celebrated in 2014. Lamb remained in the first place, having won 45 % of the votes, but the 11 thousand schoolchildren who participated in the survey put tacos, pizza and kebabs in the first three places [Nymo, 2014].

One way or another, it is now a tradition for many to finish off work week with pizza. “Friday pizza” has become a concept. There is a type of pizza that is called that, and pizza on Fridays is often indicated when listing other Norwegian habits. For example, in the novel *The Man Who Didn't Want to Go Home* the writer Roger Pihl describes the end of the working day when people “went home to their wives and children, football on Tuesdays or pizza on Fridays” [Pihl, 2014, s. 24].

In the last decade, however, tacos have been competing with Friday pizza, although the dish was introduced in Norway back in the 1980s: “Chances are that on Friday night you shovel in tacos that ooze with sauce and burst with corn kernels and minced meat” [Med andre ord: Taco, 2019].

A popular culinary magazine that was available free of charge from the defunct ICA supermarket chain, gives a recommendation for weekend hikers with confidence in what they ate for dinner the night before: “If you have anything left from a tacos dinner, this would be perfect as a filling for a backpacker’s sandwich” [Skeie, 2010, s. 11].

And finally, a somewhat odious example. In the fall of 2019, Norwegians were actively discussing a case of a girl who had to euthanize

her injured horse. The indignation of people was caused by the fact that the girl ate dishes from the meat of this horse and even posted the corresponding photos on social networks. Her answer to this was as follows: “People don’t eat their own horse, and in any case they don’t share photos on Facebook. But why can they upload photos of their Friday tacos, but I can’t upload photos of my Friday steak?” [Børstad, Kringstad, 2019]. Let’s leave aside the discussion of the legality of using the term *steak* in relation to a horse meat dish.

However, tacos are eaten not only on Fridays. The uncomplicated dish has spread to Saturday evening, that was earlier dedicated to pizza, according to the tradition established in recent decades. A note was published on the website of the Norwegian public broadcasting service entitled “I got my way if viewers choke on their tacos.” [Vedeler, 2018] The article deals with the rough lyrics of the songs performed by the participants of the TV competition “Star Battle” (*Stjernekamp*), Norwegian analogue of the Russian show “Star Factory.” The program is broadcast on Saturdays. Viewers enjoy life in front of the TV with beer in one hand and tacos in the other.

Tacos have provided a tough competition for pizza. Two female Norwegian students like this simple dish so much that they ate only its variants for five months on a bet with friends, and the girls did not even get bored with it [Hareland, Viken, 2019].

A 2012 study found that 8.2% of Norwegians eat tacos every Saturday, but they don’t want to skip pizza either. Therefore, here’s what they do: they put nachos on top of the pizza, cover with minced meat with spices, sprinkle with cheese, and then pop it in the oven [Gordon, 2018]. Thus, pizza was just the first, but not the last, to announce the era of food globalization.

The food industry responded quickly to new trends: back in 2001, *Grandiosa Mild Taco* appeared in stores, which, however, held out only until 2005, when the adherents of this brand voted for a slightly different version of pizza, with tacos as topping. Pizza with tacos (*Grandiosa Taco Fiesta*) was one of the new flavors of 2019 for the most popular pizza brand — *Grandiosa*. The author of this article saw the packaging of this particular pizza in a dumpster of a decent Norwegian house in a respectable neighborhood of Adamstuen, where representatives mostly of the middle class live (Fig. 1). After having tasted this new kind of pizza, experts invited by the newspaper *Dagbladet* unanimously recom-



Fig. 1. “Grandiosa” package in the dumpster. Photo by the author

mended it as an excellent remedy for a hangover [Dalseg, Guldbransen, 2019].

The popularity of fast food, especially burgers and pizza, among young people is a worldwide phenomenon. Talking about why Chinese teenagers also love burgers, but with age most of them begin to prefer traditional Chinese food, British gastronome Tom Parker Bowles (son of the Duchess Camilla) suggested that the popularity of fast food is probably due to the fact that it tastes the same everywhere and does not conceal any surprises, neither pleasant nor unpleasant, while local dishes often have a specific taste that you need to get used to [Parker Bowles, 2007, p. 102]. It is not for nothing that at the entrance to kindergartens and schools of France, famous for its cuisine, a menu of school lunches (very intricate) is hung every day: parents know what exactly is offered to their children, and children from a very early age get used to eating varied food with complex flavors.

Older and more educated Norwegians also enjoy other “aliens,” such as tapas, which resemble the familiar Norwegian finger foods (*fin-*

germat): simple, small-sized snacks that you can eat with your hands. Tapas are often served as a treat at crowded celebrations; for example, one article [Ingebrigtsen, 2018, s. 38] describes a luxuriant wedding for 70 guests who were treated with tapas and French pastries.

This raises three questions: 1) What has always distinguished Norwegian traditional cuisine? 2) In what direction is the traditional food of any people developing? 3) What is so unusual about new dishes, including pizza?

We have already answered the first question.

The answer to the second question was succinctly formulated by the already mentioned culinary critic Tom Parker-Bowles: “Food is inherently dangerous. It rots and becomes poisonous and perilous to our health. What civilization has done, over countless millennia, is remove this danger. From that moment where meat and fish first met fire, through preservation via salting, drying, pickling or canning — right up until the advent of refrigeration, irradiation and climate-controlled vacuum packing — we have been locked in a battle to make food safe and longer lasting, to remove any chance of spoilage or bacteria or poison”. [Parker Bowles, 2007, p.82–83] Much the same, albeit in a completely different context, writes the American culinary critic Mort Rosenblum: “The whole mystery of cheese ... is in figuring out how different bacteria behave in changing circumstances. Cheese people have spent centuries at this, perfecting how to get consistency and taste without danger to health.” [Rosenblum, 2000, p.246] Frozen pizza is a high speed vacuum-packed dish that can be stored for a long time and does not spoil for a long time. So, the “semi-digested semi-processed product,” as the writer Reisop called the pizza (see above), is rather an advantage than a disadvantage for the majority of modern working Norwegians.

What is so unusual about pizza and other dishes new to Norwegians? It is the replacement of carbohydrates in the form of the habitual barley and root crops with wheat or corn flour, as well as the presence of plant components: tomatoes, peppers and others (the exact set of ingredients from which the so popular “Grandiosa” is made, is kept secret). Many participants in a survey conducted by ethnologists wrote that it was thanks to pizza that they got used to the taste of baked tomatoes, paprika, garlic, olives and oregano [Bolstad Skjelbred, 2004, s. 9]. In addition, the presence of these new multi-colored ingredients gave this

dish a very unusual appearance for Norwegians. The two most common lines of first-time pizza eaters were said to be: “Who vomited on my flatbread?” and “Did you bake the rag rug today?” [Bolstad Skjelbred, 2004, s. 6] Now pizza evokes quite different associations for the majority of the population, and these are rather pleasant ones. The popular pizza “Grandiosa” even got a diminutive form, “Grandis.” It is this pizza that the Norwegian fairytale hero Askeladd (“Ash lad,” the Norwegian analogue of Cinderella) finds in a modern version of the old fairy tale published on the teacher’s website of the Cappelen Damm publishing house [Anly, Stjern Frønes, Kvinge, 2019].

The way pizza is stored in the freezer rather than dried in the traditional ventilated *stabbur* barn is relatively new. However, many other foods are also stored in freezers now. It’s possible to find pizza in almost every freezer in the Norwegian households. This, by the way, is evidenced by the popular rude joke: “jeg har pizza i fryseren” (I have pizza in the freezer), built on playing with the fact that the words “pizza” *pizza* and “pissa” *peed* sound almost the same in Norwegian.

It is by accident that pizza turned out to be the most convenient, handy, successful, and universal dish of our time for Norwegians. As we mentioned in a different article, the world’s population owes the global distribution of pizza not so much to Italy, where pizza was just a cheap regional dish, but to Italian immigrants in the United States, who opened massive numbers of pizzerias at the turn of the 20th century [Livanova, 2010, p. 563]. One of the American Italians, Frank Pepe, together with his wife Filomena, opened a similar pizzeria in 1925. One of the employees at this pizzeria was a man named Louis Jordan, who after a while moved to Norway together with his wife Anna, whose ancestors immigrated to the USA from Norway. In May 1970 he opened a pizzeria in Oslo and called it *Peppes Pizza*. This inexpensive establishment quickly gained popularity and expanded its geography, becoming the most popular pizza chain in Norway with more than 70 restaurants today [Gordon, 2018].

Half of the pizza imported to Norway does not come from Italy, as one might suppose, but from Germany, although Italy accounts for 35 % of import; the rest comes mainly from Denmark and Sweden [Dypvik, 2019].

Peppes’ ready-to-eat, freshly baked pizzas are still popular today. When skier Hans Christer Holund, who won the gold medal at the

Seefeld World Championship, came home, he was greeted with pizza by his sister at Oslo airport. She was actually going to invite him home for pizza, but the plane was late, and so that her brother could eat in the car on the way home, she bought a ready-made pizza, hoping that she remembered his favorite brand correctly. The accompanying photo shows it was “Peppes Real American Pizza” [Lote, Sandtholt, 2019].

It was in the seventies, when masses of people gushed from villages to cities, and women joined the ranks of hired workers, that there was an acute need for a change in culinary habits, for a universal dish that could be stored at home in widespread refrigerators and quickly prepared for serving on the table.

In a study of the eating habits of modern Norwegians, the following statement describes an opinion of a commoner (*folk flest*): “We are, perhaps, very traditional in our choice of dishes. This is ordinary Norwegian food: meatballs, fish cakes and fish casserole, and on Fridays we eat spaghetti and on Saturdays we eat pizza” [Bahr Bugge, 2008, s. 16]. In another publication, the journalist asked a forty-eight-year-old mother and her two daughters, “What is home sweet home to you?” and got the following answer: “A cozy evening on the couch in front of the TV, with pizza and stearin candles” [Åmotsbakken, 2019, s. 11]. Having entered Norwegian life as a Saturday treat, pizza has spread to the rest of the week.

In 1974, the food concern Nora began working on pizza recipes. When in 1979, things went badly at one of the factories of the concern, in the village of Stranda in the west of the country, the director of the factory received a call from the management and was offered to try to produce frozen pizza. The director, Ivar Moss, agreed without hesitation. However, after finishing the conversation, he allegedly turned to his wife and asked: “Listen, Oddbjørg, what the hell is this pizza?” [Øyehaug, 2004, s. 20]

Before that, both Findus and Frionor had already been producing frozen pizzas. But the head of the freezer department at Nora, Arnold Harang, managed to come up with a good name that both evoked associations with the size of the pizza, which was supposed to be enough for several people: *grand* — and reminded of its Italian roots — the Italian suffix *-osa*. In just three years, *Grandiosa* surpassed all competitors [Øyehaug, 2004, s. 20]. By the end of the nineties, *Grandiosa* had established itself as an outstanding item in the history of the Norwegian food



Fig. 2. Advertising in an illustrated supplement to the largest Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten*. October, 2019

alone indicate how important this dish is in the daily life of Norwegians. Advertisements for *Grandiosa* are published by leading national newspapers in Norway (Fig. 2).

So, pizza “Grandiosa” has not only become a symbol of globalization. It has served as a conduit for globalization in Norwegian cuisine.

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industry and remains the favorite brand of Norwegians to this day, with more than 9 million pizzas sold annually.

The song dedicated to *Saturday Grandiosa* from the commercial “Respect for Grandiosa” (is available on YouTube [Grandiosa reklame, 2012]) held the first place on the music chart of the newspaper *Verdens Gang* for 8 weeks, and did not leave the first 20 places for 14 weeks [Grandiosa.no].

During a transport strike that lasted for five weeks in 2005, an exception was made for some essential food products. Many Norwegians remember pizza “Grandiosa” being among these. Although the food concern’s referral service does not confirm this, such testimonies

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ПИЦЦА «ГРАНДИОЗА» И НОРВЕЖСКИЕ КУЛИНАРНЫЕ ТРАДИЦИИ

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Когда речь заходит о пагубном влиянии глобализации на норвежские традиционные ценности, нередко приводят в пример феномен пиццы «Грандиоза». Ей уступил место не только повседневный ассортимент блюд, но даже рождественские угощения. Большой интерес к этому явлению проявляют культурологи; к нему обращаются и в норвежской художественной литературе, в основном характеризуя как нечто вульгарное. Изменения во вкусах норвежцев, произошедшие с появлением этой пиццы, называют «революцией в пищевых привычках». Исследователи считают невозможным найти рациональное объяснение этому явлению. Однако традиционная норвежская кухня довольно аскетична, предпочтение в ней отдается универсальным блюдам, что легко объясняется сложными природными условиями. В наше время дефицит времени диктует дополнительную потребность в универсальных блюдах, сочетающих в себе компоненты первого и второго, а также гарнира, и не требующих длительного приготовления. Замороженная пицца подходит для этого идеально. Вслед за ней на норвежском столе появились кебабы, тапас и тако. Пицца первой возвестила о начале эры глобализации продуктов питания и послужила проводником этого явления в норвежской кухне.

Ключевые слова: норвежская кухня, кулинарные традиции, универсальные блюда, пицца, глобализация.

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