

DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v6i6.1359

Citation: Pokotilova, T. E., & Rusetskiy, M. G. (2017). The Rationalization of the Highlanders' Culture in the Terek Region of the Russian Empire in the Second Half of the 19th - Beginning of the 20th Centuries. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(6), 266-272. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v6i6.1359>

The Rationalization of the Highlanders' Culture in the Terek Region of the Russian Empire in the Second Half of the 19th - Beginning of the 20th Centuries

Tatyana Evgenevna Pokotilova¹, Mikhail Gennad'evich Rusetskiy²

Abstract

The article is devoted to the problem of constructing a new cultural identity of the highlanders living in the Terek region during the period of 1860-1917. In this article, the authors proceed from the established ideas in the science that the entire evolution of Russian history is filled with the practice of organizing the coexistence of different cultural identities in their constant interrelated development. The specific historical examples show how the inclusion of the Northern Caucasus in the Russian Empire, the modernization processes experienced by Russia itself during this period, the conscious acceptance of the elements of new consciousness, norms and values by the highlanders, has influenced the rationalization of the culture of the Terek region population. Such factors as kunachestvo, borrowings in the material culture, the provision of highlanders with economic and trade opportunities to work peacefully and provide their families with the results of peaceful work, the integration of highlanders into education and enlightenment on a modern basis have become effective means of creating a mechanism of interpenetration of the highlanders' and Slavic cultures in the region and the formation of a new cultural identity of the North Caucasian highlanders.

Keywords: Culture, Highlanders, Cultural identity, Terek region, the North Caucasus, the Russian Empire.

¹ North Caucasus Federal University (NCFU) 1, Pushkin Street, Stavropol, Russia. E-mail: t.pokotilova@gmail.com

² North Caucasus Federal University (NCFU) 1, Pushkin Street, Stavropol, Russia. E-mail: t.pokotilova@gmail.com

Introduction

The theorist of Orientalism E. Said wrote: "If we no longer imagine the relationship between cultures and their adherents as adjacent to each other without the slightest gap, completely synchronous and corresponding to each other, and if we perceive cultures as permeable and, in general, vulnerable protective boundaries between political entities, then a more promising situation arises. Then, if we see the "Other" not as an ontological given, but as a historical derivative, it will mean the destruction of prejudices associated with exclusivity, which we often attribute to different cultures, including our own ..." (2006: 305). Offering thus a basis for building more productive relations primarily between the West and the East, E. Said, as it seems to us, invented a universal recipe to find points of possible rapprochement by mitigating the confrontation of the extremes through the attempts to find similarities.

It so happened in Russian history that all its evolution is filled with the practice of building the coexistence of different cultural identities both with the expansion of the borders of our country and in connection with its centuries-old status as a multinational state. Factors that have ensured and are now ensuring such coexistence are quite multidimensional. In addition, their scientific search for the historical past has been demanded by public practice today more than ever before. Indeed, Russia's choice of a democratic form of development excluded the force from the arsenal of ensuring the preservation and promotion of socio-cultural values that are traditional for the Russian history. This, naturally, calls for an urgent need to appeal to other means of ensuring the formation and successful existence of the phenomenon of the all-Russian cultural identity, which was less obvious but quite extensive in our history.

To such, we consider it possible to attribute the rationalization of the peoples' cultures living in the country and the construction of new forms of identity in changing life ties that are correlated with the modernization processes that encompassed Russia at certain stages of its existence.

Methods

When studying the issue, the authors relied on the civilizational approach in its inseparable connection with the modernization and culture-centric approaches. The main principles of the study were the principle of historicism, the principle of consistency and the principle of concreteness. The principle of historicism is attracted to study the subject of research in development. The principle of consistency made it possible to study the culture rationalization process of the highlanders of the Terek region as a manifestation of the development of a number of systemic processes. The reference to the principle of concreteness allowed to study the subject of research as having a unique content and developing in a certain place at a certain time.

Among the involved methods of research are the historical-comparative, historical-systemic, and the method of diachronic analysis.

Discussion and Results

By the time the Russian Empire entered the period of fundamental changes through the reforms of the 60-70s of the 19th century in the North Caucasus, Russia has already firmly established itself not only in the military and administrative sense. Even 1780-1790 years have given a significant influx of Slavic settlers from the interior provinces, and since the 1960s of the 19th century "a new stage in the resettlement policy arising from two important events, the abolition of serfdom and the end of the Caucasian War", begins (Gordin, 1997: 95). And this fact takes place in conditions when "in the socio-cultural sense, many North Caucasian peoples have already been firmly incorporated into the Arab-Islamic

type of culture in the first half of the 18th century, despite the distinctive refraction of Mohammedanism in local pre-religious beliefs ..." (Shnaider, 2005: 72).

It is obvious in this situation that logically inevitable for the highlanders the process of incorporating them into the Russian socio-cultural space was defined in the dynamism and specificity of its development not only by subjective preferences, but by a number of important factors which arouse the practical interest at the present stage of development of the North Caucasian society as a part of the Russian society.

Concerned, as historians, by searching for sources confirming the presence of these factors among those that testify to the rationalization of the cultures connected in the region and the construction of new forms of identities in the changing life ties, we found these primarily in the area of the emergence of new norms, symbols and even worldviews. That allowed us to expect more confirmation of the dynamism of the process of acquiring a new form of personal identity focused on a series of nationwide cultural norms by members of such unique local communities.

The presentation of a number of facts from this series can begin with an excerpt from the publication of the newspaper *Terskiye Vedomosti* for 1892: "Marriages between the highlanders and the Cossacks constituted the most ordinary phenomenon in the old days, and by this mixing a special type of Grebensky Cossack was formed ... Quite often among the Cossacks ... one could come across the type of a handsome highlander" (*The history of the nations of the North Caucasus*, 1988: 90). In a situation where, according to V.G. Schneider, an indispensable condition for ethnic self-identification of the highlanders is the opposition of their own ethnic group to their closest neighbors (Shnaider, 2005: 86), the entering into interethnic marriages is a direct way not only to the exchange of cultural experience, but also to the acquisition of a new form of personal identity.

If interethnic marriages did not become a mass phenomenon in the North Caucasus with time, *kunachestvo*, a kind of custom of Caucasian twinning, especially between the highlanders and the Slavs, was not uncommon. As well as the return, for example, of the children by the Ossetian peasants to Russian villages for teaching them Russian spoken language.

Joint work on the ground, exchange of experience in the cultivation of agricultural crops, construction of irrigation facilities, etc. - it was not just the borrowing of material culture, it was an effective means of formation of the interpenetration mechanism of cultures, and effective way to achieve understanding.

"The collection about the Caucasian highlanders" published in 1876, contains the revelations of a prosperous young highlander, illustrating the process of gradual rationalization of the highlanders' culture under the influence of changes in the life ties resulting from the administrative and socio-cultural development of the Russian Empire in the North Caucasus. He said: "Times are different now.... Having forgotten my grandfather's contempt for black labor, I took this job. I got several pairs of oxen and horses, ... I have a brick factory of my own and a well-purchased house ... I invest in a bank. I still carry the dagger with the only purpose not to offend my relatives" (State archive of the Stavropol territory, Fund 73: 108-109).

The Russian authorities had seriously invested in giving the highlanders the opportunity to work peacefully and provide their families with the results of peaceful work. The construction of mills, elevators, cheese and tobacco companies; the involvement of the population in trade and giving it a modern scale using, first of all, the introduction in 1875 of the Rostov - Vladikavkaz railway; the transformation of Ossetia into the area of non-ferrous metallurgy. The Grozny district became the center of the oil industry. All this worked, ultimately, to instill the highlanders' interest in life and work in Russia.

The young researcher M.G. Kuleshin quite reasonably argued that "the enlightenment was one of the main channels, which followed the introduction of the highlanders to the Russian culture". And he was

also quite convincing in the point that "the development of education was inevitable through schools using a single program and giving the system of knowledge necessary for providing the polyethnic population of the region with the ideas of equality within the framework of Russian civilization" (2009: 17). Conquering the peoples of the Caucasus "morally and spiritually by the spread of education between them", Russia, first of all, involved the local population in the process of gradual formation of the foundations of a new cultural identity focused on the total Russian socio-cultural space. Second, it solved the problem of specialists training for work primarily in the management system of the region in conditions when those of the Russians often back home "at the first opportunity" (Krasnov, 1913: 17). At the same time, it is important that the planning and implementation of the school education reform in the studied region was accompanied by the registration of the main features of the local population cultures. A contemporary M.V. Krasnov testified in this regard that the government had in mind "to give the highlanders an education which provided them with the means to be useful citizens... from the comfort of their realm, that is, without detracting from their natural manners, customs, and beliefs" (1887: 61).

One of the most important steps in this direction was the organization in the Terek region the so-called highland schools, focused on providing children of the local population with general primary education, but also, which was equal or maybe more important, with the classes in crafts and agricultural work. Thus, there were laid the foundations for the construction of a new identity in which the highlanders were accustomed to the habit of "being useful citizens not in a military but mainly in a peaceful field..." (Krasnov, 1887: 61). With the aim of achieving a more immersive experience of the highlanders' children in the new environment, boarding schools were arranged at the regional highland schools. In addition to the educational disciplines corresponding the given level of education, the highland schools had both the "God's law of the Orthodox Faith" and the "Law of the Muslim religion, charters and reading of the Koran" in their curriculum (Central state archive of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania. Fund 12. Inventory 5. File 83. Page 4).

The comprehensive nature of the proposed education, its quality and relative accessibility in a material sense helped the highland schools to compete with the numerous and often influential religious schools in the region. With time, in the presence of a limited number of seats and the transformation of part of the highland schools into paid ones, the popularization of elementary secular education and the inclusion of as many children as possible from the unprivileged strata, mainly of the Ossetian population, was intercepted by the parish schools established and maintained by the Society of Orthodox Christianity Reconstruction in the Caucasus. Transferred every 2-3 years from one village to another, they acted according to the rules when teaching Russian literacy was carried out "after the study of natural literacy" (Materials on the history of the Ossetian people, 1942: 118). That, along with free and sufficiently high level of education, made the latter very attractive for the local population.

The most successful school graduates of highland district schools annually waited for the 100 vacancies in three grammar schools of the Caucasus school district: Baku, Stavropol and Kuban, where they were admitted into the fourth grade without entrance exams. In the most famous and prestigious boarding school in Stavropol, in 1868-1870 academic years, there were 191 highlanders from 451 pupils (Krasnov, 1913: 91). These were the children of the Ingush, the Ossetians, the Chechens, the Balkars, the Kabardins. It was Stavropol gymnasium that raised such prominent representatives of national cultures who could not imagine their life without Russia, like Kosta Khetagurov, Iskhak Karmov, Sultan-Bek Abayev, etc. If the gymnasiums gave a classical education and trained the cultural elite for the peoples of the North Caucasus, the training of technical intelligentsia had been carried out in handicraft schools in the cities of the region. The most famous of them was the so-called "Loris - Melikovskoe" school in Vladikavkaz, which began to work in 1868 (Terskie Vedomosti, 1886, no.52).

The case of proper education among the peoples of the North Caucasus was of great importance for the Russian authorities, and it can be traced in a closer attention to providing the region with the teaching staff. The sources indicate that by the end of 1901, there were 1393 people of teaching staff (who had the teacher's title) in the Terek region, while in the Kuban area there were 884, and in the Stavropol province – 258 (The report about educational institutions of the Caucasian school district for 1901, 1902: 536).

The important means of design of a new form of identity among young highlanders was the government's decision to permit them to enter higher educational institutions at the expense of the state. The natives of the Caucasus were educated in St. Petersburg and Moscow universities, in the Main Pedagogical Institute, in Grigoretsk Agricultural Institute and the Main School of Horticulture in Odessa, in the craft school of the Imperial Educational House and St. Petersburg Commercial College (State archive of the Stavropol territory. Fund 73: 9-10). With time, this geography has expanded due to Medical-Surgical Academy, Technological Institute, and others.

Gradually, with the expansion of the sphere of civil activity in the Russian Empire as a whole, not only urban and rural societies, but also public organizations growing in number, helped the government in approving modern education in the North Caucasus. The government encouraged the desire of responsible citizens in accordance with the procedure established by law to form organizations in order to help children in obtaining education, and to educational institutions in its provision.

And, in many respects it was the merit of members of such public associations that by 1874 in the Terek region there were 230 secular educational institutions with 7,350 pupils, 1,323 of whom were girls (Public education in Kabarda and Balkaria, 2011: 81).

Archival funds of the Central state archive of the Republic of North Ossetia – Alania, located in the city of Vladikavkaz – the regional center of the former Terek region, are full of materials about the activities of charities related to the provision of assistance in the education of children from poor families. This activity was transparent: all actions associated with the charitable activity of citizens had been reported in the press. It is only from a brief report on the activities of the "Society of assistance to students in Vladikavkaz" for 1889-1890 academic year, we are convinced of the importance of the assistance provided. The society paid "for the right to exercise" 21 schoolgirls of Vladikavkaz Olginskaya female gymnasium (870 rubles); 14 pupils of Vladikavkaz real school (360 rubles); 14 pupils of Vladikavkaz classical school (420 rubles); 2 students of Vladikavkaz Ossetian school (18 rubles); 1 student of Vladikavkaz Loris-Melikovskogo craft school (12 rubles 50 kopecks). In addition, part of the students of these educational institutions received subsidies. Subsidies with the total amount of 385 rubles were also issued by the Society in 1889-1890 academic year to 9 students who studied in higher educational institutions of the country (Terskie Vedomosti, 1890: 100).

To one extent or another, by 1897 all 11 charitable public organizations of the region, including 2 specialized ones, were engaged in various types of assistance in obtaining and providing education in the Terek region (Terek calendar of 1897, 1897: 74-75).

All these charitable and other voluntary public associations, both private-legal and part of the structure of all-Russian semi-public agencies (primarily charitable), even the very fact of their emergence, the expansion of the scope of activities and the increase in number during the modernization processes in Russia and the region had contributed to accelerating the rate of change of life ties, thus changing cultural identities. The birth and expansion of the civil initiative both among the representatives of Slavic ethnic groups, and among local population existed in autocratic cultures for centuries, had witnessed the birth of new norms, and even worldviews. Moreover, the form of a voluntary public association of people to solve their local problems led to the development of collective identity with the emphasis on local interests. In the North Caucasus region, this meant the beginning and the cohesion of different nationalities for active

joint participation in public life. For example, the representatives of almost all the peoples living in the region were a part of the leadership and members of the Board of the Society for the dissemination of education and technical information among the highlanders of the Terek region, in 1907 (Terek calendar of 1907, 1907: 288-289).

Conclusion

It is evident that the government, religious institutions and emerging communities through education, enlightenment, inclusion and encouraging the highlanders to peaceful work and other means helped them to get acquainted and gradually adopt a number of new cultural norms and patterns of behavior that led to the formation of a habit to understand themselves from the positions of the main cultural characteristics of the Russian socio-cultural environment. Because of this, clearly realizing their belonging to a certain nationality, the representatives of the North Caucasian highlanders had the opportunity to organize their livelihood, to make it predictable in the new historical realities caused by their accession to the Russian Empire and the modernization processes experienced throughout Russia. In addition, the Russian authorities during the long-term transformation of the cultural identity of highlanders by conscious acceptance of certain elements of the new consciousness, norms and values had solved the problem of establishing its presence in the region (Loba, Malahova, & Safronova, 2017).

Conflict of Interests

The authors confirm that the data submitted do not contain a conflict of interests.

References

Central state archive of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania. Fund 12. Inventory 5. File 83. Page 4.

Gordin, Ia. (1997). *Chto uvleklo Rossiiu na Kavkaze? Zametki ob ideologii Kavkazskoi voiny* [What had been Russia swept by in the Caucasus? Notes about the ideology of the Caucasian war]. *Zvezda*, 10.

Istoriia narodov Severnogo Kavkaza (kon. XVIII v. – 1917 g) [The history of the nations of the North Caucasus (end of the 18th century – 1917)] (1988). Moscow.

Krasnov, M. (1887). *Istoricheskaia zapiska o Stavropol'skoi gimnazii* [Historical note on Stavropol gymnasium]. Stavropol.

Krasnov, M. (1913). *Prosvetiteli Kavkaza* [Enlighteners of the Caucasus]. Stavropol.

Kuleshin, M. G. (2009). *Integratsiia gorskogo naseleniia Severo-Vostochnogo Kavkaza v sostav Rossiiskoi imperii v ramkakh Terskoi oblasti (60-90-e gg. XIX v.)*. Diss. kand. ist. nauk [The integration of the highlanders population of the North-Eastern Caucasus in the Russian Empire within the framework of the Terek region. Ph.D. Thesis]. Stavropol.

Loba, V. E.; Malahova, A. S. & Safronova, E. V. (2017). Scientometric Characteristic of Theses on Criminal Law Defended at the Universities in the Russian Empire (1815-1917). *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(4), 1333-1343. DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v6i4. 1189.

Materialy po istorii osetinskogo naroda. T.5. Sbornik dokumentov po istorii narodnogo obrazovaniia v Osetii [Materials on the history of the Ossetian people. Vol. 5. Collection of documents on the history of public education in South Ossetia] (1942). Ordzhonikidze.

Narodnoe obrazovanie v Kabarde i Balkarii v XIX-nachale XX vv. Sbornik arkhivnykh dokumentov [Public education in Kabarda and Balkaria in the XIX-early XX centuries. The collection of archival documents] (2001). Nal'chik.

Otchet o sostoianii uchebnykh zavedenii Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga za 1901 god [The report about educational institutions of the Caucasian school district for 1901] (1902). Tiflis.

Said, E. V. (2006). *Orientalizm. Zapadnye kontseptsii Vostoka* [Orientalism. Western concepts of the East]. Saint Petersburg.

Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh. Vip. VII [The collection of information about the Caucasian highlanders] (1876). Tiflis.

Shnaider, V. G. (2005). *Rossiiia i Severnyi Kavkaz v dorevoliutsionnyi period: osobennosti integratsionnykh protsessov* [Russia and the North Caucasus in pre-revolutionary period: the specifics of integration processes]. Moscow.

State archive of the Stavropol territory. Fund 73. Inventory 1. File 254. Pages 9-10.

Terskie vedomosti (1886 – № 52).

Terskie vedomosti (1890 - № 100).

Terskii kalendar' na 1897 god [Terek calendar of 1897] (1897). Vladikavkaz.

Terskii kalendar' na 1907 god [Terek calendar of 1907] (1907). Vladikavkaz.