

Meghan Murphy-Lee, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

Wedding Traditions in Post-Soviet Moscow

The discussion of Russian folklore often focuses on the past. However, authors such as Rouhier-Willoughby consider whether there is a nexus between traditional, village folklore and contemporary, urban social practice. In this presentation, the researcher extends that idea, noting that modern Moscow wedding traditions are breaking from some of the Soviet-era rituals while incorporating western and pre-revolutionary practices. The researcher collected data on Moscow wedding traditions in an attempt to begin to quantify the trajectory and degree to which these trends are convergent. Moscow was chosen since it has a substantial effect on culture throughout the country.

The researcher conducted interviews in 2014 with newlywed couples, proprietors of the new and booming Moscow wedding industry, and many brides and grooms on their wedding days at famous Moscow landmarks. Of particular interest was that many of the pre-revolution traditions were making a comeback. The use of a тамада (not a ведущий) at the ceremony is increasingly common, and many of the конкурсы (tests of worthiness) that fell out of style during Soviet times are re-emerging. Simultaneously, new traditions are being tested; many young couples with resources attempt to recreate their favorite Hollywood wedding fantasy. Wedding planning entrepreneurs are growing in popularity to help brides obtain the perfect Vera Wang gown and orchestrate a Western-style wedding ceremony to match the bride's favorite Julia Roberts movie.

This presentation will discuss the data collected, their revelations regarding modern wedding traditions, and how the latest, contemporary traditions address a possible dichotomy between urban and traditional folklore.

Rouhier-Willoughby, Jeanmarie, ed. *Village Values: Negotiating Identity, Gender, and Resistance in Urban Russian Life-Cycle Rituals*. Slavica Pub, 2008.

Olson, Laura J., and Svetlana Adonyeva. *The Worlds of Russian Village Women: Tradition, Transgression, Compromise*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2013.