

**ISCKMC 2020****International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****CHECHEN TRADITIONAL GAME CULTURE: GENDER ASPECT**

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**Abstract**

One of the topical scientific problems is the study of the traditional culture of raising children, a comprehensive analysis of folk traditions of upbringing, folk pedagogy of Chechens, as well as other peoples of the Caucasus. At present, these issues are among the priority tasks of Russian Caucasian studies, representing not only scientific but also demanded practical interest. Closely connected with the problems of socialization is the question of the formation in the younger generation of gender stereotypes accepted in society, ideas about the role of men and women in this society. A clearly expressed gender component was characteristic of all spheres of life of the peoples of the Caucasus, including the Chechens. She represented one of the basic socio-cultural characteristics of society. The formation of gender stereotypes began during the first days of a child's life. Gender specificity was traced at all stages of upbringing, including it was presented in the sphere of the game culture of the Chechens, which represented an important part of the spiritual heritage of this people. This article examines that part of the socio-normative culture of the Chechens, which is associated with games, toys, sports and entertainment, aimed at the formation of gender stereotypes prevailing in the society in the younger generation. At the same time, comparative material on other peoples of the Caucasus is also involved. Joint games of boys and girls among Chechens, as well as among other peoples of the Caucasus, were allowed only for young children.

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*Keywords:* Peoples of the Caucasus, Chechens, game culture, games, gender aspect



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## **1. Introduction**

In recent years, interest in the traditions of the peoples of the Caucasus has been growing, which contributes to the actualization of the centuries-old ethnocultural heritage of this multinational region. An important part of the spiritual heritage of the peoples of the Caucasus is gaming culture – a variety of games, competitions and activities of an entertaining nature that accompanied a person throughout his life. Folk games and sports performed various social functions and played an important role in the physical, aesthetic, and moral education of the younger generation. They constituted an essential part of the socio-normative culture and in general terms reflected the way of life of the people. Participation in games and adherence to their inherent rules and norms, modelling role relationships between their participants contributed to the socialization of children, helped them master the social and cultural norms of the ethnic community. Including the game culture, to a large extent, contributed to the process of forming gender stereotypes. The issue of the formation of gender stereotypes is traditionally considered in connection with the issue of socialization (Kabalevskaya, 2012).

## **2. Problem Statement**

The modern period is characterized by the attention of the world scientific community to the development of various problems of the world of childhood. Kon (2012) rightly noted that "the history of childhood in Russia has become a reality and is developing in close connection with international research in this area of knowledge" (p. 62). One of the topical scientific problems is the study of the mechanism of the formation of gender stereotypes that were characteristic of traditional society.

A clearly expressed gender component was characteristic of all spheres of life of the peoples of the Caucasus, including the Chechens. She represented one of the basic socio-cultural characteristics of society. The formation of gender stereotypes began during the first days of a child's life. The norms of education in the traditional Caucasian society had a clearly expressed gender component. An essential part of upbringing in traditional society was familiarization with the norms of the age and sex division of labour, with the development from an early age of "male" and "female" roles in society, which initially playfully took place. Gender differences were traced at all stages of upbringing, including in the field of play culture.

## **3. Research Questions**

Various games and toys played an important role in the upbringing of the younger generation among all peoples, including the peoples of the Caucasus. From an early age, games and toys introduced the child to the world around him, to economic activities, to various labour processes, to those types of work that he had to perform in the future.

An essential part of upbringing in traditional society was familiarization with the norms of the age and sex division of labour, with the development of "male" and "female" roles in society from a very early age, which initially took place in a playful way (Musaeva, 2006).

In this article, we will consider that part of the socio-normative culture of the Chechens associated with games, toys, sports and entertainment, which was aimed at forming certain gender stereotypes that

existed in society in the younger generation. At the same time, comparative material on other peoples of the Caucasus will also be used.

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

The work aims to analyze the traditions of the game culture of the Chechens, its social functions, the role of toys, games, entertainment and sports in the socialization of children of different ages, including in the formation of gender stereotypes characteristic of the Chechen society.

#### **5. Research Methods**

In the presented study, we turned to the comparative historical method, which determines the approach to the phenomena under study as to certain realities of historical reality, changing with time and under the influence of certain specific historical conditions. The synchronous-diachronic method was also used, which allows considering the subject of research in development, in the unity of history and modernity.

#### **6. Findings**

The upbringing of a child in a traditional Chechen society was complicated. It was aimed at his all-round development, at transferring to him the economic, social, cultural, communicative, moral, aesthetic experience necessary for his future life. The culture of upbringing inherent in Chechen society ensured all-round socialization of the younger generation, the training of full-fledged, physically developed and morally mature young people.

Since the gender component in the traditional Caucasian society played a significant role, the norms of upbringing were to a large extent aimed at the formation of appropriate gender stereotypes in the younger generation, which manifested itself at all stages of upbringing: even lullabies for girls and boys were often different.

Joint games of boys and girls among the peoples of the Caucasus were allowed only for young children (Kuchmezova, 2003). Games for boys and girls were clearly demarcated (Karpov, 1998; Khasbulatova, 2007). If girls began to play boyish games, they were condemned "for "misbehaviour, boys were usually mocked in such cases.

Children of Chechens, like other peoples of the Caucasus, entered the world of adults very early. The introduction of the child to work activities began with play, which was one of the forms of socialization of children. Many games reproduced labour processes or economic activities, and from a very early age, children were taught that there is a clear division of work into male and female. If a boy started doing "female" work (for example, he took a broom and swept), he was forbidden to do so; a boy who was seen doing female activities was publicly ridiculed (Gimbatova, 2014).

The games of Chechen girls, in contrast to those of boys, were generally less varied and were more associated with the space closest to home. As a rule, girls played in their yard (during the warmer

months), in their own house or the house of neighbours' children. Thus, one of the favourite amusements of Chechen girls was playing with pebbles – "tulgeh lovzar".

In the past, playing with dolls was the most popular among Chechen girls, and dolls were their favourite toys. This situation was typical for other peoples of the Caucasus (Solovyeva, 1995; Warziati, 1987). Ragdolls were made with the help of adults, and they were taken care of and often passed from the elders to the younger ones. Games with dolls were multifunctional and made it possible to simulate various family situations, all the details of the family's everyday and festive life. Each girl had a whole doll farm – clothes, dishes, utensils for dolls.

The girls had popular games devoted to various subjects from everyday and ritual life: the doll was married off, they received "guests" and others.

The girls, in addition to clothes for dolls, also made bedding accessories, made pillows and feather beds from bird down, which they collected. On the whole, playing with dolls turned into a kind of labour school. In the process of playing, children often became teachers who taught dolls the norms of behaviour in various life situations. The girls "washed" linen, "weaved", "knitted", "baked cakes", invited each other to visit.

The girls also loved to sing songs, dance, participate in sports games (running, jumping). The girls demonstrated their dancing skills at weddings, parties, social events. The games and entertainments of boys, more diverse than those of girls, were primarily aimed at developing strength, dexterity, courage, and ingenuity. Everywhere, boys competed among themselves in the running at various distances, in jumping over all kinds of obstacles, in throwing weights. Many of the boys' games were military: they imitated hunting, war and various military competitions. At the age of 10–12, boys made themselves wooden guns, daggers, sabres, arrows, bows and played hunters, war and other situations. Knife games "Ursah lovzar" were popular among boys.

The popularity of such paramilitary amusements was because every man in Chechnya had to have military training, be able to wield cold weapons and firearms masterfully.

In winter, the boys built tunnels from snow, sculpted snow figures, and depicted clothes on them – Circassians with gazyry, with daggers, and put on a hat on their heads. They also built large snow towers, while competing, whose tower would be taller and stronger.

Children skated "koga salazash", on the ice they twisted a whirligig, which they made from polished bull's horn. Sometimes, to give the whirlpool stability, the horn was filled with molten lead. The favorite game of Chechen boys was the game of alchiki – "gIulgash".

Ball games played an important role in the entertainment of Chechen boys. The Chechens knew various types of balls: dumbbell balls; balls stuffed with sand – to train the abdominal muscles and shoulder muscles; balls from a bull bubble, covered with goatskin. There were also rag, woollen and wooden balls ("buirka") for playing rounders.

Often there were stone-throwing competitions.

The elders often watched the boys' games, encouraging those who achieved results, with the words "Hyo konakh wu" – "You are a real man".

There were known games, the primary purpose of which was to overcome fear, for example, to go in the dark to some "scary" place. The Chechens attached great importance to the upbringing of such a

quality as the ability to overcome fear, because, according to their views, everyone could experience fear. However, the courage consisted precisely in overcoming fear by passing a psychological test. If a boy or young man showed cowardice, peers in the future could not allow playing him. Such games are interesting in that they reveal the methods and techniques of bringing up the courage and the ability to overcome fear in Chechen boys. Similar games were played among other peoples of the Caucasus, for example, among the Andians of Dagestan. In this regard, Aglarov (2002) writes: "Games were also arranged with such psychological tests for children: one had to carry the hat of the other to the grave of the deceased, and the owner of the hat had to take it from where" (p. 72).

The presented materials indicate that children's games and toys largely determined the mechanism of the formation of gender stereotypes in the younger generation, conditioned by the process of socialization. Communicating with each other in the process of playing, children received clear ideas about the foundations of the social structure of society, about the relationship between men and women and their socio-gender roles, about the norms of behaviour of men and women in certain situations.

## 7. Conclusion

The issue of improving the upbringing of the younger generation, acquiring particular urgency and sound today, is at the centre of attention of the international Russian society. One of the conditions for solving this important and complex task is the creative application of all the richest experience that peoples have accumulated over the centuries and is based on national traditions.

A significant gender component characterized the traditional culture of Chechen education. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the noted gender differences, the clearly expressed dichotomy of the masculine and feminine principles inherent in most Caucasian peoples, did not in most cases indicate gender inequality in Chechen society. They were aimed primarily at a clear separation of the male and female space of Chechen culture, at maintaining the age and sex hierarchy and internal orderliness of family and social life, at the formation of symbols and models of male and female behaviour. Concerning Chechen culture, one can speak not about opposition, but about the interaction of the male and female worlds, which, thanks to this, formed a viable social model.

The popular system of upbringing was aimed at the formation of the qualities, skills and abilities necessary in life in the younger generation. In particular, it contributed to the formation of gender stereotypes as one of the basic socio-cultural characteristics of society. The central place (locus) of constructing gender stereotypes and gender asymmetry, i.e. inequality in the distribution of socio-gender roles was primarily a family (Mafedzev, 1991; Pushkareva, 2003).

The materials of this study demonstrate that a significant role in the formation of a picture of the world around the younger generation, ideas about the role of men and women in society, gender stereotypes as a support in the construction of a consistent and orderly picture of the social world by the individual belonged to the game culture. As a rule, in the traditional Chechen society, the games of boys and girls differed in their character and orientation, forming in the younger generation "male" and "female" character traits corresponding to the needs of society, the desire to fulfil in the future the corresponding socio-sexual family and professional roles.

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