

Northernmost Islam: “Islamic Factor” in Eastern Siberia

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Abstract

The article dwells on the growing Islamic factor in Eastern Siberia, namely in Krasnoyarsk Krai. Neither area has ever been a Muslim territory, and Muslims still make up a minority in these regions. Starting from the 1970's–1980's, the number of Muslims living in Eastern Siberia has been growing, and so has their influence on the processes occurring in the Eastern Siberian economy, politics, and culture. There isn't a single Muslim ummah in Krasnoyarsk Krai. The Muslim groups living there differ by ethnic origin. The main reason behind the increase in the Muslim population in Krasnoyarsk Krai is active labor migration from ex-Soviet countries in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. As the number of labor migrants continues to grow, it may trigger Islamophobia and increase migrant-phobia and xenophobia in the area. On the other hand, as their population grows, Eastern Siberian Muslims are likely to develop their own set of political interests which they will want to see catered to. One way or another, unless there is special political management in place taking these issues into account, the chances of ethnic and religious tensions in society will only keep growing. Another worrying thing is that radical Islamists also infiltrate Eastern Siberia as part of labor migration. Modern-day Muslim communities are gradually changing the social, demographic, and cultural face of urban communities in Eastern Siberia.

Keywords: religion study, Islam, Eastern Siberia, Krasnoyarsk Krai

1. Introduction

The Islamic factor in the former Soviet Union is gaining momentum even in those areas that would never come across as traditionally Muslim some 30 or 50 years ago. Eastern Siberia whose native population comes from the Tungus-Manchu ethnic group and whose territory was previously explored and colonized mainly by Russian speakers (both under the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union), has now turned into an area with continuously growing economic and political influence from Muslim communities. Eastern Siberian Muslim communities play a fairly active part in transforming the former Soviet Union, and their activity keeps building up. Eastern Siberian social stratification is transforming too: Muslim-only areas are starting to appear and, as the share of Muslim voters continues to grow, Muslim communities are becoming a more powerful political force in the area. Islamic culture is having a big impact on the form and content of school and university education, public holidays, architecture, literature, and visual arts. Eastern Siberian Islam is flexing its muscles slowly, but steadily. Eastern Siberia is becoming the Northernmost Outpost of Islam in the modern world (Yarkov et al., 2007). This prompts a question about the reasons and factors behind this process and the prospects for the future. The growing presence of Islamic communities in Eastern Siberia comes with historical, cultural, economic, political, geopolitical, and social context. The purpose of this research is to analyze some of the factors behind the increasing Islamic presence in Northern Eurasia by looking at Islamic communities in Krasnoyarsk Krai (Eastern Siberia, Russia).

2. Literature Review

Researchers these days keep a close eye on the Islamic factor, the politicizing of Islam, the pan-Islamic movement, and the recent political events in the Middle East and Muslim African and ex-Soviet states. The history of Siberian khanates accepted in the academic community derives from G. F. Miller's 1750 study All-round research into the factors behind the

spread of Islam in different parts of the world started with a study by T.W. Arnold, *The preaching of Islam: a history of the propagation of the Muslim faith* (1913). The author believes that the key factors behind the active spread of Islam lie outside politics and economics and have more to do with individual preachers and prophets, as well as new converts' motivation. According to T.W. Arnold, Islam may not have had centralized missionary organizations like Christianity did, but its influence was more powerful than that of the organized Christian effort thanks to the amazing personal qualities displayed by Muslim merchants, traders, rulers, prophets, and spiritual leaders. T.W. Arnold believes it is unfair to view Islamic expansion from a military and political perspective only because spiritual and psychological reasons also played a big part.

For a fairly long time, the study of Islam was restricted to the realms of religious history, cultural history, history of the arts, and comparative religious studies. Many researchers believed that religious and ethnic factors would lose their edge in the 20th century and their influence on geopolitics, society, and economics would fade with each passing year.

Analytical publications of the 1970's started introducing terms such as "Islamic revival", "Islamic fundamentalism", and "Islamic modernization". A new kind of Islamic state started to emerge, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and others. As the world's dependence on oil production was growing, so was the economic influence of Islamic states, where oil extraction is known to be a crucial business.

Starting from that point, Islamic studies begin to acquire new features. Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic revival turned out to stretch beyond state and economic systems and into the realms of terrorism and extremism. Modern Islam is studied in the context of its direct influence on various political and economic practices typical of Muslims living in different countries and communities.

The interdependence between the Islamic worldview and a certain type of political and economic system is researched in *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning: Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse*, edited by William R. Roff (1987). The study analyzes elements of the political systems of Iran, Pakistan, and Nigeria and finds a link between the religious fabric of Islam and the state systems in Muslim societies.

Ira M. Lapidus (1997) supports the opposite point of view. This researcher believes that the spirit of reformation and modernization has been an integral part of Islam from the very start and dates back to Prophet Muhammad, who is a role model for Muslims. Ira M. Lapidus views Islamic fundamentalism as a reaction to modern capitalist economy and culture and a way to safeguard the fundamental values and principles of Islam in the modern age.

This approach is also supported by Roy (2004). He analyzes neofundamentalism, that is, peaceful or armed attempts by second- and third-generation Muslim immigrants living in Western countries to preserve their right to a Muslim identity within non-Muslim societies. O. Roy points out that currently one-third of Muslims live in countries where they make up a minority. This trend is growing, and radicalized young Muslims living in non-Muslim societies often provide fertile ground for radical Islam to sprout on. This is not about rebelling against Westernization as much as it is about self-identification: young Muslims identify themselves with a real or imaginary supranational Muslim community, a "global ummah".

In the study *Contemporary Islam: Reformation or Revolution?* (1998) the world-renowned Islam expert J.L. Esposito raises a number of pointed questions about modern Islam. Present-day Islamic ideology tends to look back and often offers an escape to the past from the present or the future. Muslim communities keep growing in Europe, Canada, and North and South America. This raises the question of how the Islamic ideology affects modern law and how religion influences modern culture in general. J.L. Esposito believes modern Islam needs spiritual leaders who can think globally and bring together inherent Islamic ideals and global transformations.

Saeed (2007) suggests the following classification of the key trends in modern Islam: 1) Legalist Traditionalists; 2) Theological Puritans; 3) Militant Extremists; 4) Political Islamists; 5) Secular Liberals; 6) Cultural Nominalists; 7) Classical Modernists; 8) Progressive Ijtihads. This researcher believes the classification can be continued because newly-emerging terminology allows analyzing Islam as a complex and controversial modern-day phenomenon rather than as a homogeneous issue.

In the latest edition of his book, *Islam: The straight path* (2010), J.L. Esposito conducts a deep and comprehensive study of Islam, including its history and modern-day standing. J.L. Esposito pays a lot of attention to globalization processes in modern Islam and the way Muslims respond to the biggest social and political challenges of the 21st century. He also looks into Islam's attitude to violence and extremism. He argues that submovements of Islam are so diverse that there isn't a single universally Islamic response to the key challenges of the 21st century.

These and multiple other studies suggest that the growing role of the Islamic factor in Eastern Siberia is part of a global trend found in non-Muslim, originally Christian or Judaist societies where emerging Muslim communities still make up a minority. Hence, Eastern Siberia faces a global trend with a local twist. This local twist in the way the Islamic factor is building up in Eastern Siberia has not been studied in much detail.

Both the history and current state of Islam in Siberia have generated a very small amount of research. The fundamental reference work *Encyclopedia of Islam* includes only four entries on Siberian Islam: "Siberia," "Tobol," and "Tyumen," written by P. Golden, and "Baraba," written by V. V. Bartold (see Fleet et al. 2007). Neither Prozorov's *Islam in the Territories of the Former Russian Empire* nor the *Encyclopedia Iranica* mentions Siberian Islam (Prozorov, 2006)

One of the first studies into Soviet policies towards Islam in Central Asia and Siberia was conducted by Dr. Violet Conolly (1986). J. Forsyth looks at some aspects of Siberian Islam in *A history of the peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian colony 1581-1990* (1994). Since the 1990's, A.G. Seleznev (1994) has been studying the history of Islam in Western Siberia (particularly the Omsk and the Tumen regions), where Islamic communities have existed for over 600 years. Other than history, Western Siberian Islam has also been the subject of literature studies. For example, Sayfulina et al. (2013) conduct philological analysis of Western Siberian literature in the Tatar language and discover a number of location-specific features of Western Siberian Islam.

Crews (2006) believes that Russia has unique experience of treating Islam with tolerance ever since the age of Catherine the Great. Muslim communities were integrated into the Russian Empire, and state officials were able to successfully arbitrate disputes between various Muslim communities. The researcher believes that the Russian Empire managed to develop a number of practices to allow Christians and Muslims to coexist within a single state.

New studies into the history of Siberian Islam have been emerging lately. For example, in *Islamization and native religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and conversion to Islam in historical and epic tradition* (2010) DeWeese analyzes Turkic epic literature to study the Islamization of ethnic and cultural groups within the Golden Horde living in Central Asia.

In his book, *Islam in Russia: the four seasons* (2014), R. Bukharaev offers a chronological study of Islam in Russia, including Siberia, from 922 to the 1800's. He does not look into modern-day Islam though.

Sources on the history of early Islam in Siberia are extremely limited. Very few sources that can be used in scholarly research have been translated into Russian, the primary language for research conducted in Russian universities. Lacking a strong tradition of research on which to base this paper, the authors began this study with the following facts and concepts in mind.

The authors adhere to the concept that Islam in Siberia is part of a large Islamic world (Malashenko, 2006). Siberian Islam is closely linked with world history's Sunni communities and Sufi orders and is defined by the pagan beliefs that existed among Turkic Ugric ethnic and cultural groups before Islam spread to the region. The spread of Islam in Siberia was aided by the Soviet Union's historical period of state atheism.

Fortunately, there are some scholars studying Siberian Islam. Today there is a West-Siberian scientific school studying the history of Islam in Western Siberia, headed by Professor Alexander P. Yarkov. Yarkov, the Director of the Institute for Human Studies at Tyumen State University in Western Siberia, is the author of many studies on the history of Islam in Western Siberia. His research relates to the young people's prevention of Islamic terrorism through the use of the Internet. He and his followers believe that the prevention of Islamic radicalism is associated with the cultural study of Islam in Siberia, with the support of the Islamic religious community which advocates a loyal relationship with the state. In his research Yarkov reveals the cultural and political practices through which Russian settlers in Siberia built cultural and political communications with the Siberian Tatars-Muslims. Yarkov is an expert in the field of Islamic religious education and actively participates in public discussions about religious issues of various denominations in Western Siberia. He believes that Muslims in Siberia originally had more political and cultural freedom than in the center of the Russian Empire. He associates this situation with the small population of Siberia, which forced Siberian authorities to have a large tolerance for non-Christian and non-Russian peoples. This historical freedom is reflected in the current situation of Muslim Tatars in modern Siberia.

We considered Professor Yarkov's expert opinion as we explored the current situation of Muslims in Eastern Siberia and in the Krasnoyarsk Territory. In Eastern Siberia the population has always been sparser than in Western Siberia. Therefore, there have always existed mono-ethnic villages of Muslims (mainly Tartars) and houses of worship there have always been Islamic (Yarkov, 2004). In addition, serious researchers in the fields of archeology, ethnology, and ethnography, such as Belich (2010), Seleznev (2013), and Selezneva (2008), focus their studies on the Siberian Tatars. These scientists are exploring the features of Islam in Western Siberia on the basis of field research in the Omsk, Tomsk, and Tyumen regions.

The main reason for the lack of historical information about Siberian Islam results from the political situation in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, which for decades created obstacles that prevented the academic study of Islam in general and Siberian Islam in particular. Cultural and religious studies of Siberian Islam avoided the following important topics:

- 1) the adoption of Islam by Ugric and Turkic tribes in Siberia in the fourteenth century;

- 2) the peaceful relationship between the Islamic and Orthodox populations after the annexation of the Siberian khanate to the Moscow Principality and the integration of the Siberian khanate into the structure of the Russian state;
- 3) the Russian state's decision to force Muslims to accept Orthodox Christianity during the Russian Empire; and
- 4) the state policy of militant atheism during the Soviet Union period.

Nowadays scientific research of Islamic communities living in Eastern Siberia is practically non-existent. Existing studies are focused on the history of Siberian Islam up to the 20th century, the demographic situation, and the religious revival common for all post-Soviet Russia.

3. Research Methodology

For this study we used scientific approaches related to the hermeneutical analysis of representative cultural texts, described by Geertz; the concept of culture as an educational ideal; Pivovarov's concept of religion as the core of culture; and Pivovarov's recognition that in the basis of every culture is its sacred texts (Geertz, 1977; Ilbeykina et al., 2015; Koptseva & Kirko, 2014a; Pivovarov, 2009; Pivovarov, 2012). Previously one of the authors explored the philosophical and theoretical issues associated with the history of Islam in India and with the history of Indian Islamic art (Koptseva, 2003). That study analyzed historical and cultural texts relating to the history of Siberian Islam, including Kungur's Short Siberian Chronicle (1880) and G. F. Miller's Description of the Siberian Kingdom and its Affairs from the Beginning, and Especially from Conquering it by the Russian State until Present Times (1937).

The authors administered opinion polls to Muslims in the Krasnoyarsk Region, Azerbaijani immigrants, and members of the Tajik diaspora in the city of Krasnoyarsk; used statistical data; administered focus groups of representatives from the Tatar, Azerbaijani, Tajik diasporas from the city of Krasnoyarsk; and conducted expert interviews related to applied cultural studies in both the Krasnoyarsk Region and the city of Krasnoyarsk (Koptseva et al., 2011; Koptseva & Kirko, 2014b; Zamaraeva et al., 2015).

In 2010, the Siberian Federal University realized the project "Dialogue of Cultures in the Space of the Krasnoyarsk Territory". As part of this project researchers conducted focus groups with representatives of the Tatar national and cultural group from the Krasnoyarsk Territory. The focus group included 10 Tatar Islamic men aged 20 to 50 years old. All focus group participants had received some higher education and had the same social status. By selecting the participants according to these criteria, the researchers hoped that the participants would not be afraid to express their opinions. Focus group participants did not have a professional attitude about the issues they discussed and were not familiar with the procedure for focus groups. Natalia Koptseva, Professor of Cultural Studies at Siberian Federal University, moderated the focus groups. The groups discussed the following issues: modern interpretations about the history of relations between Russians and the Tatar people; ways in which the Tatars of the Krasnoyarsk Territory retain their cultural and ethnic identity; the attitude of Tatars from Krasnoyarsk Territory toward the historic homeland, the Siberian Khanate, which existed until the 16th century; and relationships within the family and attitudes toward intermarriage with people of other ethnic groups or religious faiths.

The discussions were very interesting. We learned that Tatars have great dissatisfaction with official versions of Russian history, especially those that are presented in school and university textbooks. They believe that the modern Russian nation stems from the Tatar yoke that dominated Russia for 300 years, and that the modern Russian state is a synthesis of the Moscow state and the state of the Golden Horde. Focus group participants argued that this thesis is not explained in the official history of the Russian state.

The focus group participants stated that it is necessary to carefully preserve the identity of religious and ethnic Tatars. They argued that schools could help to preserve this identity by introducing an ethnic component into public education that would focus on the Tatar culture and language. Alternatively, schools could teach academic subjects in the Tatar language.

The focus group participants believe that there is and should be much variation in Krasnoyarsk Territory Muslims' professional activities. They believe that hard work must be delegated to migrants from Central Asia, such as Tajiks and Uzbeks, and that Azeris and Armenians should be engaged in the construction of buildings and roads. They believe that the Tatars occupy the top position in the social pyramid among Muslims in Krasnoyarsk Territory, and that Tatars should be engaged in business and commerce. This information was significant for the authors, as we did not previously know that there was such a professional stratification among Muslims in the Krasnoyarsk Territory.

At the beginning of the debate focus group participants argued that intermarriage between Muslim Tatars and other ethnic and religious groups is possible and desirable. However, during the second half of the debate the vast majority of participants were against intermarriage. They believe that marriage should be between "us", and that marriages between

Muslim Tatars are "more strong and stable", because they receive approval from parents and other family. The main argument in favor of "non-mixed" marriages is the importance of retaining the Tatar ethnic and cultural identity which, in turn, will allow parents to educate children in the Tatar and Muslim traditions. Focus group participants believe that in mixed marriages parenting cannot be connected with the Tatar identity. Additionally, the focus group participants believe that the mother of the future "husband" will not approve a "mixed" marriage. As an exception, they believed it possible to marry a girl of another nationality or religion, but it is thought impossible for Tatar woman to marry a man who is not a Tatar Muslim.

These and other studies have shown that Krasnoyarsk Territory is not a homogeneous ethnic and cultural society. The Tatar Islamic social group holds clear boundaries between Tatars and non-Tatars, as well as Muslims and non-Muslims. And even within the Muslim group Tatar representatives isolated different social and professional statuses. The mayoral election in the city of Krasnoyarsk was important to the Tatar community, as the elected mayor, Edkham Akbulatov, is an ethnic Tatar. Experts believe that his election was largely a result of efforts by the Tatar Muslim community of Krasnoyarsk.

The research used an integrated approach, where the results of our study of historical sources and field research in the Krasnoyarsk Region were supplemented with both theoretical generalizations and the application of the theoretical method of creating ideal types, a concept first invented by Max Weber (Green 1959). We also found that Berry's theory of cross-cultural communications and strategies of acculturation were particularly important for understanding the cultural specificity of contemporary Islam in Siberia (Berry 2002).

Until recently, Russian social science operated according to the following practices and design principles:

- 1) Culture independent: consistent and stable; in a fixed geographical position and unaffected by globalization
- 2) The interest of researchers should focus on individual cultures.
- 3) In the study of the dynamics of individual cultures—a process of continuous development and reconstruction—change is defined as a result of interaction between individuals within a culture, not as a result of contact between cultures.

These principles are categorically rejected by John Berry, who rightly argues that currently independent ethnic and cultural populations do not exist, as ethnic cultural groups are in constant contact with each other.

Today it is difficult to find a society that is represented by only one ethnic cultural environment, one language, one religion, and one ethnocultural identity that characterizes all people. Rather, our modern global society is pluralistic in nature, as different ethnic and cultural groups often live together, with common social and political cultures. As a result: 1) each group has its own culture; 2) not being "independent" groups, one cannot uniquely identify the behavior of people, as sources of cultural behavior cannot be unambiguously attributed to one particular culture; and 3) new ethnic and cultural groups emerge. This last point suggests that research efforts should be multiplied to study original and developing cultures.

Nevertheless, the majority of Russian researchers build their research position as if societies are culturally homogenous. John Berry's research methods differ from this path and helped us to understand that the modern Islamic community in Eastern Siberia is significantly different from that of the Muslims who lived in Siberia in the sixteenth or nineteenth centuries. The process of cultural evolution in Siberia continues today, as the Islamic community in Eastern Siberia has its own unique and active influence on the cultural and political development of the region. Muslims are no longer ignored by the authorities and or excluded from the legislature of Eastern Siberia. Ethnic Tatars are present in all three branches of government: the executive, legislative, and judicial. Clearly, Muslims are an ever-present and powerful part of life in modern Siberia.

Highly insightful for this research were expert interviews with Muslims working for state bodies in Eastern Siberia. Important details on the current state of Islamic communities in Eastern Siberia were given by Rashit Rafikov, a Tatar expert in ethnic and religious studies. Rashit Rafikov holds a high government post at the Krasnoyarsk Krai Governor's office: he is Deputy Head of Public Relations and oversees relationships between the Governor and the Krai's religious communities, including Muslims living in Krasnoyarsk Krai.

To analyze the current state of Muslim communities, we used a magazine called *The Krasnoyarsk Krai Muslim Council Bulletin*. This magazine publishes minutes from the Krasnoyarsk Krai Muslim Council meetings, analytical data, and other information dealing with various aspects of life of the Muslim community living in Krasnoyarsk Krai these days.

To sum it up, there are currently no substantial scientific studies into the modern-day position of Islamic communities in Eastern Siberia. The analysis of existing scientific literature on the subject did not reveal the reasons behind the growing Islamic factor in the region.

4. The Ethnic and Confessional Policy in Siberia during the Russian Empire

Ethnic and religious policies in Siberia during the Russian Empire differed from the same policies in Central areas. These differences existed because Siberia was formed as a place of exile and penal servitude, a temporary or permanent residence for criminals and political outcasts. In a way, Siberia served the same function for Russia that Australia served for Great Britain.

The Russian Empire implemented an indigenous people policy, which was created to support the local elite. As a result, Russia's administrative-territorial districts had ethnic names associated with indigenous peoples: Evenkiya – the land of Evenks, Khakassia – the land of Khakasis, Buryatia – the land of the Buryats, etc. Territorial officials had ethnic names, and taxes for the indigenous population were minimal (e.g., the owner of 100 reindeer was taxed at a rate of one deer per year) (Koptseva and Kirko, 2015).

Other ethnic and confessional policy was conducted in relation to non-Orthodox religions, including Catholicism, Judaism, and Islam. Imperial policy in Siberia against non-Orthodox groups was less harsh and more tolerant than in the Central areas of the state. There are several reasons for this tolerance: 1). Muslims are considered colonial inhabitants of Siberia; 2). the number of Muslims in Siberia was very small and they were scattered throughout the region, meaning that they did not pose a threat to the Russian Empire; 3). indigenous Siberians are very religious and tolerant of other ethnicities, and various ethnic and religious groups have always co-existed in Siberia without much conflict; and 4). prayer institutions, mosques, and madrasah did not appear in Siberia until the turn of the twentieth century, when the political situation in the Russian Empire had changed dramatically. The construction of mosques did not attract negative attention from other religious groups, because at that time the position of Orthodoxy also sharply deteriorated (Kalmina 2009).

5. Ethnic Processes in the Krasnoyarsk Region as a Prerequisite for Strengthening the "Islamic Factor" in the Region

In the post-Soviet period Krasnoyarsk Region was hit hard by a demographic crisis. Due to natural attrition and immigration, from 1992 to 2002 the region lost roughly 6% of its population (over 190,000 people). During the past 13 years the number of nationalities in the region has increased from 124 to 137, but their population has decreased by more than 50,000 (13.3%). For comparison, the "loss" of the Russian population of the region during the same period amounted to 0.5%.

After the serious political and economic turmoil caused by the collapse of the USSR, a significant change occurred in the number and proportion of ethnic groups within the national community and the Krasnoyarsk Territory. In Krasnoyarsk Region the Russian population decreased due to lower birth rates, higher immigration, cultural integration, and assimilation processes. In particular, the number of Tatars in the region decreased by 10%, Buryats and Yakuts Germans by 15-18%, Bashkirs, Lithuanians, Mari, Moldavians, Poles, Tuva, Udmurtia, Finns, Khakasas and Chuvash by 20-30%, Belarusians, Latvians, Ukrainians, Mordovians by 50-70%, and Jews by 90% (Rafikov 2004).

In contrast, some groups significantly increased their presence in the region through higher birth rates and immigration from the Caucasus Mountains, Central Asia, and South-East Asia: Koreans, 24%; the Chinese people of Dagestan, 50%; Kirghiz, 100%; Azeris, in 160%; Tajiks, 190%; and Armenians, 260%. Therefore, it is no coincidence that Azerbaijanis, the 7th largest ethnic group in the 1989 census, by the number 7 in the region, moved to 4th place in 2002, while Kirghiz rose from 27th to 15th, Tajiks from 32nd to 19th, and Lezghins from 33th to 25th. Among those living in the large Muslim Diasporas of the Caucasus and Central Asia, the only population declines were concentrated in Uzbeks (30%) and Kazakhs (18%).

The overall number of ethnic Muslims in 2002 was 88,000 (3.0% of the total population of the province), exceeding the 1989 level by 11.6%. Taking into account migrant workers and visitors from neighboring countries this figure, according to expert estimates, increases to more than 100,000. At the same time the Tatar-Bashkir population is already less than half their number.

Currently Tatars live in all the towns and districts of the Krasnoyarsk Region. Tatars in Krasnoyarsk Region are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi madhhab (excluding a small ethnic group, baptized Tatars, or Kryashens). Since Tatars have practiced Islam for a thousand years, the religion has played a huge role in shaping the basic direction and defining features of the group's spiritual culture. In the Russian context between people of different nationalities and religions, Islam has shown its flexibility, adapting to local conditions and traditions.

Decades of State-supported atheism in Soviet Russia caused a marked decrease in Islamic practice and significantly influenced changes in the nature of Tatars' religion and rituals. Many settlements lacked mullahs with basic

spiritual training, and often religious rituals were limited to elementary Islamic burial rites. Since the 1990s, Islam in Russia has experienced a revival. The number of registered Muslim associations increased from 870 in January 1991 to 3,467 in January 2001. In the Krasnoyarsk Region during the same period the number increased from one to nine.

However, the revival of Islamic traditions has been accompanied by divisions in religious organizations and the formation of new independent spiritual administrations. While in 1991 there were only two spiritual administrative bodies (in Ufa and Dagestan), by 2003 the number had reached 67.

6. Islam in the Krasnoyarsk Region (Eastern Siberia)

Muslims living in Krasnoyarsk Krai nowadays fall into two large groups. The first group includes Muslims who have been living in Eastern Siberia since the 6th–9th centuries, when Turkic ethnic groups migrated to the forest steppe of Western Siberia from the regions of the Altai and Central Kazakhstan. In the 13th century Kipchaks settled near the Irtysh River, only to be supplanted from the southern steppe by the army of Genghis Khan. During this period Ugric tribes moved north and assimilated among the Turkic population, and Border States from Central Asia reached the Irtysh River. Thus, there was constant communication between the Siberian Turkic ethnic groups and ethnic groups in Central Asia. By the 16th century, this intermingling led to the formation of the ethnic core of the Siberian Tatars and Bashkirs.

The second group includes Muslims who have been moving to Krasnoyarsk Krai as part of active migrant groups from the 1970's–1980's and up until the present day. The first group, that is, Siberian Tatars and Bashkirs, currently dominates the Muslim demographic landscape of Krasnoyarsk Krai. But their proportion out of the total number of local Muslims is thinning each year. Eastern Siberian Muslims, such as Siberian Tatars and Bashkirs, practice the mildest form of Hanafi madhhab with clear elements of simplification and even local paganism. This is because there were hardly any acting Islamic communities in Eastern Siberia during the Soviet era. With the rise of Islamic organizations in the post-Soviet times, that is, in the 1990's, classic Islam began to take over. Thus, Muslims from the second group follow stricter madhhabs.

At the same time, migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus tend to be more religious than local Tatars and Bashkirs. This difference became immediately obvious with their attitude to dogmas and rituals. Most Muslims living in Krasnoyarsk Krai are Sunni, and only Azerbaijanis and some Dagestanian peoples are Shia. But Azerbaijanis are not particularly religious, which is why they do not necessarily visit a mosque even on the biggest Muslim holidays. Because the first group still prevails, Tatars dominate the Krai Muslim community and hold most key positions in Islamic religious organizations. On the whole, the Muslim landscape of Eastern Siberia is still dominated by soft, "Russian" Islam, which is well adapted to local conditions.

Up until the arrival of the second group, there have been hardly any traditional Muslim communities in Krasnoyarsk Krai since most of the local Tatars came from Kazan and Ufa Provinces; whereas Siberian Muslims, Siberian Tatars, and Bashkirs are mainly focused in the Tyumen Region, with some living in the Omsk, Novosibirsk, Kemerovo, and Tomsk Regions. Even in the days of the Russian Empire, only a few odd nomadic Turkic tribes would profess Islam (no more than two or three tribes). But they could hardly influence the big picture, where Christianity dominated the religious landscape.

Colonization and several waves of migration became the key factors behind the growing role of Islamic communities in Eastern Siberia. Migration was first of all linked to the soaring number of migrant Tatars triggered by the Stolypin agrarian reform and the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, which saw the number of Tatar settlements increase dramatically. This is why a mosque would be one of the first community houses constructed by settlers. Some of these mosques still exist, and some of them have even been renovated. This was the most crucial factor which challenged the almost-100% domination of Christianity in the Eastern Siberian religious landscape.

The next historical factor to influence the spread of Islam was the time of repressions when some peoples were deported to Siberia. Few of them were Muslims though. Chechens, Crimean Tatars, and ethnic groups from Central Asia and Kazakhstan would not reach as far as Eastern Siberia. Several tens of thousands of Turks were deported to Siberia during World War I. But because there was no Red Cross to help them and they were unaccustomed to the local climate, almost all of them died. This was not the case for Austrian, Hungarian, and German prisoners of war. Subsequently, this did little to help the rise of Islam. The Great Patriotic War and Stalin's repressions affected only Muslim religious leaders: priests and imams were deported to Eastern Siberia throughout the 1930's to 1950's. But only a few of them would survive, which is why they too were unable to change the religious landscape.

Certain changes started to happen as early as the 1970's–1980's, when university and other graduates began coming to Eastern Siberia (including Krasnoyarsk Krai) from Muslim areas of the Soviet Union: those were so-called "jobbing brigades" coming from Central Asia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan. They were only temporary migrants though.

A true boom in migration influence in Krasnoyarsk Krai and a simultaneous rise of the Islamic factor started in the 1990's. On the one hand, those were internal Russian processes; on the other hand, labor migrants started coming to Siberia. There were three main sources of migrants coming to Krasnoyarsk Krai: Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Caucasus. Migrants from Southeast Asia did not affect the area Muslim-wise, whereas Central Asians who made up almost 60% of labor migrants did help reinforce the Islamic factor in Krasnoyarsk Krai.

The growing number of Muslims in the region created certain problem areas, particularly banned radical Islamist groups, such as Nurcular, infiltrating Krasnoyarsk Krai. Nurcular was brought to Krasnoyarsk Krai by Turkish immigrants, who first acted quite legally until the organization was officially banned approximately in 2001–2002. They would operate by opening Turkish language and history schools and classes. Another line of their activity involved educational programs, etc. The third direction was publishing activities, that is publishing and spreading newspapers, magazines, and books, primarily those connected with Said Nursi and Gülen, their leader. Nurcular is a Turkish organization which was actively expanding in Russia up until it was banned. Muslims living in Krasnoyarsk Krai and Siberia were on the whole among those who fell under their influence.

Later another radical Muslim movement, Tabligh Jamaat, infiltrated Krasnoyarsk Krai from Kyrgyzstan. When its members, mostly Kyrgyzstan citizens, were expelled from Kyrgyzstan, they would move to Russia, including Krasnoyarsk Krai.

The most radical Islamic movement to hit Krasnoyarsk Krai in the early 21st century was Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami, whose members were also driven out of Central Asia. Some of them infiltrated Krasnoyarsk Krai, but not in the same numbers as Nurcular or Tabligh Jamaat supporters. Tabligh Jamaat was banned relatively recently, and up until that time the organization felt quite at ease in the area.

Salafi groups also started to appear in Krasnoyarsk Krai: quite a few of them are still functioning even these days because the movement has not been officially banned. The appearance of these organizations was down to the following events in the post-Soviet history. Refugees started arriving in Krasnoyarsk Krai from other areas, such as Tajikistan (especially in the days of the Civil War), conflict zones between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (such as the Osh Valley), Chechnya and Dagestan (during war times). Needless to say, Muslims coming from those areas were far from always being friendly towards the Russian Federation.

As the number of migrants and refugees was growing, the ethnic and cultural composition of the Krasnoyarsk Muslim community was gradually changing. The share of long-term residents was shrinking in favor of actively migrating people coming from Central Asia and the Caucasus. As a result, the newcomers started aiming for and occupying higher managerial roles in existing Muslim communities. This was because their level of education was much higher than that of local imams, that is, community leaders. Most local imams were self-taught old men who would perform religious rituals the way their grandfathers and great-grandfathers used to do. Unsurprisingly, their level of education was low and their knowledge of the Koran and Islamic traditions was rather weak. They were unable to argue with newly arriving imams on a par, which only resulted in conflict and religious and ethnic differences. This would lead to tension within the Krasnoyarsk Muslim ummah, which had never been homogeneous anyway.

Bigger cities were hit the most because this is where most Muslim migrants would settle down and cluster. Out-of-town locations offer worse employment and accommodation prospects, which is why the majority of migrants would head off to bigger cities. Things would take a drastic turn at times: for example, out of 15,000 people attending an Eid al-Adha or a Eid al-Fitr prayer at the Great Mosque, only 500 would fit in the main hall. By using additional halls, they would be able to increase the number to 1,000 at the most. Local Tatars and Bashkirs would make up no more than 10% of those 15,000 people, and the rest would be new migrants. This was immediately obvious with bigger salats.

The number of old-time Muslim residents is shrinking, and some of them have even started holding separate public sermons. The Tajiks, for example, started attending separate sermons with their own imam preaching in their native language. The Kyrgyz have also been holding their sermons separately from other ethnic groups. Given the importance of the sermon language to attendants, this suggests that the Muslim community living in Krasnoyarsk Krai is also somewhat split by ethnicity.

On the whole, the Muslim community living in Krasnoyarsk Krai has the following ethnic composition: long-term residents (currently, the Tatars and the Bashkirs); migrants from Central Asia, with the Uzbeks and the Tajiks dominating the category, whilst the Kyrgyz and the Kazakhs display above-average Islamic activity. There are hardly any migrants from Turkmenistan living in Krasnoyarsk Krai. The share of migrants from Azerbaijan keeps growing: Azerbaijanis make up 15% of Norilsk's population. On the other hand, Azerbaijanis are not that religious. Dagestan-born peoples are very active and influential, particularly the Lezgians, the Avars, the Laks, and the Rutuli. The Chechen and the Ingush people are, of course, among religiously active groups. The Karachay-Cherkess and the Kabardno-Balkar people are less numerous, but they are religiously significant and active. The Crimean Tatars are hardly present in Krasnoyarsk Krai. On

the whole, there are 42 different ethnic groups practicing Islam in Krasnoyarsk Krai.

Some Muslim people, such as the Kyrgyz, the Tajiks, and the Azerbaijanis have adapted well and integrated with the local environment. Thanks to higher-than-average birth rates, their population keeps growing and so does the number of Muslim migrants who have received Russian citizenship. On the other hand, the number of labor migrants keeps increasing. This growth somewhat slowed down in 2015: tougher migration rules reduced it by 25–30%.

These days labor migrants must pass exams and receive special certificates. Still, the number of Kyrgyz Muslims has increased since Kyrgyzstan is part of the Customs Union and its citizens do not need a work permit.

Thanks to migration and natural reproduction, the overall trend is that the Muslim diaspora is gradually growing, particularly in bigger cities. The number of Muslims living in countryside areas is likely to go down. But the general forecast for Krasnoyarsk Krai is that numbers will continue to grow steadily, both for migrants receiving Russian citizenship and leave to remain and labor migrants, whose numbers we expect to recover after the dip and keep increasing. Hence, the overall trend is going up.

7. Conclusion

The influence of the Islamic factor in Eastern Siberia has been growing continuously ever since the 1970's–1990's. The ethnic and ideological composition of Eastern Siberian Muslims has been changing as well. Muslims from Tatar and Bashkir groups typical of Eastern Siberia in the days of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union are being driven out by Muslim migrants coming to Eastern Siberia from Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

Post-Soviet Russia offers cultural support to Muslim communities. Russian society has extensive historical experience of Christian and Muslim ethnic groups living side by side. This experience is currently implemented in Krasnoyarsk Krai so as to prevent religious and ethnic conflicts. Islamophobia occurring in other parts of modern Russia does not appear to be a big issue in Krasnoyarsk Krai.

Economic reasons behind the growing Islamic factor in Eastern Siberia are linked to labor migration and changing demographics. The area's economy today demands a much larger workforce. Currently, the gap can only be filled with migrants from ex-Soviet Islamic states. Also, while the country was transforming into a market economy, ethnic Muslims were actively engaging in commerce and the service sector. There is a growing class of well-off Eastern Siberian Muslims in Krasnoyarsk Krai who soon will want to flex not only their economic, but also their political muscles so as to protect their rights with political levers.

At the moment, the Islamic factor in Krasnoyarsk Krai is steadily gaining momentum. The political elite must not overlook this trend. Should the Russian economy worsen, it is possible that currently latent Islamophobia, xenophobia, and migrant-phobia will find their way out and burst into social conflict.

The metaphoric name used for Eastern Siberia, "the Northernmost Outpost of Islam", is likely to become reality in the near future, once the critical mass of Muslims living in the area turns its attention not only to the economy, but also to politics.

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