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**ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER SPECIFICITIES  
OF SLAVIC PEOPLE MIGRATION TO NORTH CAUCASUS**

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***Abstract***

The colonization of North Caucasus that began in XVIII century enabled the movement of Slavic migrants to this regions. The paper considers the peculiarities of family patterns that were introduced by Slavic population into social life of North Caucasus during its settlement in XVIII–early XX century. The work analyses trading and social relations that had a particular influence on their family patterns. It also traces back to the evolution stages of Slavic families from individual settlers and small families to the formation of large families and collective households with consequent disintegration and domination of nuclear family collectives during the period of transition to capitalistic management. Interestingly, between the Slavic and North-Caucasian peoples there were intense social, economic and cultural links. Slavic migrants have brought traditional culture of their provinces to North Caucasus. From the beginning of migration to North Caucasus, have established a tight interaction and mutual sharing of business experience were established between Slavic peoples, highlanders and nomads. Noteworthy, even during Caucasian war, the business and cultural interaction of Slavic peoples with highlanders was developing. Various elements of culture of North Caucasian peoples were embedding into domestic life, material and spiritual culture of the migrants. Slavic migrant needed time to adapt to new sowing and harvesting dates, develop new cattle breeds adapted to local environment. In particular, they learned distillation, madder growing, and studied metal working. Slavic migrants facilitated the development of gardening, horticulture, construction and other in North Caucasus.

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**Keywords:** Slavic migrants, gender specificity, small family.



## 1. Introduction

Beginning from late XVIII century, the Russian government initiated policy of stronger influence in North Caucasus by migration of Christian peoples to that region: Russians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Nogai, Kalmyks, Turkmens and others. Simultaneously with planned migration policy of Russian administration on settlement of Caucasus territories, a spontaneous escape of serfs and representatives of other social groups. Concurrently with the migration, peaceful bonding with local ethnic population occurs, the majority of whom are highlanders. Collaborative business, grassroots contacts and exchange of objects of material and spiritual culture lead to both tight mutually beneficial economic bonds and mutual permeation and cultural enrichment of the peoples involved into comprehensive integration of North Caucasus into Russian Empire. Such socio-economic changes of course could not help but particularly affect such form of collective life as family. The lifestyle of Caucasian peoples, their business and social patterns have reflected in family relations as historically changing social institute. Gender bonds in Caucasus for a long time have been studied by Terek ethnographic expedition of MSU, Department of Ethnology. Over the recent years, these problems has been carefully studied by Hazbulatova (2016), Velikaya (2003), Danilova (1973), Tkhamokova (2016) and others. The historiography was enriched by a multitude of papers and monographs on this topic.

## 2. Problem Statement

The study of cultural interethnic interaction in modern conditions is high on the agenda. North Caucasus is a region with historically developed community of people which tries models of people cooperation, tests their capability to survive in extreme conditions of natural, social, religious and other shakes. The study of gender specificity of Slavic migrants to North Caucasus in XVIII–early XX century today has practical demand as well, since it promotes understanding and implementation of previously accumulated experience on regulation of interethnic struggle in this region.

## 3. Research Questions

This paper provides the anthropological analysis of gender specificities of Slavic people migration to North Caucasus from XVIII century to early XX century.

## 4. Purpose of the Study

The investigation is aimed at comprehensive study of the peculiarities of family patterns that were introduced by Slavic population into social life of North Caucasus during its settlement in XVIII–early XX century.

## 5. Research Methods

This work uses the **historically genetic method** enabling considering in dynamics the changes taking place in the life of Slavic peoples migrated to North Caucasus. The **historically comparative method** was

also used for comparing the peculiarities of households and domestic life of highlanders and Slavic population typical for North-Caucasian region.

## 6. Findings

In late XVI and XVII centuries, the region primarily was settled by individual Cossacks or those with small families. Since on early migration stages, there was a lack of women population, the marriages were often mixed, i.e. between foreign men and local highland women. Some of the marriages were abductions, other were unforced. The consequences of such mixed marriages encountered in the anthropological type of population of Chervlenaya, Grebenskaya, Shchadrinskaya, Kurdyukovskaya and other old stanitsas of Kizlyar-Grebensky regiment.

During traditional period of North-Caucasian society development, the sociocultural roles of men and women did not envisage the gender equality and had socially conditioned boundaries of the dialog of roles (Shoranova, 2012). The ethnical traditions, as well as social composition of foreign population were one of the factors affected the domestic life of different forms of family in this migration zone. For Ukrainians, such main type was small family, which traditionally consisted of either two spouses and their non-married children or spouses and their married children, i.e. families of two generations (Shchapov, 1970). For central, northern and south-eastern regions of Russia with dominating occupation by Russian population, the typical form was big family, however, small families were not an exception. Besides spouses, big family included elder parents and married grandchildren running collective undivided household and forming a family of four generations. A transition form was a family of three generations in which elder parents lived together with their youngest son and his family. Of frequent occurrence were big families with husbands who moved into the house of their wife, when together with married sons, the family household was run by married daughters with their husbands. Their position in the family was rightless and was comparable to that of a foreign cottar. In families with predomination of daughters, such husbands were free working labor. The same rightless position was typical for daughters-in-law, especially youngest ones. According to the hierarchy of a big family, she was under absolute subjection of not only the head of the family, but that of mother-in-law, elder daughters-in-law and husband. In Cossack families frequent was commerce between father-in-law and daughter-in-law, because the husband—literally the only protector of his wife—was constantly on service. The commerce was also in other regions of Russia (Kharuzin, 1985; Kosven, 1946).

Since the northern migration flow was much larger than south-western one, all the family forms above propagated in North Caucasus as well. Due to the specificities when the migrants had to develop new territories demanding serious physical efforts, small family with humble number of producers was of no competitiveness. Kosven (1946) wrote, “In hard conditions of colonization with relatively low state of art, small family was too weak group to create new households on a new location. Large collectives running households were of demand...” (p. 184). Nevertheless, there were regions, where arable farming was not widely developed due to the presence of podzolic soils hardly suitable for this. In stanitsas of Sunzhe-Vladikavkazskiy regiment, seasonal works and craftsmanship were more popular that did not required strong concentration of producers in one household. In such regions, small families prevailed.

Hence, one cannot note dominating character of business-economical factor that determined the existence of various forms of family household running in direct dependence on the quality and amount of land ownership. The effect of this factor can be traced as well on the life of foreign population whose families—due to the absence of land—changed in size and composition. Small size of two, and on rare occasions three, generations was typical for such families. However, if a foreign family had good house and rather large household plots, its members could exceed 10 people.

A large role in supporting and increasing the number of big families was played by Russian administration, which with due regard to the Caucasus population as the enhancement of military and economic power in the region, has issued a Decree in 1832 on strict prohibition of separation of any families. Indeed, under the influence of the factors above, the considered period demonstrated the new birth of large families represented by a large patriarchal family.

A large family of Slavic migrants in mid-XVIII–early XIX century was characterized by closed domestic life, especially among Cossack-Old Believers, which was the reason they tried not to become relatives with orthodox migrants. Such closeness of the domestic living caused many large families with Domostroy (family tyranny) customs to become self-standing and patriarchal traditions to become deep-rooted in their environment.

Big patriarchal families of migrants—which sometimes included mixed type of Slavic-mountaineer family—on average included 18 people; though some families could reach 25 people and even more. The head of a big family, as a rule, was the elder man (father), and in the case of his incapability or death, elder brother, who regulated daily household routine of the family and represented the family at the level of settlement. He was taking the responsibility for even distribution of work among the family members, its correct execution and fair distribution of income. The power of the father in a family was exceptionally strong; however, it based not on fear, but on respect for household running experience, wisdom in making the decisions and expertise. Though unreasoned despotism was not in favor, in one of the stanitsas we were told about some cases of disinheritance of one of the family members for certain grave mistakes. The same authority as the family head in a Slavic family was given to the elder woman, who dealt with the issues of household running, child-rearing, etc. Such hierarchy was especially observable in Cossack families, which Cossack was absent for a long time on service. In mixed Slavic-mountaineer families, a woman had no such power. This was prohibited by mountaineer customs. One should note a specific character of the family pattern of the Cossacks, where Cossack women has relative freedom as compared to peasant women or mountaineer women. The Cossack women had equal rights among the family members with self-dependent and proud character. The contemporary wrote about Cossack women the following: “Combine beauty and charm of a Russian woman with the beauty of Circassian woman, Turkish woman and Tatar woman; and if you add fearlessness of the Amazons, you will get the portrait of real Cossack woman”. For a Cossack woman, of the highest value were honesty and loyalty; they could ride a horse and fight with a weapon; they could defend themselves and were helping men in battle, if needed (Butova, 1989). An interesting fact describing the specific domestic life of Caucassian families, especially Old Believers, is that a woman had a guarantee of property in the case of unsuccessful marriage or family breakdown. For instance, in the customs of Grebentsy from stanitsa Chervlenaya, when a new family was formed, a part of marriage portion of a girl was left in the property of her parents’ family for herself and her children as a material basis in the

future, if the marriage for some reason was not successful (Malyzavkin, 1968). Such customs were spread among the Caucasian mountaineers.

The development of exchange relationships in North Caucasus and pre-reformation situation connected with further abolition of serfage in Russia caused the break-up of big families into small ones. However, it should be noted that this process was not linear. There are a lot of examples of outgrowth of small families which followed the trends of replication of big patriarchal family collectives in such stanitsas as Chervlenaya, Soldatskaya, Prokhladnaya and other. Their domestic life is known up to 1920s–1930s.

Thus, big and small families for a long time had an inclination to coexist with each other. Concurrently, there was a peculiar coherence. Under conditions of self-sustaining subsistence farming, when a family need a lot of producers, one should not the prevalence and orientation on big families. With the development of capitalistic relations and exchange business patterns, such necessity becomes obsolete and big families more easily transform into nuclear ones.

In North Caucasus, the break-up of big families began in early and mid-XIX century, when their quantity gradually and constantly diminished. Big families began to loose their former power. According to historical and ethnographical materials, late XIX century was the period of intense break-up of big families and domination of two-generation small family generally consisting of 6–12 people. During the transition from big family to small one, for a relatively long time—almost by XX century, there was the tradition to separate married sons. The head of a big family had to build or buy a house, give a part of property and a part cropland, meadow, farm buildings, forest, cattle and inventory. The same was given to a married daughter as marriage portion, except residential and farm premises. The provision of a new family with all necessary was controlled by public opinion. If a newly formed family could not be provided with land from the father's and mother's property, the young marrieds were presented land from public stock. Weak and broke families were assisted by public. Thus, after getting their portion, elder sons could not have pretensions for inheritance of the parents' family, where the youngest son inherited all the property. This was the segmentation of big family collectives. In the case of father's death, all the property was equally divided between the brothers. The widow was also receiving a part of property and land, because she still could marry someone. If there were small children in the family, the raising and material provision of them was born by a guardian who was close to the family or a step-father if he was appointed as the guardian (Zasedateleva, 1974).

During XIX century, together with the increased property differentiation of population, the break-up of large families was affected by land shortage. Large land plots were preserved by prosperous population being of small number. Due to lack of land, elder sons with their families migrated to free lands thus separating from the father or were finding work in cities, vineyards or fisheries and were building houses, where they lived as small families (Yagodinskiy, 1905). There were cases, when children were separating tom their parent families only by territory living in a separate house, but at small distance from the parents' house. The specificities of domestic life in new and transformed old families had a lot of similar aspects. This was facilitated by common business and economic interests and established traditions and life norms introduced from big patriarchal families into separate small families. With the break-up of a large family and formation of its small form in XIX–early XX century, a problem occurs of relation of rural,

neighboring and family commune which included both big and small families. With the advancement of urbanization process divorces become more frequent when young women leave husbands' families and return to their parents or go to work to cities and vineyards.

In the considered chronological frame, family life and traditions of migrants have received further development in completely new conditions of capitalistic business. Cheboksarov and Cheboksarova (1971) term as "byt" (domestic life) "specific forms of people behavior in their everyday life, i.e. constantly occurring during a day, year, life, and the interrelations between people, methods of application of things purposed for the satisfaction of their materials and spiritual demands" (p. 121). Despite the conservatism, Caucasian family life differed by its variability, which depended on the family type and household and property status.

Small family which replaced big family was less shackled by patriarchal norms dominating in the hierarchical Domostroy form of family collective. The wife in a small family had equal status and more freedom; though, the husband was in charge in the house. A lot of specificities were in mixed Slavic-mountaineer families that introduced a wide diversity into their family domestic life: language, religion, cuisine, traditions in child-rearing. As in a big family, in a small family, the birth of a boy was more welcomed, since this was based on the traditional attitude to him as the future head of the family, which was the most pronounced in the families of mountaineers and Cossacks. Boys were regarded as the economic and social foundation for the whole family.

No limits for birth promoted fast demographic growth of the region. Newborn children were, as a rule, christened due to the belief that a child has no soul—only vapor—and receives the soul after chrismation. The Old Believers were christening children immediately after birth. In mixed families, depending on the prevalence of different religions of parents, the children could be christened in either Christianity or Islam. However, it should be noted that despite the form of the family and its ethnicity, in the relations of parents and children, the indisputable authority of parents' power remained and was maintained.

## **7. Conclusions**

North Caucasus is the richest polyethnic region with numerous anthropological gender variations. The number of the main problems includes: the formation of Slavic population in the region, evolution of commune and family, traditions and domestic life, which individuality was historically formed under the influence of a specific combination of social, ethnical, political, geographical and other factors. To understand correctly specific sides of cultural and historical life of Slavic migrants, one should consider the whole range of these conditions. Such approach allows revealing local specificities inherent of the family life sphere. Its development included hard stages from initial settlement of the regions by individual migrants and small families, mainly from Russian regions to the formation of large-family collective households during massive settlement of the region with consequent division and prevalence of newly formed nuclear family collectives during transition to capitalistic business management. Obviously, the gender problems of North-Caucasian region are high on the agenda today too and require further detailed analysis.

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