

THE PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONS IN THE FAMILIES OF CAUCASIAN ORIGIN IN A FOREIGN ETHNIC ENVIRONMENT

The preservation of cultural traditions in families living outside their ethnic “ancestral homeland” is a current ethnographic problem. The main question is whether elements of family culture that are associated with ethnic tradition are preserved, transformed or lost in such a situation. The study was conducted among the families of employees at the Kola Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (the city of Apatity in the Murmansk Region), whose members define their origin as Georgian, Armenian and Kabardian. The vast majority of informants come from multi-ethnic families. Ethnocultural traditions are examined using both the material artifacts: ethnically marked relics, family archives and national cuisine, and intangible heritage: language, religion, rules of conduct, rituals, festive ceremonies (e.g. weddings). The study is mainly based on the author’s field materials obtained in 2024. The purpose of the study is to record and show the extent to which ethnic culture is preserved in the families of the Kola Scientific Center employees with a “Caucasian” ancestry. Special emphasis was placed on the practical application of certain traditions and the transfer of relevant experience to the next generation. A comprehensive methodology was used with a focus on the oral history method. The study summarizes the main factors that facilitate the preservation and development of ethnocultural traditions within families living in a foreign ethnic environment. Firstly, it’s the active cultural position of a family member of Caucasian descent and a special effort made to teach the language and traditions to their family members. Secondly, it is very important to maintain close ties with the ethnic homeland and contacts with relatives. Thirdly, the second parent (in the study, these were mainly Russians) should not prevent the child from being introduced to a “different” culture by the in-laws; that is, the quality of the marriage is an important factor. Fourthly, the personal motivation of the descendants in “appropriating” a certain Caucasian culture is of crucial importance.

Keywords: *ethnic identity, language preservation, religious traditions, ethnically marked material heritage, rituals*

Author Info: **Busyreva, Elena V.** — Ph.D. in History, Senior Researcher, Barents Centre of the Humanities of the Kola Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Apatity, Russian Federation). E-mail: ebusyрева@mail.ru ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2054-2910>

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