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**ROLE OF PRINTED PUBLICATIONS IN ETHNIC  
IDENTIFICATION OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN BASHKORTOSTAN**

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**Abstract**

The article discusses the role of the media in the ethnic identification of peoples on the example of printed publications of Chuvash, Udmurt and Mari peoples living in the Republic of Bashkortostan. The article analyzes the current state of national mass media, produced and distributed in the languages of ethnic groups living in the republic; it examines the possible directions of their development. A special role in the context of preserving and increasing linguistic and cultural diversity belongs to national mass media, published in the languages of ethnic groups and aimed primarily at a very specific audience – representatives of these ethnic communities who know the corresponding languages. Based on the quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the republican printed publications of Chuvash, Udmurt and Mari peoples, the author comes to the conclusion that socio-political national printed publications of the region provide information support for state programs. They publish official materials of municipalities, but ethnocultural content still dominates newspaper content. They pay special attention to socially significant topics and national projects. The states that the policy of providing the peoples living in Bashkortostan with the opportunity to publish newspapers in their native languages has already justified itself. The national press actively participates in socio-political and socio-economic processes of the republic, ensuring stable interethnic situation in the republic. Study also considers historical prerequisites for the emergence of national newspapers, the role and importance of media in ethnic identification of peoples. The article introduces new scientific sources.

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*Keywords:* Bashkortostan, ethnic groups, national identity, national seal



## **1. Introduction**

The Republic of Bashkortostan is characterized by ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and confessional mosaicism. It is one of the largest regions of Russia in terms of population (over 4 million) and multinationality (representatives of 160 nationalities). It is important to note that the coexistence of different peoples in the republic is perceived by the population as something that occurs naturally, as a historical given, and as a resource for successful development. Study of media development of Russia's multinational population makes it possible to complete the information realm with the existing problems of ethnic groups, such as migration processes, adaptation of ethnic groups to a foreign language and a different cultural environment; interethnic communication and interethnic tolerance; erosion of national lines in the context of globalization; it makes it possible to reveal the specifics of the ethnocultural development of peoples (Atlaskirov, 2019). The directions and models of the integration processes of the multinational population in the new realities have not yet been sufficiently studied and require additional scientific understanding. In addition, the adopted Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of December 19, 2012 N 1666 (as amended on December 6, 2018) "On the Strategy of the State National Policy of the Russian Federation for the Period up to 2025" highlights weak Russian civic consciousness with the increasing importance of ethnic and religious self-identification, as well as dissatisfaction with ethnocultural needs of thin peoples. In recent decades, the issues of media in general and problems of interaction with national culture of particular people are of great relevance (Akhmetyanova, 2020; Gladkova et al., 2019). This is reflected in the print media of the Republic of Bashkortostan – in coverage, in development and implementation of various practical programs of cultural revival: language, folk traditions. Mass media actively display all the variety of current events, work for a favorable interethnic climate in the republic, create original mentality of Bashkortostan. Under such conditions, the role of the republic's periodicals in the formation of ethnocultural values is extremely important.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The relevance of this study is determined by the fact that the problem of belonging to an ethnic group, arising as a result of understanding the characteristics of one's people, is one of the main directions not only in sociology, history and ethnography, but also in modern journalism,. Ethno differentiating signs are still the subject for discussion (Baykova et al., 2019; Bilalov & Akayev, 2019; Monakov, 2008; Russkikh, 2013). At the same time, the influence of media on an individual in the information space and in modern society is constantly growing; and the issues of ethnocultural values and ethnic identity formation were not the subject of scientific research in the region, which determines the scientific novelty of the article.

## **3. Research Questions**

According to researchers, the specific historical conditions for the emergence and development of national print media in Bashkortostan date back to the end of the 20th century (Kuzbekov, 2013). In the 90s, a wave of national movements took place throughout the territory of the Russian Federation, which

had a positive effect on the media market of Bashkortostan. Democratic conquests contributed to the emergence of new printed publications in the languages of the peoples: “Ural Sassi” (in the Chuvash language) and “Oshmes” (in the Udmurt language), the newspaper “Cholman” (in the Mari language) appeared.

Chuvash population of the republic (107,450 thousand people) is united by the print publication Ural Sassi (ed. by Y. Mikhailov), a republican socio-political newspaper in Chuvash language (Monakov, 2008). In 1989, the first issue of Ural Sassi (Voice of the Urals) was published based in the Aurgazi regional newspaper “Çërshyvçulë” (“The Way of the Motherland”) (now it is called “Aurgazăkhyparçi” (“Aurgazinsky Bulletin”). Its revival was initiated by the Society of Chuvash Culture of the Republic of Bashkortostan. The decree of the Council of Ministers of the Bashkir SSR No. 218 of December 3, 1990 “On the approval of the temporary Charter, cost estimates, staffing table of the editorial staff and publication of the newspaper “Ural Sassi” (“Voice of the Urals”)” established that founders of “Ural Sassi” are the Parliament and the Government of the Republic of Bashkortostan starting from January 1991 (Akhmetyanova, 2018). Since that moment “Ural Sassi” (ed. by Y. Mikhailov) as a republican socio-political newspaper is published in A3 format (4 pages) in full-color printing (4 + 1) in Belebey. For fruitful efforts in the revival of self-awareness, preserving, developing and promoting the spiritual heritage, strengthening friendship between the peoples of Bashkortostan and Chuvashia, Chuvash newspaper of Bashkortostan was awarded the prize of the Chuvash National Congress and the Union of Chuvash Regional Studies named after Bichurin. The editorial board initiates republican cultural events that have become traditional: the competition “Chavash piki” (“Chuvash Sudarushka”), the festival of children's creativity “Silpiasamach” (“Silpian rainbow”), the competition of children's drawing, dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the birth of the outstanding Chuvash educator Yakovleva (1848–1930). The newspaper discusses the problem of preserving language and culture; talks about the famous Chuvashes who have achieved success in science, literature, art and culture. The titles of the headings and special pages tell about the subject matter of the materials: “Ărukhyççănăru” (“Family after family”), “Çem'yeuyavë” (“Family holiday”), “Avallăkhupravçi” (“Old-timers”), “Asratytma” (“Building on the past”), “Asrayulnăçulçyrev” (“Memorable voyages”), “Yăla-yërke” (“Traditions”), “Kulturapurnăçë” (“Cultural life”), “Pallăyenteshsem” (“Famous compatriot”), “Uyav” (“Holiday”), “Khalăkhsănaninchen” (“Observations of the people”), “Yrătëslëkh” (“Good example”), “Yuratnăvērenteken” (“Favorite teacher”). Materials are regularly published, reflecting the work of the Commission for the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On the languages of the peoples of the Republic of Belarus” and the progress of preparations for the 6th World Folkloriad, which will be held in the capital of Bashkortostan in 2020. The materials contribute to the promotion and implementation of republican state programs for the collection, preservation and development of folklore. Journalists writing on the topics of interethnic relations rely on certain linguistic means that promote and strengthen interethnic communication. The vocabulary of the native language is expanding due to the vocabulary reflecting the culture and religion of neighboring peoples, with the help of which the picture of the unity of the worlds of ethnic groups is recreated. Content analysis of the newspaper of the Chuvash people “Ural Sassi” showed that publications are becoming more diverse not only in the thematic sense: texts are created in various information, artistic and journalistic genres. At the present stage of its development, the

newspaper continues to gain popularity not only in the republic, but also abroad: it is subscribed to in neighboring regions, with a circulation of 3,380 copies.

The newspapers of the Finno-Ugric diaspora of the Republic of Bashkortostan are presented by the editions “Oshmes” (village Tatyshly, Tatyshlinsky district) – in Udmurt language and “Cholman” (Neftekamsk) – in Mari language.

There are 21,477 Udmurts living in the republic. At the first constituent congress of Udmurts of Bashkortostan on July 20, 1996, it was decided to appeal to the leadership of the Republic of Bashkortostan with a request to create and publish a republican newspaper in Udmurt language for the Udmurt diaspora of Bashkortostan. In 1998, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Bashkortostan “On republican programs of national and cultural development of the peoples of Bashkortostan” was issued. Later on, a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Bashkortostan “On the establishment of the republican newspaper “Oshmes” in Udmurt language was adopted. The first issue of the newspaper was published on June 1, 1999. The newspaper “Oshmes” is a socio-political republican newspaper (ed. A.G. Zainukov), published in the village. R.B. Tatyshly, A4 format (4 pages), is distributed once a week in a circulation of 1,130 copies. (about 1 newspaper for 2–3 Udmurt families) (Kuzbekov, 2013). In addition to the inhabitants of the republic, “Oshmes” is prescribed by Udmurts of Perm, Chelyabinsk, Sverdlovsk regions and the Udmurt Republic. Political, economic, social life, everyday life and work of Udmurts are covered in the headings: “Famous Udmurts of Bashkortostan”, “Journalist raises a problem”, “News from Udmurtia”, “In the world of Finno-Ugrians”, “At the neighbors”, “Young power”, “Udmurt households”, etc. The headings: “Traditions and rituals”, “It went down in our history”, “Who are we? How many of us are there?”, “Everything starts with the native language”, “Memory”. Literary and artistic headings: “Young voices”, “Creativity of our readers”, “The word is provided”. “Oshmes” makes a great contribution to the development and preservation of culture, folk rituals and traditions, identity and folklore of Udmurts of our republic. It discusses the results of competitions, performances of folk groups, folk holidays and events organized by the National-cultural and historical cultural centers of Udmurts of the republic. In the preparation of folklore and ethnographic materials, fellow countrymen, doctors of historical sciences Sadikov, head of the department of ethnology of the Institute of Ethnological Research of the Ufa Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and Minniyakhmetova, who now lives in Austria, works at the Institute of European Ethnology and Folklore, The University of Innsbruck named after Leopold and Franz. The editorial staff are actively developing various topics and problems that reflect the identity of Udmurt people, provide materials on projects designed to develop and preserve the cultural values of Udmurt people. Publications of a fairly high level and style confirm that the native language is an important and significant factor in the formation of ethnic identity along with culture and historical past.

The Republic of Bashkortostan is home to 103,658 Mari, which is 2.6 % of the total population. They are united by the republican socio-political newspaper “Cholman” (“Kama”). In addition, newspapers are published in the Mari language in the Mishkinsky (“Kelshimash” – “Druzhba”) and Kaltasinsky (“Kaltasäyzhara” – “Kaltasinskaya Zarya”) districts of Bashkortostan.

“Cholman” (“Kama”) has been published since July 2001 in the city of Neftekamsk RB, in A3 format on four pages, distributed once a week with a circulation of 3,816 copies. The founders of the

publication are the Kurultai State Assembly, the Government of the Republic of Belarus. It is distributed by subscription in 39 regions of the Republic of Belarus, in the republics of Mari El, Udmurtia, Tatarstan, in the Sverdlovsk, Kaluga regions and the Stavropol Territory. For many years Gubaev has been the permanent editor. “Cholman” is the owner of the Badge of Distinction at the international professional exhibition “Golden Fund of the Press” (Moscow, 2006, 2007, 2008). The editorial staff have their own propaganda team and a kind of support group – the folk-ethnographic and pop ensembles “Osh Vichesem” (“Chants of the Belaya River”) and “Kande Kava” (“Blue Sky”), with which they organize various holidays for their readers. The editorial office is the coordinating center of the entire Mari community of the republic, and the editor of the newspaper I. Gubaev heads the national-cultural center of Neftekamsk. The newspaper has established constant communication with readers through its own correspondents and volunteers from cities and villages, among whom there are many who write in other languages – Bashkir, Tatar, Russian. Not a single message from the field is left without attention. The editorial office will necessarily translate it into the native Mari language and publish it. The headings “Finno-Ugric World”, “Our Home – Bashkortostan”, “Jokes from Life” have become popular. The editorial office notes that children have been writing a lot in the newspaper lately. It is their information from the field, poems, stories that form the basis of the children's page “Runlet”. The desire of children to create, write, communicate in their native literary language speaks of the continuity of the connection between generations. The publication has become a kind of school for the exchange of experience among teachers of the Mari language and literature. The headings “Native language at school”, “Law on the languages of the peoples of the Republic of Belarus – in life” are in demand. In these sections, materials are often published that contribute to the development of the language, raising the cultural and educational level of Mari people. The editorial board understands that in the process of familiarizing with national literature, language and culture, the foundations are laid for understanding oneself to a greater extent as a representative of one or another ethnic group. On the pages of the Cholman newspaper, you can find a lot of interesting and useful materials about the history, culture, traditions and customs of Mari people. Topics are covered in various aspects: from political, economic and philosophical – to social and everyday life. The variety of the newspaper's content was marked with the second place in the republican creative competition of journalists “Interethnic accord – the path to the prosperity of Bashkortostan”. Journalists of the editorial board of the Mari print edition “Cholman” take a complex approach to solving the issues of preserving and developing the language, national traditions (Akhmetyanova, 2018). Based on the editorial office of the Cholman newspaper in Neftekamsk, meetings of the secretariat of the Russian Association of Finno-Ugric Journalists (2008) and a seminar for employees of republican and regional newspapers published in the republic in the Mari and Udmurt languages were held. Cholman occupies a worthy place in the information space of the multinational republic.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this article is to analyze the degree of formation and development of ethnic identity through the media using the example of printed publications of the Chuvash, Udmurt and Mari peoples living in the Republic of Bashkortostan. The achievement of this goal made it necessary to formulate and solve the following tasks: to study the specific historical conditions of the emergence and development of

printed publications of the peoples of the Republic of Bashkortostan; conduct a content analysis of newspapers from the point of view of the formation of ethnic identity; to reveal the role of mass media in ethnic identification of ethnic groups, preservation and development of national culture.

## **5. Research Methods**

This article was prepared based on publications of socio-political newspapers of the Republic of Bashkortostan in national languages (Udmurt, Chuvash and Mari), reports on the results of the work of the Agency for Press and Mass Media of the Republic of Bashkortostan for 2018–2020, research literature, which are reflected the main directions of studying the history, culture, life of the Chuvash, Udmurt and Mari peoples living in the Republic of Bashkortostan. As the main research method, the author used a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of materials published for the period 2018–2020, in print and online media in national languages and in Russian. This study analyzes the media officially registered by Roskomnadzor and having the appropriate state licenses; all others were not considered in the context of this work.

## **6. Findings**

The modern system of ethnic publications of the republic is irrelevant to the main ethnic groups of Bashkortostan in terms of their number and historical significance. At the present stage in the information space of the Republic of Bashkortostan there are publications in Russian, Tatar, Bashkir, Udmurt, Mari, Chuvash languages, and there are no printed publications in Ukrainian (39,875 people), Mordvin (20,300 people), Belarusian (11,680 people), German (5,909 people), Kazakh (4,373 people) languages, while they are also numerous ethnic groups in the republic. Thus, the existence of a problem is confirmed: the modern media space does not sufficiently actualize information resources of an ethnic nature, does not fully satisfy the information needs of ethnic groups living in the territory of Bashkortostan.

## **7. Conclusion**

Summing up the analysis carried out by the author, the following main conclusions can be drawn. Analysis of the data showed that the unifying factors of ethnic groups are language, culture, and historical past. The ethno cultural component is predominant in the content of the analyzed editions: the preservation of the native language, culture and traditions of one's ethnic group and the revival of national identity.

The analysis of the thematic paradigm of the texts of the selected printed editions of ethnic groups revealed that when creating texts, the most common lexemes denoting elements of national identity: folk songs, dances, folk culture, national spirit, self-awareness. Today, a significant share of the population of the republic, thanks to print media, has become more actively associated with their ethnic group. Therefore, it seems that the formation of ethnic identity through the media is beginning to take on more concrete forms.

Awareness of one's identity with an ethnic group, arising as a result of understanding the characteristics of one's people, remains one of the topical trends in modern journalism. The influence of

the media on the individual in the media space and in modern society is constantly growing, therefore, the issues of the formation of ethnocultural values and ethnic identity with the help of the media require further research.

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