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MAKHACH MUSAEV

The Prohibition of Alcohol in Islam: Religious Imperatives and Practices in Seventeenth- to Nineteenth-Century Dagestan

Translated by Margaret Berggren

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Despite the well-known alcohol prohibition in Islam, in their everyday lives, throughout many places and times, Muslims have drunk alcohol. In this study, the religious prohibition and its practices are discussed in the context of the bicentennial history of Dagestan (since its final annexation by the Russian Empire). The article draws upon religious prescriptions in the works of the Shafi'i (al-Nawawi and others) and Hanafi (al-Samarqandi and others) jurists, comparing them with evidence described and analyzed by scholars, foreign travelers (Adam Olearius, Evliya Çelebi, J. A. Güldenstädt, etc.), as well as local theological, legal, and historical works in the Arabic language.

Keywords: Dagestan, alcohol in Islam, Shafi'i, Hanafi, khamr, nabidh, al-Quduqi, al-'Aymaki.

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IT is well known that Arabs of the “Jahiliyyah” period¹ were aware of methods for producing alcoholic drinks and liked to use them. Corresponding *ayahs* (verses) of the Qur’an, hadith, South Arabian, Palmyrene, and Nabataean inscriptions, pre-Islamic Arabian poetry, written records, et cetera, provide evidence of this. In *Kitab al-Mukhassas*, Ibn Sidah² (d. 1066) cited almost one hundred Arabic synonyms of the term wine, and in al-Firuzabadi’s (d. 1415) “wine list” there are 357. The variety of nomenclature indicates that alcohol was a part of Arab daily life and culture. They drank not only wine (*khamr*, a derivative of grapes and dates), but also other alcoholic drinks produced by the fermentation of honey, fruit, cereals, dried fruits, and dried berries (*mizr*, *bit*, *gubaira* and many others) (Maraqten 1993, 95–96; Waines 2011, xiii).

Initially there was no prohibition on the use of alcohol in Islam. One of the early *suras* (chapters) of the Qur’an mentions wine (*khamr*) in a “positive” context as one of the drinks promised to the God-fearing in paradise (Qur’an 47:15),³ and as one of Allah’s signs of grace to humanity (Qur’an 16:67). Hadith indicate that Hamzah, the uncle of the Prophet, and another companion, Anas ibn Malik ibn Nadar al-Khazraji, were once found in a state of intoxication. One of the sacred stories relates that some warriors for the faith used alcohol before the Battle of Uhud (*Sahih al-Bukhari*: “Kitab Fard al-Khumus”; *Sahih al-Bukhari*: “Kitab al-Jihad”; *Sahih Muslim*: “Kitab al-Ashriba,” etc.). Similar information can be found, for example, in al-Tabari’s *tafsir* (exegesis). His work mentions the mistakes of the first Muslims in ritual prayer, which were caused by a state of intoxication (Wensinck 1997, 994).

Subsequently the situation changed. Wicked works committed by those who were in a state of intoxication overshadowed the useful properties of wine. The use of *khamr* was forbidden (Qur’an 2:219; 4:43; 5:90–91). It is not surprising that there was no ban initially: the Muslim community received individual concepts and guides to action incrementally and as necessary.

After the death of the Prophet, the jurists of Hejaz came to the conclusion that all alcoholic drinks should be prohibited (haram).

1. The period before the advent of Islam. — Ed.
2. Hereinafter, Arabic terms, place names, and personal names will be rendered using a simplified transliteration.
3. It has been noted in exegeses of this hadith that the *khamr* of paradise is not the same as the *khamr* that can be encountered on earth. A person cannot become intoxicated or lose one’s faculties from its use.

Later Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali scholar-theologians, as well as their Shi'ite colleagues, confirmed this opinion. At the same time, each of the schools of law utilized their own approaches for reaching that decision, and interpretations of *ayahs* and hadith served as sources for them. The Arabic verb *khamara* (meaning "to cover," "to conceal") was derived from the same root as the term *khamr* (wine) — the only kind of intoxicating substance specified in the Qur'an. Muslim jurists and philologists, using the principle of analogy, determined that *khamr* is that which clouds the mind and senses. Accordingly, not only the fermented juice of grapes and dates should be considered *khamr*, but also any substance that causes intoxication and is able to dull the mind and senses. The hadith from *Sahih al-Bukhari* — "*khamr* is something that clouds the mind" (*Sahih al-Muslim*: "Kitab al-Ashriba") — supported the conclusion of the specialists. In their opinion any other substance, such as *nabidh* (see below for details) that acts on a person in the same way as wine is *khamr*. *Khamr* became a generalized term that denoted all alcoholic beverages. This explains why many translators of Arabic sacred texts translate *khamr* as "alcoholic beverage" or "that which intoxicates."

However, not all theologians agreed with this interpretation. The Mu'tazilite Muhammad al-Jubba'i (d. 915–916) argued in favor of permitting the use of *nabidh*. He believed that Allah created certain things that resemble those that are permitted in paradise but forbidden on earth, including *nabidh*, which is not prohibited so that the faithful can comprehend how wine (*khamr*) will be in paradise (Heine 1993, 840). Being from Basra, al-Jubba'i in part followed the jurists of earlier centuries from his hometown and from Kufa, who were not advocates of the complete prohibition of alcohol. They had concluded that only certain forms of alcoholic beverages, which are clearly identified in the Qur'an and the hadith, are prohibited, whereas others are permissible to use. The most recognizable of them [the jurists] is the eponym of the Hanafi madhab (school of Islamic jurisprudence), Abu Hanifa (d. 767).

Advocates of this point of view put forward arguments in favor of permitting some alcoholic beverages. Firstly, in contrast to representatives of other madhabs, many Hanafi understood the term *khamr* to mean only that which was revealed to them. In their opinion, applying the term *khamr* to all substances that have the capacity to cause intoxication is incorrect, and for this reason beverages such as *nabidh* should not be included in the category of *khamr*. Secondly, those who opposed the prohibition of the use of any alcoholic beverages regarded some of the hadith cited by their opponents as abrogated (*mansukh*) or incorrectly interpreted (Long 2014, 80–81).

Nabidh is a generic term for alcoholic beverages of various kinds produced by means of fermentation, for example, *mizr* (from barley), *bit'* (from honey), and *fadikh* (from different kinds of dates). Such beverages could be prepared from a blend of different ingredients (raisins, dates, and honey). Their composition sometimes included St. John's Wort or cannabis, which produced a hallucinogenic in addition to an intoxicating effect (Heine 1993, 840; Maraqtan 1993, 98–99). Quite a few hadith are cited concerning *nabidh*. Not all of them unambiguously prohibit it, giving cause for some theologians and jurists to permit or preclude the use of *nabidh*. For example, one of the hadith discusses a straightforward prohibition of the drinking of *nabidh* prepared in a gourd or a jug that is covered on the inside with “pitch,” but at the same time the Prophet did not provide direct instructions on the prohibition of using other forms of *nabidh*. Intoxication from *khalitayn*, prepared from two different kinds of dates, is reported in another sacred story. The Prophet banned this beverage then and there (although the hadith mentions nothing about the punishment). Nonetheless, from this report many Hanafis arrived at the conclusion that the Prophet's special ban on the excessive use of just this form of alcoholic beverage points to the absence of a general ban on intoxicating beverages.

Hanafis were the first to claim that texts that ban *khamr* should be interpreted in a broader context. For them it was significant that *nabidh* was a common drink in Medina in the days of the Prophet. According to their interpretation, prominent companions such as 'Umar and Abu Dharr continued to drink *nabidh* after the death of the Prophet. Moreover, while in Kufa, a renowned companion (*ashab*), the jurist Ibn Mas'ud, reportedly expressed the view that this drink was legal, although he himself did not use it. Many jurists in Iraq followed this example and began to assert that the prohibition on *khamr* did not refer to *nabidh* (Rabb 2015, 145–47).

To be clear, Abu Hanifa did not refute the standard opinion that *khamr* and intoxication are unacceptable, that it is haram. Hanafis were united in this issue with representatives of all the madhabs. The principal difference of opinion of some of the Hanafis lies in the fact that it was not the drinks themselves that were prohibited, but the effect of the drinks (that is, intoxication). That said, there were also authoritative scholars among the Hanafis, such as Abu Khanifi Muhammad al-Shaybani (d. 804–5), who supported the prohibition of alcohol.

There is another important dimension: what is considered intoxication? Every legal school expressed an opinion on this question.

From the point of view of Abu Hanifah, intoxication is the state of a person when “intellect has left him so he does not understand a little or much (anything at all)” (Long 2014, 83).⁴ It should be noted that all madhabs provide punishment⁵ for the use of alcoholic beverages or the state of intoxication.

Thus, in accordance with three Sunnite madhabs, anything that intoxicates is prohibited, even in small quantities. Shi’ite theologians also adhered to the same view. In conformity with the norms of Sharia, wine and other forms of alcohol are unclean (*najis*) and their use prohibited (haram). However, they do not take a Muslim beyond the bounds of Islam: he or she does not become an unbeliever (*kafir*) but is considered impious (*fasiq*). In some Hanafi texts and particularly in early ones, alcoholic drinks that are not prohibited explicitly are permitted under certain circumstances, but not in intoxicating amounts.⁶

However, the well-known Swiss Orientalist Adam Mez, describing the daily life of Muslims of the third through fourth centuries AH (the ninth through tenth centuries CE), and citing a multitude of examples concerning representatives of all social strata, wrote that “despite the Qur’an’s prohibition, wine drinking was prevalent at that time.” According to the testimony of al-Muqaddisi, even people worthy of respect (*masha’ikh*) did not renounce wine in Old Cairo. The Baghdad vizier al-Muhallabi drank together with local qadis and with the members of the supreme qadi. Caliphs also drank alcohol (Mets 1973, 319). Some argue that representatives of the upper classes drank from a sense of superiority, taking pleasure in alcohol as one of the privileges granted to the elite (*khass*) in Islamic countries. Abstinence was regarded as the duty of common people (*‘awam*), who were not able to control themselves (Matthee 2014, 104).

A little later, at the turn of the eleventh century, Ibrahim al-Raqiq al-Qairawani (of Tunisia) wrote a work devoted to wine (Maraqten 1993, 95). His follower, the Egyptian Muhammad ibn ‘Usman al-Imam al-Nawagi (d. 1455), was subjected to serious criticism for his work of “unrestricted” content, but he was not executed nor even forced to

4. The Dagestani scholar-theologian Muhammad al-Quduqi explained one of the definitions of intoxication according to the Hanafi madhab: “The state when a person cannot distinguish a man from a woman and heaven from earth.”
5. From twenty to eighty blows of different intensities with a whip or a stick depending on the madhab, legal status, and state of health of the punished.
6. The position of the Hanafi scholars concerning the use of alcohol eventually moved closer to the view of representatives of the other madhabs.

go into hiding; he simply changed the title of the essay, making it less provocative (Van Gelder 1995, 225). If drinking wine makes a Muslim impious (*fasiq*), then his exhortation to drink conflicts with Islamic dogma and leads to *kufir* (that is, unbelief). For this reason he could easily have been punished.

The historical examples above may be misleading. In accordance with the norms of Sharia, drinking wine (and its production, trade, etc.) was, of course, prohibited at the religious and state levels, and it was also censured by society. Those authors cited above provide evidence of this. In general, caliphs struggled both with their own weaknesses and wine drinking. With respect to the work of al-Nawagi, a contemporary issued a fatwa that almost exceeded it in size (Van Gelder 1995, 225). Individual examples of works devoted to wine cannot be compared with the thousands of others in which the drinking of wine was prohibited.

Regional characteristics should also be mentioned. For example, wine drinking was punished in the Hejaz, “while in Mesopotamia they did not find anything wrong with it” (Mets 1973, 320). In the Ottoman Empire — the successor of Sunni orthodoxy — the Qur’anic prohibition was carefully observed; the annals of its history are full of information about the persecution of those who dared to use the banned beverages. At the same time, as a multiethnic empire, it absorbed numerous communities of different faiths, representatives of which used these drinks widely. Both those for whom the use of alcohol was prohibited and those for whom it was entirely legitimate could be among the inhabitants of a city or even a quarter (Georgeon 2002, 7).

With regard to Dagestan, the history of the daily life of its population is practically unstudied, and this is particularly the case with respect to the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Although written sources and artifacts on this question are few, they nonetheless exist. Excavations at Derbent revealed fragments and complete exemplars of stone and ceramic wine presses that date to the eleventh through the beginning of the thirteenth century.⁷ Nutsal ‘Andunik of Khunzakh’s will notes that “in 890 AH [1485 CE], vizier Qadi ‘Ali-Mirza of Andi, during a meeting of lords on Mount Andi,” mentioned grapes that were under cultivation in the territory he governed (Khashaev 1967, 135). The Georgian metropolitan Kirill, who visited the embassy in Muscovy, reported that “in Buynak . . . there are many grapes, arable lands, and forests” (*Snosheniia Rossii* 1889, 401). Buynak was regarded

7. Unpublished material. Verbal communication with Professor M. C. Gadzhiev, doctor of the historical sciences and head of the archeology department of IIAE DNTs RAN.

as the possession of the *shamkhal*⁸ and main qadi of its state, ‘Ali al-Baghdadi (who became a qadi no later than 1635 CE and died in 1655) (ad-Durgeli 2012, 27, 39). Al-Baghdadi denounced an addressee in poetic form because “he allows people to commit the illicit” — to drink alcoholic beverages and to smoke (al-Ghumuqi, 11–12). For this reason we may assume that the grape was not only cultivated as a berry but also for the production of alcoholic beverages. The European traveler Adam Olearius, who visited Tarki in 1638 CE, wrote, “The vessels they have for drinking are long cow horns from which they drank a beverage they called *braga*,⁹ which is distilled from millet and has a color and consistency that resembles brewer’s yeast. They also drank vodka¹⁰ from these vessels with gusto, so they all quickly became very drunk and made such a noise that they could barely hear their own words in spite of the presence of their prince” (*Podrobnoe opisanie puteshestviia* 1870, 988). Describing the “Koyusu fortress” situated six hours from Endirey, which he visited in 1666, the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi wrote, “In this city . . . they do not drink any wine or spirits. They do not know about all the means of intoxication, but the dissolute [people] drink kumiss and bouza.¹¹ Ulema and elderly people drink a dense [dark] sweet bouza called *maksheme* [in another text Çelebi called it *makseme*] (Chelebi 1979, 118).¹² P. G. Butkov, who has studied archival material of past centuries, writes that “Peter the Great found outstanding grapes in Derbent (in 1722 — M.M.) and regretted that they could not make good wine from them” (*Materialy dlia novoi istorii Kavkaza* 1869, 148).¹³ J. A. Güldenstädt, who gathered information on Dagestan at the beginning of the 1870s while in Transcaucasia, noted, “In the region of Ansokul by the river there is the village of Kharakan and

8. *Shamkhal* is a title of rulers of the shamkhalate in Dagestan. — Ed.

9. “They” meaning the Russians; *braga* (*brazhka*) is a beer drink, a product of incomplete fermentation.

10. They purchased vodka in the city of Terskii, a Russian outpost in the Eastern Caucasus.

11. *Bouza* is defined in the *Bol’shoi sovetskoi entsiklopediia* [Great Soviet Encyclopedia] in this way: “*bouza* (Turkish) a beverage, is prepared from millet, buckwheat, or oat flour, like beer but without hops. *Bouza* contains 4–6% alcohol. *Bouza* is prevalent in Crimea, in the Caucasus, and to a lesser extent in Turkmenistan.” In Dagestan it was also prepared using hops.

12. *Bouza* is called “makhsymae” in Ossetian. The term is assonant in many Indo-European languages and, it appears, has the same root.

13. In Dagestan *chikhir’* (Turkish) was produced — a young wine from incomplete fermentation and was in essence grape juice or must. It was low alcohol and spoiled quickly.

fourteen others Wine and fruits are encountered in this region” (Gil’denshtedt, 2002, 247). This fragmentary information is evidence of the fact that the local population used alcohol both on the plain and in the mountains and mountain valleys of Dagestan and that it was of various types. The research of ethnographers who have recorded a significant variety of alcoholic beverages indicates this (Alimova 2005, 95–96; Ramazanova 2011, 139–45; Musaeva 2003, 121–23) as does folklore. For example, there is a well-known legend in which an Arabic theologian arrived in Dagestan together with the jurist Ibrahim-Hadji al-‘Uradi (d. 1770–1771). In the morning they set off together for special lodgings (in Avar, *qul’a*) to perform a ritual ablution. It was so cold that Ibrahim-Hadji had to break a thin layer of ice in order to immerse himself in the water. The Arab was extremely cold, and on arriving home Ibrahim-Hadji gave him a type of *bouza* (in Avar *bakqva-chha’a*)¹⁴ to drink for warmth. The Arab drank it and said, “There it is forbidden (haram) but here it is permissible (halal).”¹⁵

It is difficult to imagine that Ibrahim-Hadji al-‘Uradi supported permitting the use of alcoholic beverages. He is known as a theologian with “radical” views that are clearly revealed in his legal opinions, particularly in regard to the necessity of military campaigns in Transcaucasia, wherein he disputed the opinion of his contemporary Dawud-Hadji al-Usishi (d. 1757) (Musaev 2013, 3225–26). The qasida of the latter contains these words: “We drank and from that we became drunk. That which intoxicates poured on us like rain from heaven.” Considering that the author uses the first person plural personal pronoun, one may suppose that it is not about him but about Dagestani society in general. But along with this he writes: “this is Dawud-Hadji’s qasida in which he turns to the Almighty and repents for sins that have been committed” (ad-Durgeli 2012, 48).

A well-known expert on the history and written culture of Dagestan, ‘Ali al-Ghumuqi (Kayaev, d. 1943) wrote about the theologian Hasan al-Kudali (d. 1795): “Sometimes, taking one of his students as a traveling companion, he set off for the city of Alkhatsikhe (Akhiskha),¹⁶ spent the winter there, taught, and then returned home. It is said that

14. *Bouza* is not completely fermented, and even children drank it.

15. The story is known in Dagestan and is often used jokingly by lovers of alcohol as a “justification” for their actions. (Communicated by M. G. Shekhmagomedov, junior researcher at IIAE DNTs RAN.)

16. It was located in the Ottoman Empire and now in Georgia.

[Hasan al-Kudali] sometimes drank alcoholic beverages (*khamr*),¹⁷ known as *bouza* and produced in Dagestan, in small quantities as well as other [wine]" (‘Ali al-Ghumuqi, 48).

Hasan (the Elder) al-Kudali was the author of various works including legal papers. If a well-known theologian in Dagestan used alcoholic beverages and had found a justification within the framework of Islamic law, then one may infer that some part of the population also had a propensity for drinking *bouza*. A contemporary of Hasan, Abu Bakr al-‘Aymaki (d. 1791), who had a friendly relationship with him, wrote, “I‘lam al-tilmidh bi ahkam al-nabidh” [A student’s letter of advice on determinations regarding nabidh] — a legal essay that considers the issue of *nabidh*, understood as *bouza* in Dagestan. Abu Bakr wrote his work in 1777 with the intention of eradicating the practice of some teachers and their students concerning the permissibility of drinking *nabidh*. With an explanation for every issue, the scholar-jurist cited quotations from the Qur’an and Sunnah, as well as pronouncements of authoritative scholar-jurists of all four madhabs. He wrote:

I am surprised when I see scholars of Dagestan and their disciples, not to mention the people of Dagestan as a whole, who are indifferent to the commands of Sharia, in particular those who drink *nabidh*, who are drawn away from an understanding of Allah; Dagestanis do not greet a guest without offering *nabidh* until he gets drunk and becomes a laughingstock for the people. This is not acceptable to reason, not to mention Sharia.

Abu Bakr indicated that Abu Hanifah permitted the use of beverages not obtained from grapes or dates if the purpose of their use was not for amusement and revelry. At the same time, however, al-‘Aymaki believed that Abu Hanifah’s pronouncement should not be understood as allowing *nabidh*, which was in conflict with Sunnah.

“Know that anything that intoxicates is prohibited. The ban is established by the four foundational sources of Islamic law — the Qur’an, Sunnah, ijma, and qiyas . . . Apparently,” continues Abu Bakr, “certain hadith did not reach Abu Hanifah, who lived before the three imams of the other madhabs, such as: ‘That which intoxicates by use in large quantities is banned also in small [quantities]’; ‘Beverages obtained from wheat,

17. ‘Ali al-Ghumuqi understood *khamr* to mean any alcoholic beverage.

barley, dates, raisins, grapes, and honey are wine, and I (the Prophet) prohibit all that intoxicates” (Guzbulaev 2005, 38–39; IIAE DNTs RAN, f. 14, op. 1, d. 88).

Yusuf al-Salti was another contemporary of Ibrahim al-‘Uradi, Dawud al-Usishi, Abu Bakr al-‘Aymaki and Hasan al-Kudali. Yusuf and Hasan lived in populated areas located several kilometers from one another, and “scholarly disputes took place between them on various issues. It is said that Hasan al-Kudali once showed flexibility and, upon reflection, gave his opponent credit and said, ‘I will leave a place here for the leather tanner so that he may express [his opinion].’ . . . By leather tanner he meant Yusuf al-Salti because that is one of the main trades of the people of Salti. [Yusuf] was a student of two prominent scholars — Dawud al-Usishi and Ibrahim al-‘Uradi. Al-Salti was the author of several works, including some on the prohibition of [the use of] wine” (al-Ghumuqi, 53).

The ulema mentioned above are among the recognized Dagestani theological authorities. At the same time, some of them remained within the context of the local culture of drinking¹⁸ and ventured to use *bouza* themselves, not considering this in conflict with religious norms. The presence of the aforementioned essays by al-‘Aymaki, al-Salti and al-Awari indicates the relevance of the question of the use of certain forms of alcoholic beverages. Legal decisions were not imposed without cause, just as they did not write lengthy legal essays without necessity. The latter were created above all for the scholarly community and were intended as a guide in explaining the tenets of faith to the Dagestani population.

In the eighteenth century Dagestan was not a unified governmental and legal entity. Nonetheless, it continued to be one “country.” It is difficult to imagine that the opinion of the ulema that made the appeal not to drink alcoholic beverages could be heard when there where those among the Dagestani theologians who themselves drank. Moreover, opposing views could exist even within a single family, as, for example, in the family of hereditary theologians of al-Awari. The qadi of the Avar Khanate, Dibir-Qadi al-Awari (d. 1817), gathered excerpts from theological and legal essays and the pronouncements of Muslim authors in support of the prohibition of the production and drinking of wine. The text was titled, “*Taqrirat fi tahrir al-khamr*

18. The high-calorie *bouza* did not require fire for its preparation and it occupied an important place in the Dagestani diet.

wa shurbihi” (Conclusions on the prohibition [of the production] and consumption of alcoholic beverages) (Shikhsaidov and Omarov 2005, 70–71). It contains the conclusions of Dibir-Qadi al-Awari including those on the prohibition of *nabidh*. However, his younger brother Nur Muhammad al-Awari (d. 1834), who was the next qadi of the khanate, drank alcohol (for further details see below).

There were in fact ulema whose words conflicted with their actions, and so the appeal of one of the qadi to his flock is not incidental: “Listen to what scholars say and do not watch what they do themselves” (Omarov 1868, 21).

There is a very interesting case recorded in a biographical work by ‘Ali al-Ghumuqi (Kayaev):

Abdallah al-Sughuri, nicknamed “Satan,” . . . reached great heights and perfection in the sciences. At the same time he got carried away with alcoholic beverages and lacked willpower to such an extent that he drank away his household goods. Then he reached the point that he stole some of his wife’s property that fell into his hands. He sold that and bought intoxicants. When his wife found out about this she objected to it but could not change anything.

The scholar Nuzur al-Sughuri told me that [Abdallah] sometimes took an annual trip to an alliance of communes, Khindalal (Qoysubu), in which vineyards grew and alcoholic beverages were made. He took his journey every fall in order to drink wine there and take it back with him, after which he returned home. All this ended after Imam Hamzah-bek established Sharia law there. Subsequently, [Abdallah] saw people there whom he had not seen earlier and who paid no attention to him. He observed that all the inhabitants [of Khindalal] became *murids*¹⁹ who began to wrap their *papakhas* (Astrakhan hats) with a turban, which Dagestanis had not done before, except those who visited Mecca and performed the rites of hajj. Abdallah noticed that all the inhabitants [of Khindalal] repented of the use of wine, smoking, and other things that conflicted with Sharia that they were involved in earlier. They began to follow the religion, worshipped [Allah] and [began to perform] *dhikr*.²⁰ Abdallah was very surprised by this.

19. Those committed to a spiritual path, particularly in the Sufi tradition. — Ed.

20. *Dhikr* is the practice of meditating on the names or attributes of Allah; it is a spiritual exercise whose goal is to feel the presence of Allah within oneself and to be focused on Allah. Generally *dhikr* is rhythmic and connected with repeatedly breathing an iterative remembrance of the names of Allah (*asma’ al-husna*) or phrases that contain the name of Allah.

One day Abdallah came to them on a Thursday. He noticed that they believed this day was Friday and gathered to begin Friday prayer. Abdallah watched their actions, got out of their way, sat, and began to observe them, marveling at their blunder with regard to [the day of] festive prayer. Then, when they entered the mosque, he went in together with them, performed Friday prayer, left earlier than them, and sat near [the mosque]. Afterward, when people left the mosque they approached him and began to exhort him to stop drinking wine. They admonished him, noting his deep knowledge, and said that owing to this knowledge he possessed, he should confess before the others and stop drinking wine. He listened to them until they stopped their speech, their exhortations, and their reproaches of him regarding his sins. He told them that he accepted their admonitions and thanked them for this. Then he said to them, "I also want to leave you a bequest and I hope that you accept it just as I accepted your exhortations." They asked: "What is this bequest?" Abdallah responded, "I instruct you not to perform Friday prayer on Thursday, earlier than prescribed according to the Sharia of time." He repeated this to them, pointed to their mistake, shamed them and after this they parted" (al-Ghumuqi [Kayaev], 69).

This story is also in circulation in an oral form as a legend. In it, it is said that when the people from Khindalal reproached him for his use of alcohol, he responded: "Heqolev dun 'antav vatani, khamiz qoyatl ruzman balel nuzh shchal kkolel?" (in Avar) — "If I who get drunk am a fool, then you — who then are you, who perform Friday prayer on Thursday?"

Perhaps the best known of the lovers of alcoholic beverages among Dagestani theologians is the scholar, teacher, and political figure Sa'id al-Harakani (d. 1834). He was the grandson of Abu Bakr al-'Aymaki, who wrote an article that criticized the use of *nabidh* (see above). 'Ali al-Ghumuqi (Kayaev) wrote that Sa'id learned to drink *bouza* from his teacher Hasan al-Kudali:²¹

Sa'id was an eloquent person. He could speak softly like the rulers with whom he had good relations. He enriched their society with his presence

21. 'Ali al-Ghumuqi (Kayaev) wrote (p. 79), that Sa'id al-Harakani, in turn, instilled in his student Abdulkhalim al-Tsuishi a passion for alcohol: "[Abdulkhalim al-Tsuishi] like his teacher Sa'id al-Harakani, drank a little alcohol and issued a fatwa on the permissibility of this. [Consuming alcohol] became a habit for him. Before the start of a lesson, he sometimes 'scented himself with perfume,' and then began the lesson. He said that [alcohol] makes him more energetic in teaching."

and sometimes even permitted himself to drink [alcoholic beverages] with them. He issued a fatwa permitting some of them to be drunk in non-intoxicating doses, although no one adhered to the [established] limits, and they often reached a level of intoxication (al-Ghumuqi, 55).

When Imam Ghazi-Muhammad began to establish Sharia, as he understood it, throughout Dagestan, Sa'id al-Harakani harshly criticized his actions. For this the imam "drove Sa'id Effendi from [his] home, and imprisoned his son" in the beginning of 1830. Meanwhile, the imam ordered all the wine kept in his home to be poured out onto the ground (Gammer 1998, 84; *Dvizhenie gortsev* 1959, 130). Hamzah-bek, who subsequently became the successor of Ghazi-Muhammad, carried out the punishment. In addition, they were both students of Sa'id. There is a story that Sa'id met a woman on his way home to Arakani who informed him with malice about the destruction of his library: "Sa'id, it seems your manuscripts are floating in wine."²² He did not betray his sorrow and responded, "Well, so be it! They deserve that — after all, they contradicted one another" (Shikhsaidov, 149). In despair, hoping for the return of his main property, books, Sa'id al-Harakani complained to his patron Aslan-khan al-Ghazi-Ghumuqi, a colleague and pupil of Muhammad al-Yaraghi, and another pupil, Shamil, who, as is known, in turn became the next imam (Kasumov and Gichibekova 2012, 21).

Ghazi-Muhammad waged a relentless campaign against the consumption of alcoholic beverages; Hamzah-bek continued it, although it is said that before he became an imam, he allowed himself to drink *nabidh*. Shamil led this fight with redoubled energy, employing Sharia norms of punishment like his predecessors. It should be noted that according to some reports, the fathers of Ghazi-Muhammad and Shamil liked to drink. The father of the first, although well versed in religious matters, led a carefree life and often drank alcoholic beverages. Khasanilav from Gimry states that he [Ghazi-Muhammad's father] burned nine homes of fellow villagers who were at odds with him while in a state of alcoholic intoxication. Ghazi-Muhammad scolded his father but could not influence him (IIAE DNTs RAN f. 1, op. 1, d. 84, l. 15, 20–21, and elsewhere; Chichagova 1889, 15).

It is apparent from information provided by the aforementioned Khasanilav that Ghazi-Muhammad's prohibition on drinking alcohol was introduced gradually; it is possible that he acted according to the example of the Prophet. At first the use of low-alcohol *bouza* was allowed

22. We should bear in mind that "floating in wine" is an allegory.

and then a complete ban was introduced. For a characterization of the first stage of Ghazi-Muhammad's struggle against alcohol the following case is striking. When merchants from Gimry went to Derbent for textiles, they turned to the imam with the question: "Is it possible to allow us to drink a little?" Ghazi-Muhammad advised them to appeal to the local mullah, who, as a native of Khunzakh, "was accustomed to drinking." The mullah asked [them] to bring drinks — vodka and filtered *bouza*. After this he drank them together with those present. They became drunk "until they collapsed" (Gasaniġau [Gimrinskii]; IIAE DNTs RAN, f. 1, op. 1, d. 84, ll. 96–97).

A familiarization with sources and materials on the history of Dagestan of the first half of the nineteenth century reveals that the use of alcohol was a rather widespread phenomenon. The *Memoirs* of Abdullah Omarov, in which he describes the 1840s–1850s, indicate that *bouza* was a part of the traditional culture. A wedding, a celebration of the birth of a son, or any celebration in general could not do without it. *Bouza* was even given to a teacher for teaching religious studies. Representatives of all social strata drank — *uzdens*, khans, and *ra'iyas*.²³ Notwithstanding the presence of strict ceremonial frameworks, they might even drink alcohol during religious holidays. Thus, Omarov wrote, in Kazanishche during the Muslim holiday of breaking the fast (Eid al-Fitr, known locally as *Uraza Bayram*), "it was difficult to encounter five people, of which two were not drunk."

With the development of economic contacts with Russians, wine, vodka, rum, liquors, and balsams gradually entered into use (Omarov 1868, 17, 24, 29, 30, 39, 52; Omarov 1869, 28, 42–43). In his *Notes*, A. P. Ermolov, the commander of the Russian troops in the Caucasus, wrote, not without satisfaction: "But debauchery from the use of hot drinks for which they have a great passion [he means people from Akushin — M.M.] is beginning to take root. Up to now our treasury wine serves as the most luxurious [drink] and perhaps the only thing that saves them is the fact that the vice-governors sell water instead of vodka!" (*Zapiski A. P. Ermolova* 1991, 350).

The use of stronger alcoholic beverages resulted in the transformation of a celebratory meal intended to amuse the revelers into a social evil. They saw Russian influence as the cause, and this may have played a precipitating role in the expansion of the liberation movement in Dagestan in the second half of the 1820s (Magomedov 2015, 135–39).

23. An *uzden* was a free land owner; a *rayat* was a serf or dependent. — Ed.

Moreover, existing social attitudes dictated that a devout Muslim should not consume alcohol. Thus, for example, one student of a madrassa, wanting to appear devout, did not even eat food from yeast-leavened dough.²⁴ Others, from “decorum,” supervised entertainment functions from the outside (Omarov 1868, 54–56; Omarov 1869, 43).

Ghazi-Muhammad was not the first ruler who struggled with the circulation of alcohol. Surhkay II “Kunbuttay,” khan of Ghazi-Ghumuq, banned the purchase of vodka (*‘araq*) and wine under the threat of a fine at the rate of one bull by special rule in 1813. Individual communities introduced similar customary laws (*‘adat*). For example, the community of Orota reached a decision to exact a cow “from one who drinks wine . . . and from one who makes wine at home, even if in a small quantity” (Aitberov 1999, 106–7).²⁵ Taking into consideration the fact that the use of alcohol had a mass character and that some ulema used it, the presence of texts in which this fact is justified appears logical.

The legal views of the aforementioned Nur Muhammad al-Awari (d. 1834) on this issue are interesting. In his work he criticized Imam Ghazi-Muhammad for corporal punishment, which was introduced due to the use of alcoholic beverages. Nur Muhammad’s position consisted in the following:

1. If a person is a confirmed Hanafite who in accordance with the madhab is permitted to use non-intoxicating quantities of a beverage,²⁶ and he has consumed an intoxicating amount of a beverage (besides wine, which is prohibited), then he should be punished according to Sharia, but “his witness [*shahada*]²⁷ is accepted.”

“You,” wrote al-Awari, referring to Ghazi-Muhammad, “should know the attitude of the Hanafi scholars on the issue of drinking alcohol and the punishment for this action. In particular Imam Abu Hanifah believes that punishment for drinking is obligatory only for wine (*khamr*). And for drinking other beverages a person is punished only if he becomes drunk.”

2. Drinking non-intoxicating amounts, with the exception of wine, is a minor sin (*saghira*) and not a major sin (*kabira*).

24. Yeast was obtained when preparing *bouza*.

25. The author of the publication dates the source to the 1810s.

26. It follows from the works of Dagestani ulema that they were oriented toward the view of those Hanafi theologians who did not forbid the use of some alcoholic beverages in non-intoxicating doses.

27. The *shahada* is the Muslim profession of faith, one of the five pillars of Islam. — Ed.

In his conclusions Nur Muhammad al-Awari cited a great number of works of the best known Shafi'i jurists.

"These arguments are more than sufficient for me," wrote Nur Muhammad,

I hope that the Almighty does not punish me for drinking non-intoxicating amounts of *nabidh*, the prohibition of which is debatable. I am following Abu Hanifah on this question. . . . If a person performs an action following a madhab allowing this action, yet there are disagreements among scholars regarding its permissibility, it is not a considered a sin for him, since the following [*taqlid*] [of the madhab's opinion] is well grounded. . . . If a person sees someone drink *nabidh*, then it is not possible to condemn him, since perhaps he is following the view of Abu Hanifah in this matter (al-Awari).

It is possible Nur Muhammad was familiar with the judgment of the Dagestani scholar-theologian Muhammad al-Quduqi (d. 1717), passed at the end of the seventeenth century. At the very least their conclusions are similar: although they use a different argumentation and different sources, both were Shafi'i theologians.

In his conclusion Muhammad al-Quduqi first explained the difference between the opinion of Shafi'i and Hanafi scholars regarding the use of alcohol and further suggested:

Muslims, including ascetic Sufis,²⁸ should not blame someone for the fact that they drink alcoholic beverages in a quantity that does not result in intoxication It is preferable not to consume drinks about which there is no unified scholarly opinion. It is also preferable not to condemn and debate those who use them in non-intoxicating quantities. Courts (*qadi*) or rulers (*amir*) have the right to that (to judge and to determine the rules).

Further, the author focused on the status of the Hanafite and Shafi'ite who use *nabidh* in non-intoxicating doses: whether their testimony (*shahada*) is accepted or not has important legal consequences in the context of Islam (an acknowledgement of the validity of agreements and so on). Muhammad al-Quduqi cites a quotation from the work of one of the jurists and provides an explanation:

28. It is stressed that Sufis adopted an uncompromising position with respect to the use of *nabidh*.

“If a Hanafite drinks a small quantity of *nabidh*, then he should not be considered impious (*fasiq*). Accordingly, his witness (*shahada*) is accepted. But if he became drunk, then he should be punished, since intoxication is a sin (haram). However, if one who regards *nabidh* as prohibited drinks, for example a Shafi’ite, then his witness (*shahada*) is not accepted. Some say that it is accepted.” In other words, this opinion is disputed. From the words of the imam al-Shafi’i it follows that the witness is accepted.

Considering what is unlawful as permitted is a greater sin (haram) than committing the given sin. If a person considers adultery (*zina*) to be permissible, then he becomes an unbeliever (*kafir*), and if he commits adultery, then he does not.

The Shafi’i madhab accepts the witness (*shahada*) of a Hanafite (that is, one who considers a small quantity of *nabidh* permissible). Nevertheless, recognizing the illicit as permissible is a great sin from the point of view of the Shafi’i madhab. A Shafi’ite who drinks *nabidh* commits a sin, but this sin is minor, smaller than unbelief (*kufir*). For this reason, if the witness of a Hanafite is accepted, then the witness of a Shafi’ite who drinks *nabidh* in non-intoxicating doses should also be accepted. (al-Quduqi)

We have cited extensive quotations from Muhammad al-Quduqi’s legal opinions because they spread widely in Dagestan and would have served as a guide for theologians of subsequent generations by virtue of the authority of the author.

Dagestani scholar-theologians were not unanimous in their views concerning the use of alcohol, and some of them did not follow the Shafi’i but rather the Hanafi madhab. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that the view that prevailed was for the total prohibition of alcohol, even in small doses. For example, a theologian of the mid-nineteenth century, Akhmad al-Rugdji, who carried out the functions of qadi in Rugudzha, wrote the work, “Mas’ala fi-l-khubz,” in which he considered whether it was permissible to use products of fermentation when baking bread (Gvaramia et al. 2002, 203; Al-Rugdji).

‘Umar al-Khunzakhi²⁹ perhaps expressed the views of Dagestani theologians most capaciously on the question of prohibiting the use of alcohol in his “Address” in the genre of *nasikhah*:³⁰

29. The authors of the translation identify him as the eighteenth-century theologian, writer, and poet Umar b. ‘Abdusalam ad-Dagistani — a descendent of a Dagestani family that settled in Mecca as far back as the beginning of the seventeenth century.

30. *Nasikh* or *naskh* is a form of moral instruction in Islamic law that investigates material that seems contradictory. — Ed.

With regard to the judgment concerning the consumption of intoxicating beverages, it is forbidden in accordance with the text of the hadith, that reads:

“Anything that intoxicates is wine, and all wine is prohibited.” From this it follows that any intoxicating beverage is also prohibited. Drinking it is prohibited. A person who does disregards religious commandments. Imam al-Shafi’i refers to alcohol as sewage, comparing it with human feces. There are many hadith about the prohibition of spirits. Thus far the issue has been the drinking of the common people. With regard to scholars, even a small sin becomes big because this follows from the books on *tawhid* (dogmatics), since they are an example for others, as communicated in the following hadith: “Whoever set a bad example receives a punishment for this and for whomever followed his example until Judgment Day. Moreover, those who followed him also receive a punishment.” And you, the people of Dagestan, cast aspersions on Musalav (Muhammad al-Quduqi — M.M.) and Damadan [al-Mukhi] (d. 1724), claiming they allowed themselves to drink both this and that (alcohol). And in reality, those who attribute this action to these people are liars and offend the honor of these accomplished scholars. And if they committed such an action, then they erred in this. But they (i.e., prophets) and imam-mujtahids are not infallible; they are merely followers of the madhabs of those imams. And if a follower [*muqallid*] is mistaken in his conclusions and pronounces a judgment that contradicts that of his imam, then we may not follow his word (Abdulmazhidov and Shekhmagomedov 2013, 133).

In summary, we can come to the following conclusions. In spite of the fact that the inhabitants of Dagestan followed the Shafi’i madhab, in which the production and consumption of alcoholic drinks is prohibited, there are numerous reports that in the seventeenth through the first half of the nineteenth centuries they were produced and used. This is also the case for wine, which was prohibited by all Muslim legal schools. Some Dagestani theologians drank *nabidh* (*bouza*), finding justification for this in the fact that they followed the Hanafi madhab on this issue. In classical works, representatives permitted the drinking of some forms of alcoholic beverages in non-intoxicating doses.

Among Dagestani scholar-theologians the opinion was widespread that the use of any alcoholic beverage is forbidden (haram) but that this is a minor sin, since the witness (*shahada*) of such a person is accepted. They thought that if a person followed the Hanafi madhab,

then it was permissible to use alcoholic beverages that did not belong to the category of *khamr*, in non-intoxicating portions. It appears that the explanation of this position must be sought in the undesirable legal implications of the rejection of the testimony (*shahada*) of people who drank *nabidh*, which was a widespread occurrence.

Some Dagestani scholar-theologians wrote works justifying a full ban on the use of alcohol, including in the smallest portions. They believed that the testimony (*shahada*) of someone who uses alcohol in any amount is not accepted. In some feudal estates, alliances of communes and individual communes introduced local bans on the use of alcohol that did not make provisions for Sharia forms of punishment (*hadd*). Imams (Ghazi-Muhammad, Hamzah-bek, and Shamil) introduced a complete prohibition on the production, trade, and use of alcoholic beverages. Individuals who violated the ban were punished in accordance with the norms of Sharia. The legal opinions and fatwas of scholar-theologians did little to influence the everyday practice of using alcohol by the local population. They became more effective when they were supported by state and legal coercion.

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EKATERINA KAPUSTINA

The Market of Islamic Goods and Services in Dagestan: Consumption Practices and Public Debates

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This article deals with the functioning of the sector of Islamic goods and services in Dagestan's urban space and the popular practices of consumption. It describes and analyzes various aspects of Islamic business, including the operation of the halal market, the women's clothing sector, and advertising strategies. Special attention is given to the issue of the hijab, its symbolic meaning, and its role in women's social life. The problem of Islamic consumption is viewed through the prism of the commodification of Islam, which affects both religious practices and the local economy. An intensive appeal to Islam in the city's social and economic space is not so much a sign of Islamic radicalization as it is a choice of cultural references in the society and a quest for new behavioral patterns. The emergence of new consumer attitudes forces Dagestani society to face a problem of choice between European standards and a new identity — belonging to global Islamic civilization. The article draws upon the author's field materials from 2011 to 2015.

Keywords: Islam in Dagestan, religious practices, commodification, halal market.

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IN the post-Soviet period, Islam has come to play a significant role in the social life of Dagestan, and an individual's religiosity, along with the forms of its expression, is now one of the most pressing topics of discussion in various communities. This tendency is particularly apparent in the urban areas of the republic, where modern, urban modes of life coexist, and are often closely intertwined, with religious resurgence, and, in some cases, with Islamic radicalism.

Over the past two decades, active migrations from the mountains to the plains and from cities beyond the borders of the republic have set in motion certain reactionary sociocultural and economic processes in Dagestan's cities; the makeup of the population, primarily of Makhachkala, has subsequently changed remarkably, and cultural and economic orientations have shifted in the course of changes to the business strategies and social ideology of the Dagestani people (for details, see Kapustina 2013). Almost everywhere, national projects, which were actively developed in the republic during the 1990s, have given way to others that are founded on religiosity/areligiosity. At times, it is the variant of religiosity that has become the important element in the formation of the identity of various groups among the urban population (for details about the national revival in Dagestan, see Kisriev 1998). This is due to the ethnic diversity of Dagestani society, as well as to the influence of the process of global Islamization on the republic and on the North Caucasus as a whole.

In this article, I will examine the place of Islam in the economy of the republic and, through an examination of Muslims' consumption strategies, the influence of religion on the social life of Dagestani society. Attention will be given to the behavioral practices of Dagestanis who appeal to Islam and who live in Makhachkala (since the majority of my field materials, collected in 2011, 2014, and 2015, relate specifically to the capital of Dagestan) and to the distinctive features of the mechanism of the consumption of goods and services that are branded in religious terms or that use Islamic symbolism and are included in the Islamic discourse of the capital.

The local "Islamic industry" itself is characterized by relative youth (its appearance corresponds with the beginning of the post-Soviet era) and by swift growth. In the cities of the republic, it is now possible to find a myriad of stores, from the largest supermarket to the smallest kiosk, that offer religious literature, video and audio recordings of sermons, prayer rugs, prayer beads, and the local style of skullcap (*tiubeteika*), that is, all those goods that can be called Islamic. In addition to merchandise expressly intended for religious purposes,

such stores also stock related goods that may not directly relate to Islam, but could be associated with it.¹

Among Russian cities that are perceived as “Islamic territories” (Kazan, Ufa, the capitals of almost all of the republics of the North Caucasus, other cities of Dagestan), Makhachkala is a special case. On the one hand, Islam has long been in Dagestan, and now, without doubt, it is the religion of the majority.² On the other hand, the Soviet period was one of forced secularity, and although Islam did not entirely disappear, it remained almost exclusively in the private sphere, having vanished from the public sphere. In the 1990s, as religious freedom emerged, society had to resolve many questions connected with religiosity, including how to consume goods that are related to the religious sphere or that are understood to be part of religious practice. In addition, Makhachkala, like other cities where Muslims live, is subject to global Islamic trends, both on the level of ideas and on the level of things. In this way, the case of Makhachkala is a synthesis of classic cases of cities with a Muslim majority that are reshaping the global trends of the Islamic market, while at the same time, of a neophyte city, which is only just “opening up” the market at the local level and learning anew the consumption of goods that can be branded as Islamic. There are evident similarities here with the situations of those European cities where the Muslim diaspora has comparatively recently begun to consume such goods, and where this consumption is occasionally declarative in character and is associated with versions of religious identity that are relevant and new to all of urban society.

Often researchers and informants alike are inclined to present “life in Islam” (that is, various Islamic daily practices) as a moral path oriented toward spiritual development, far from the conventional “Western” path, which is associated with a society of consumption, hedonism and even debauchery. However, a number of specialists insist on the existence of an Islamic model of consumerism, and an

1. I do not intend to address specific interpretations of dogma in this article, as I am concerned here with a certain society’s practices and declarations, which, in general, do not coincide with normative religious prescriptions.
2. I have intentionally not used the word “traditional” here, as the term is subject to debate. The phrase “traditional Islam” in Dagestan already has an extensive historiography in connection with the discussion of various versions of religious practice in today’s world, in particular, with disagreements between followers of the Salafi movement and Tariqa schools of Islam. All such definitions are unstable right now, owing to the heated polemics in the public sphere and in professional discussions about terminology and about the specific sects of Islam in the republic (for an overview of these problems, see Sokolov 2015; Starodubrovskaja 2013; Biurchiev 2014).

analysis of the various forms of the commodification of Islam supports this thesis (Navaro-Yashin 2002). Here, commodification signifies the process in the course of which an increasing number of various types of human activity acquire monetary value and, in effect, become goods (Abercrombie et al. 2004). This article will describe examples of such commodification practices in Dagestan's public culture. Although similar processes are happening in other Muslim regions in Russia, the capital of Dagestan demonstrates particularly well the intensity and prevalence of this occurrence, and to some degree, it is even becoming a trendsetter in this regard.

Islamic Business

The growing number of companies that appeal to Islam in their business makes evident that such an appeal is now one of the most popular business strategies in the republic. As a rule, this strategy pertains to the sale of goods that may be marketed as Islamic, although industries dedicated to the production of goods are developing in a similar fashion, especially in the spheres of food products and tailoring.

One example of a successful player in this field is the extremely large and well-known Islamic goods holding company "Risalat," which includes a men's clothing store, a women's clothing store, the restaurant "Miiasat," a tailor shop, a delicatessen, as well as a taxi service and a furniture showroom. The holding company is associated with and, in fact, was organized by the Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Dagestan (Dukhovnoe upravlenie musul'man dagestana, hereafter DUMD), which evaluates its goods' adherence to Islamic norms. It is said that Risalat's profits are allocated to the Dagestan Islamic University (also opened under the auspices of DUMD). In addition to goods associated with religious practice, Risalat sells many other items, in particular, cosmetics and perfumes. Shampoo and other personal care items (for the face and body) made with black cumin, kohl, and henna are among the most popular products. As a rule, the cosmetics are manufactured in Turkey, the UAE, Syria, and other countries of the Middle East (except Israel, of course). The large quantity of goods imported from these countries is explained not only by the fact that commodities produced there are connected with religious practice and permitted for Muslim use, but also because the suppliers obviously trust local Islamic products. I have seen black cumin shampoo that is manufactured in Thailand being sold in stores, as well, but here it is important for the buyer that Islamic theologians draw attention

to the medicinal properties of black cumin. At the counter, so-called “Eastern sweets” are also on display.

I will note that, according to my observations, goods such as Arab perfumes, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, the use or ingredients of which are approved by Islam, have become especially widespread. For example, products that were not long ago considered exotic in Dagestan and were known only to those who had studied at Middle Eastern universities are now actively flooding the market. Such products include instruments for *hijama* (bloodletting), *siwak* (teeth-cleaning twigs), as well as black cumin oil, the universal remedy for any ailment.



Wedding dress store, The Islamic Bride. 2014. Photo by E. Kapustina

The names of stores and businesses that sell Islamic goods often contain references to the Arab world (for example, the company Arabian Secrets, discussed below). Such names, however, should not be attributed to orientalizing tendencies, but should rather be seen as an appeal to Muslim countries, which are important as sites of expertise in questions of Islam on the grounds that they are culturally and geographically closer to the “birthplace of Islam”; that Islamic traditions in these countries have continued without interruption; and to some degree, that the state ideology in some of these countries is

connected with the Islamic religion. For example, an Arab perfume boutique recently appeared in the city, which (as the name indicates) primarily sells brands of perfume from Arab countries. However, this store sells not only perfume oils, but also alcohol-based fragrances. When questioned about the permissibility of the latter for Muslims, the salesman answered that many Islamic scholars have come to the conclusion that alcohol evaporates from the skin and, therefore, alcohol-based fragrances may be used. Then he added that they are, after all, produced in Saudi Arabia, which is to say, if Saudi Arabia produces such perfumes, surely they are in accordance with the norms of Islam. In another shop, perfume oils were called “Islamic perfumes.”

Enterprises that appeal to Islam have also ventured into the sphere of sports and recreation. What is more, a few such enterprises even cultivate demand for their products precisely through such an appeal. For example, the recent appearance of a store called *Luchnik* (The archer), which sells crossbows and bows, might at first glance be taken as a reflection of a growing interest in the sport of archery or in the use of that type of weapon for target hunting. However, it should be noted that this store is located in immediate proximity to the Juma Mosque, in a building that also houses the aforementioned *Risalat* (which apparently also owns *Luchnik*). Moreover, their business cards display the store’s slogan, “Revive the Sunnah,” and in their promotional brochure, a hadith explains that archery is the best leisure activity for a Muslim. In 2014, *Risalat*, together with the Dagestan Republic’s Ministry of Sport, organized an archery tournament in various regions of Dagestan called “Revive the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad.” Given that archery had hitherto not been popular in Dagestan and that this store appeared only two years ago, the cultivation of demand for the new products obviously came about through the process of positioning this type of sport as a recreation that is encouraged specifically for Muslims. Interestingly, according to one of my informants, crossbows and bows are now considered good high-status gifts (such as might be given to public officials or honored guests), since, according to him, there is a hadith about the coming of the end of the age, when, of all types of weapons, only bows and crossbows will remain.

In the context of popular pastimes prescribed by Muslims, horse races have enjoyed increased interest too, also as the result of an appeal to hadith, which approves of them. One should note, however, that in a few regions of Dagestan, horse races have long been loved and practiced, but their recent implementation in other regions has been specifically labeled as a commendable activity for Muslims.

The service sector is also focused on Islamic prescription. Halal hair salons, where men are attended to by male hairdressers, have appeared in the city. According to my observations, the restaurant business has yet to offer the urban community “women’s cafés,” but there is already a “women’s beach” not far from Makhachkala. Advertisements for an ordinary *banya* (bathhouse) might contain the warning “haram not allowed” (so that an establishment for the relaxation and cleaning of the body will not be confused with the saunas, which in Dagestan are, in fact, synonymous with brothels). Even establishments that barely hide their profiles as “houses of indulgence” appeal to Islam; in Makhachkala there are a few establishments where men enter into “temporary marriages” with women for the duration of one night. Naturally, DUMD and many of the city’s citizens criticize such practices, however, judging by discussions on social networks, some view these establishments in a positive light, as a step in the direction of a righteous life for both “spouses.”



Sign on the entrance to the Café Azbar, which reads “Haram not sold here.” 2014. Photo by E. Kapustina

There have been attempts to introduce the norms of Islam into the world of finance. The limited partnership LaRiba Finance offers clients loans and goods on an interest-free installment plan, thereby

observing the law that forbids interest-bearing transactions (*riba*), and provides consulting services for Muslims. DUMD also certifies LaRiba's work. Other firms offer similar services, which they advertise as "Islamic installment plans."

The businessmen of Makhachkala, who actively declare their Islamic identity, talk about creating a special business association, determining membership through affiliation with the Muslim *ummah*³ (as a rule, of one branch of Islam) and formulating the rules for conducting business by Islamic norms. I was told of the existence of a business club where people conversant in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) give consultations on various questions of business. Members of the club pay *zakat* (a proportional, annual property tax called for under Islamic law) in addition to dues. While some talk about such clubs as a reality of contemporary economics in the capital, others doubt the scale and even the existence of such associations. Nonetheless, businessmen from one branch of industry reportedly might meet daily, combining this, for example, with collective *namaz* (prayer).

In the republic's press, considerable space is allocated to religious issues. Columns in the most popular local newspapers discuss different aspects of the life of the "proper Muslim." In these columns, the reader can not only find texts about how to do *namaz* or how to hold a fast, but also analyses of all aspects of economic and social life: the regulations for opening a business, guidelines for relationships in the family and in society, and the rules of personal grooming (for examples, see the daily newspaper *Chernovik*).

There are also tourist firms oriented around organizing Muslim pilgrimages, especially to Mecca, for the hajj or the *umrah*.⁴ As an example, one tourist agency had also been under the control of the DUMD, but it subsequently became independent, while in actuality it retained its connection with the Spiritual Board.

Islamic business not only creates a supply of Islamic goods (several times I was told in interviews that the owners of various stores live in the UAE, or Turkey, that is, that the business comes from other countries) but also responds to the demands of believers. Sometimes the operation of this type of business might be taken up as a successful career for those who try to uphold the norms of Islam

3. *Ummah* means the community or nation, and typically refers to the whole Muslim community. — Ed.

4. The *Umrah* — a lesser pilgrimage, especially to Mecca, at any time of the year except for the hajj.

in everyday life (or who state such a goal). In other words, work in that sector is, in essence, a form of religious practice. Salespeople in one of the commercial pavilions said that the owner of that particular store had only been conducting business related to Islamic goods for six months, while she had earlier sold something else, unrelated to religion. First, she had changed her own way of life and had become a “practicing” Muslim, and then she changed the direction of her business. An Islamic business is perceived as halal not only for its owners. Occasionally, women in hijabs are able to find work in Islamic stores and cafés that focus on halal products, a fortunate alternative at a time when, in certain sectors, “covered women” might even be discriminated against. In particular, women are refused employment because of the hijab, whereas personnel of Islamic establishments are chosen, as a rule, from just such observant Muslims.

Islamic business in Dagestan is often transnational in character. As has already been mentioned, the entrepreneurs who are developing the sector of goods that are positioned as Islamic occasionally live beyond the borders of Dagestan and Russia, frequently in countries with an Islamic majority. A few of them have two homes, employing transnational practices not only in business but also in their own social life. I know of situations where moving to a country of “the Islamic world” propelled them into the business of trading Islamic goods, or even into the production of Islamic goods (examples include the manufacturer of chewing gum who will be discussed below and the owner of the store “Dates from Arabia”).

The Hijab: Fashion and Belief

Women’s clothing is one of the most sought-after of Islamic goods, and one of the most frequently discussed in society. There are an abundance of stores selling Islamic women’s clothing in the city, most of which opened from 2012 to 2015, and, in certain micro-regions, entire streets are now dedicated to the sale of this merchandise. In addition to the women’s clothing stores, Islamic men’s clothing stores have also appeared in Makhachkala, but clothing for Muslim women has become the truly significant Islamic business.

There are stores in the city that sell ready-to-wear Islamic women’s clothing, imported, for the most part, from Turkey and the UAE, though to a lesser degree, and rarely, Saudi Arabia. These last, as salespeople know, are very expensive for the Dagestani consumer and for that reason the business of sewing dresses in accordance with the

norms of Islam is currently growing in Makhachkala's tailor shops. Dress patterns from Saudi Arabia are rarely copied directly (according to the salespeople, they are very loose-fitting and, in general, are not favored by locals), but are usually redesigned according to local taste. Ample lace and other elements of décor are sewn onto the classic black "Saudi" model, and, at the same time, the dresses are frequently sewn with a narrower silhouette (although not a slim one). A few models are even more representative of local color; they are sewn in the style of the so-called "Dargin" dresses, which are wide dresses with a yoke (they are preferred by older women). Makhachkala Islamic fashion is not static and changes from year to year; in 2014, dresses with ruffles and dresses with lace yokes were popular. Islamic wedding fashion is a separate topic, which I will address below.

The fundamental element of women's Islamic clothing, which, in a sense, has become the symbol of the "observant" woman, is the hijab headscarf. According to my observations, the main consumers of hijabs are young women and university students or girls in their final years of secondary school — that is, girls of marriageable age. In Dagestan, the hijab stopped being an unusual sight long ago and is now common everywhere. According to one female informant, very few people are now surprised if a girl suddenly starts wearing a hijab, as they would have been at the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s. Women often begin to wear a hijab before marriage or immediately following it, often at the insistence of their husbands. Moreover, they often begin gradually, at first wearing a headscarf that only covers their hair, then moving to a bright hijab and to clothes that fully cover their body but are fairly close-fitting, and only later to black *kabalai* dresses, or to loose-fitting dresses of muted, usually dark colors. Middle-aged women are seen wearing a hijab less often. According to one female informant, when a "covered" woman is middle-aged, she is more frequently suspected of radicalism.

In the context of this examination of the Muslim women's clothing industry, attention should be given to the social discourse on the topic of traditional Islamic clothing in contemporary Dagestani life. The appearance of one or another element of global Islamic fashion in the urban areas of the republic is a traditional competitive arena for the proponents of different positions on the culture of the city and, more broadly, of Dagestan. The topic of Dagestani women wearing hijabs (and more broadly, clothing that hides a woman's figure with the exception of her face and hands) has stirred the most public interest. I have heard stories of a bus driver's fundamental refusal to drive

women in hijabs and of women in a beauty salon who refused service to “covered” women, along with stories about people’s exceptional attentiveness and goodwill toward these women as representatives of a higher moral culture. Women dressed in this manner are often greeted as “sister” on the street. The terminology is also interesting: proponents of the hijab call women in hijabs “covered” (*zakrytye*); critics call them “wrapped” (*zamotannye*) or even “Chupa-chups” (a popular brand of lollipop in the former Soviet Union; the slender figure of a young woman in a slim or even tight-fitting dress, paired with a high, voluminous hairstyle in a hijab, has conjured this image for a few witty individuals).

Proponents of secular conventions of life in the city emphasize the foreignness of the hijab to Dagestani culture and propose to those women who are zealous for female Islamic piety that they wear the traditional headdresses of the mountain women, such as the *chokhto*⁵ or kerchiefs, which also conform to the norms of Islam (Takhnaeva 2011). Proponents of the hijab defend it by stressing the rights of the individual and freedom of conscience. It should be noted that the hijab, having passed through the process of commodification, has become a symbol of Islamic identity throughout the entire world (Navaro-Yashin 2002).

According to data from interviews with respect to cases of discrimination against young women in hijabs, problems arise most often when seeking government employment or during their time in high school, and to a lesser degree, in institutions of higher education. In recent years, conflicts have periodically arisen associated with the wearing of hijabs, but since the mid-2010s this tension has somewhat lessened. One of my female informants told me: “When I was hired, I was called into the office, and they said, ‘Why have you covered yourself? Don’t you understand that such people are viewed differently and that comments will be made to us?’” (M., age 31). Then, acquiescing to the woman’s choice, her employers asked her at least not to wear black so that she would not be suspected of radicalism.

At the same time, in the private commercial sector there might be entirely different expectations. I saw help-wanted advertisements in local newspapers that required the applicant to be a “covered” woman, even when the establishment was not directly associated with Islamic industry.

5. The traditional women’s headwear in the mountain regions of Dagestan.

Against the background of conversations about the conformity of the suggested options of “Islamic” women’s clothing to “folk” costume, a question arises as to the place of traditional Dagestani culture in the contemporary life of the republic. Traditional costume, especially for women, has experienced a renaissance in the post-Soviet North Caucasus republics in the wake of a national revival and interest in native culture. In the Western and Central Caucasus, enterprises dedicated to making “traditional” clothing, especially clothing for celebrations, in particular for weddings, have sprung up everywhere. The growth of such enterprises has been recorded in North Ossetia, Ingushetia, and Chechnya, as well as in the South Caucasus — in Abkhazian and Georgian societies. As an example, one might recall the Tbilisi tailor shop, Samoseli Pirveli, which has recreated various types of traditional costume for the many regions of Georgia and presents them as examples of haute couture (Sytnik 2014).

In Dagestan, this practice has not been as widespread. Separate initiatives of the secular national intelligentsia are not worth considering here, since they have not achieved a wide public response. Even the initiative of Ramazan Abdulatipov, the head of the Republic of Dagestan, to dress his civil servants in traditional garments like the *cherkeska* (the Circassian coat) was received coolly, and even with annoyance, as utter foolishness. In Dagestan, the hijab and the image of the “covered woman” has emerged as a competitor to the fashion of off-the-shoulder dresses for secular holidays and weddings. I recall, from my own observations, that, ten years ago, there were still signs hanging in a few places within the republic that read, “wedding [*venchal'nye*]⁶ dresses for rent,” referring to the “European” type of wedding dress, with crinolines, décolleté and other similar accoutrements. Now in the republic, hijabs for weddings are gradually crowding out all of their competitors (in one of the wedding salons of Kizlyar, the owner said that practically all off-the-shoulder dresses and those with décolleté had disappeared, since demand for them had fallen).

Men’s Islamic fashion is also not static. Alongside the classic *tiubeteika* skullcaps, men’s *jellabiya*⁷ of the Arab type and even turbans have appeared (such exotic raiment is not common in Dagestan, but is still seen on the streets of the city). For the time being, people consider the *jellabiya* to be a marker of radical Islam, but not all that long ago

6. *Venchanie* is a term for the Christian ceremony.

7. A *jellabiya* is a long, full garment with long sleeves. — Ed.

hijabs also carried this connotation, and now they are common in all branches of Islam. In the last couple of years, an even more specific type of women's clothing was introduced — the niqab, a cloak with an opening for the woman's eyes only, worn with black gloves.

Studies on the practice of hijab-wearing in Europe and Russia — in particular, in Tatarstan — show that women do not necessarily wear a headscarf as the result of an imposed code of conduct and pressure from the religious community. Rather, the decision to wear a hijab is sometimes the conscious and individual choice of a Muslim woman, especially in societies where an opposing discourse dominates (whether secular or from another religion) and where “thorough adherence to the laws of Islam is viewed as a legal right, which must be frequently defended in the public sphere. Here, traditional Islam yields to the realization of women's rights and to the multicultural context, within which a modernist project with a new system of cultural and moral values is formulated” (Garaev 2010). In this case, the hijab might at times be part of a project of emancipation, either as the condition for a young woman from a religious family to go beyond her family circle, and thus, as her access to an education and a career, or as an element of the free choice of a young woman who is leaving the control of a patriarchal family and is stepping out in defiance of the local community (Benkhabib 2003). I have heard of similar heated polemics in families where a young woman had to defend her right to wear a hijab to her parents or her spouse.

Not long ago in Dagestan, the hijab might also have been understood from this perspective. This is partly true even now. According to my informants, “observant” Muslims (especially those opposed to *Tariqa* [Sufi] Islam), among whom there are many “covered” women, are, to a high degree, focused on marriage outside of their *tukhum* (kinship group) and village; indeed, they enjoy great ideological freedom in this case. In Dagestani society, an orientation toward endogamy has traditionally existed and has not lost its relevance in any way within the village and sometimes within the *tukhum*. In a few communities, even marriage to cousins is still possible. Now that the hijab has become mainstream, however, it has gradually lost its power as a “manifesto.” Moreover, it cannot be denied that women are forced to wear hijabs, especially by their fiancés or husbands, on the eve of or after their weddings. That such situations occur frequently is evident from the public debate on the problem (in particular, in the press; see, for example, the information portal www.daptar.ru) and from my field notes.

The problem of the hijab can also be viewed through the prism of global Islamic fashion, as it is supplanting local variants of traditional women's clothing throughout the world (for details, see Tarlo 2010). Of interest here is the question of the interaction between Islamic symbols and secular fashion in urban culture, and through this, the question of the fashion of religiosity itself, which is transmitted everywhere. It is clear that the hijab in Dagestan is often not only a reflection of religious faith, but also of fashion. For example, some urban women wear "half-hijabs": a kerchief or scarf that covers the hair but with a top layer that fits loosely at the neck and leaves the earlobes and earrings visible. According to the saleswoman in one Islamic clothing store, more than one-third of the store's customers are "uncovered" women. In all fairness, women whose transition to the classic hijab is a gradual process might be wearing such "half-hijabs" (for examples of similar cases in Kazan, see Garaev 2010). Based on my observations, the number of women in Makhachkala who wear not a hijab, but a headscarf, in the form of a turban that covers the hair in its entirety but leaves the neck and earlobes uncovered, or kerchiefs or scarves draped over their hair, or another similar variation, has greatly increased. Even ten years ago in the Dagestani city, the women who were wearing headscarves were either old women or women from the country who were either visiting the city or who had moved there recently. Often, women from the country would remove their headscarves when arriving in the city and put them on again upon returning to their village. Now Makhachkala women themselves — more often than not young women and girls — wear headscarves, turbans and hijabs.

Several times, in conversation, I was told that young women want to cover themselves, because it is pretty and because there are so many fashionable options available.

When my sister and I went to Risalat to buy shampoo or something, the [sales]girls said to me — my sister was dressed (covered — E.K.): "Don't you want to cover yourself too?" I said: "No, I don't." She said: "Well, you should. With these things, with headscarves, you can dress so much more fashionably. But everyone walks around with their hair loose." They think that it's more fashionable this way (covered — E.K.) than with loose hair. But I don't walk around with my hair loose in order to be the most fashionable. What's fashionable about that? Almost the entire city walks around like that! That's not the point . . . But they say: 'This way, you can wear scarves in various ways, so many fashionable, beautiful scarves.' That's exactly what they say. (P., age 29)

At a time when European fashion has been substantially scaled down in Dagestan (transparent or very tight-fitting clothing and short skirts are essentially condemned, and neither the clothing of European subcultures nor unisex styles ever caught on), the search for fashion guidelines leads contemporary Dagestani society toward countries with Muslim majorities.⁸

What is more, young women see the hijab as an additional opportunity to increase their chances of a successful marriage, or as a way to rid themselves of a blemished reputation, and thus improve their chances in the marriage market.

A girl was engaged, she was fifteen years old, maybe even fourteen. I asked, why is she engaged so early, why get married? And my sister told me: “What do you expect? At least she’s covered — naturally, they’ll take her.” (P., age 29)

Now a lot of guys also demand that . . . women cover themselves before marriage. (M., age 31)

To conclude the discussion of the hijab, I want to offer a passage from Alisa Ganieva’s well-known story, *Salam, Dalgat!*, which gives an accurate portrayal of Makhachkala reality in the early 2000s:

“Zalina, look at Zainab!” Asya whispered loudly, pointing a claret-coloured fingernail at the next table where a girl sat in a pretty *hijab* headscarf.

“She’s covered up,” said Zalina, looking sideways at Zainab’s Islamic garb.

“I knew she’d cover up after what happened.”

“Why, what happened?”

“Well, her family left her on her own with a girlfriend in the village one night and to cut a long story short, she went off into the mountains with some guys. Her cousin happened to come by and knocked at the house, then raised the alarm. She came back the next morning and they took her to a doctor immediately to have him check her for signs of intercourse.”

“And...?”

“I don’t know. She wanted to get married but now she pretends she’s too pure for it.” (Ganieva 2010b)

8. Stores offer their customers fashion magazines purchased from Turkey, for example, so their clients can navigate the world of Muslim women’s fashion.

Halal Territory: Islam in the Food Industry

The term *halal* usually implies products permitted and not forbidden to Muslims, and, more narrowly, it has to do with food products. The Islamic world is not in complete agreement as to the definition of what is *halal* and what is not, insofar as not all possible food products were directly mentioned in the Qur'an. By and large, theologians agree regarding the majority of foodstuffs: for example, seafood and locusts are considered permissible for use as food, but dogs and donkeys are not. However, not all teachers of Islam share these convictions, even within the bounds of Sunni Islam (Bergeaud-Bleckler et al. 2016). The *halal* industry, and Islamic consumption more broadly, have only recently begun to attract the attention of representatives of the social sciences, but this topic already occupies a well-defined niche in anthropological studies (Bergeaud-Bleckler et al. 2016; Fischer 2011). Worthy of mention in the study of this phenomenon are the topics of the Islamic project of globalization, research on the Muslim diaspora — primarily that of Europe and the United States, but also of other regions — as well as research on the global market of Islamic goods as an economic reality.

If one were to take a look at the case of Dagestan, then it would become apparent that everywhere in the republic restaurant and commercial businesses, while establishing their range of products and in the development of their advertising slogans, are using more frequent references to the sphere of religion. “*Halal*” stickers can be found on all types of food products, although such a sticker does not always indicate the existence of any license from an authoritative Islamic institution. The word “*halal*” is written not only on the packages of those products that might be suspected of containing forbidden ingredients, but on many others besides. For many food service establishments, *halal shwarma* and *halal pizza* are flagship dishes.

The majority of cafés and restaurants, which not many years ago still had alcohol on their menu, do not serve it now. According to citizens, the reason for this is not only the growing piety of the owners, but also the influence on the market of the so-called “woodsmen” (*lesniki*).⁹ Rumors have spread among citizens claiming that these

9. Participants in illegal militias, who hide in the rural areas of Dagestan, i.e., “in the woods” (*v lesu*).

“woodsmen” send “thumb drives” with requests written on removable media devices to end the sale of haram products. Someone assured me that the “woodsmen” were only pursuing a ban on products prohibited to Muslims; others say it was a covert form of racketeering. In either case, disobedience leads to one thing — coercive measures (for example, the bombing of a store).

A few cafés, which opened very recently, positioned themselves from the start as halal territory. An example of this is the café chain Z&M. These are trendy cafés with a refined, European interior, Wi-Fi, and dozens of each kind of dish, but no alcohol at all. Cafés are also emerging that target those Dagestani Muslims who are even stricter in their way of life. An interesting example is the story of the bistro chain Azbar (Courtyard). It opened in Makhachkala a few years ago and fairly quickly dominated the market; more than a dozen such cafés opened around the city. The characteristic design of these cafés included the predominance of wood in the interior and a focus on dishes in the style of shwarma and shashlik. Needless to say, the cafés did not serve alcohol. Colleagues informed me that the founders of Azbar did not originally target strictly observant Muslims, but simply wanted to open a café with male servers that did not serve alcohol. When they initially began to recruit personnel they were dissatisfied with the qualifications of those who came, but at some point they visited the mosque on Kotrov Street (known locally as a Salafi mosque) where many young people expressed a desire to work in the new establishment. Since the first Azbar café was located near that mosque and a few of its members worked there, the rest of the “Kotrov congregation” began to eat lunch there. As a result, Azbar gradually acquired a reputation as a club for Salafi Muslims; that is how both the café’s regulars, as well as the wider public perceived it. The bistro began to emphasize and actively cultivate its Islamic orientation. For example, at the entrance, visitors would find a sign informing them that haram (that which is not permitted) was not sold there (along with an illustration of a pig, a wine bottle, and cigarettes). However, very soon the customers of Azbar began to suspect it of catering to illegal armed militias. Raids occurred more than once, and, as a result, around two years ago, Azbar closed. Now these cafés have been sold off to other owners and have lost their Islamic flavor. Another Islamic-oriented restaurant, Room Center, also suffered from the increased attention of law enforcement agencies to the activities of such cafés. Police officers, who suspected that some of its employees were “participants in extremism,” visited

the restaurant several times in 2013 to conduct searches (Ostrovskii 2013).

In the city's local food establishments that are less clear about their relationship to Islam, more often than not reminders of the rules that a Muslim must observe during a meal can be found. For example, in one café featuring Turkish cuisine, posters hanging over the tables inform guests of the *adab* (sharia rules of etiquette) for meals, with the requisite mention of the hadith from the life of the Prophet that are associated with meals. In the end, halal products and halal consumption, as a defined cultural and religious norm, have, in effect, created a new economic niche and new values in various industries, but have thereby complicated economic reality, which has provoked certain legal and ethical problems (Coombe 1998). This new economic activity is beginning to necessitate a system of certification, a clientele, suppliers, and marketing strategies.

Inevitably, this begs the question of a certification for products permitted to Muslims. In many cases, DUMD and other similar boards in Russia (in the case of products from other regions of the country) act as the organization that carries out such a certification. Yet, since all believers do not consider this organization authoritative (and many Salafi even view it with blatant hostility), it can be argued that the city lacks a single local center of certification for Islamic goods. For many Dagestani Muslims, products manufactured in Arab countries, as well as in other countries with a Muslim majority, are *a priori* halal, merely on the basis that they were produced in a place where Islam is professed.

Halal products might be used as an element in the construction of a particular identity for the modern Dagestani, primarily for the urban citizen. Similar alignments of identity by groups oriented toward Islam, particularly through the use of halal products, are taking place in other communities, like Turkey, for example (Navaro-Yashin 2002). At the same time, halal consumption might be understood primarily as a challenge to the "Western" model of modernity, that is, to the secular model (Lever and Anil 2016). This clearly also applies to the case of Makhachkala. By way of example, halal cafés are becoming sites for meetings of urbanites for whom their Islamic identity is in many ways becoming a priority. A characteristic example is the gatherings of businessmen who are trying to conduct business based on the norms of Sharia in a secular state. Often the polemic with Eurocentric, secular forms of consumption is carried out with the help of copying their stylistics and in the very same terms of commodification.

Fashion Islam — Islam as Mainstream

According to my observations, one of the important strategies of Islamic marketing is to make Islam fashionable, and especially, to make it attractive to young people. For this reason, many goods branded as Islamic and produced in Dagestan appeal to a young audience and directly or indirectly copy the “secular” brands on the market. A characteristic example is the chewing gum “The Family of Fuad and Samira,” released in Dagestan in 2015, which directly copies the popular “Love Is” brand (Turkish chewing gum with liners imprinted with sayings about love). The distinctive feature of this new Islamic gum is that the liners have comics about the family life of Muslims Fuad and Samira and their children, Raikhana and Dzhamal. All the comics are created in the style of “Love is . . .”, but the sentences begin with the phrase “Happiness in a family is . . .” Interestingly, Dagestani Ramazan Emeev — who studied at the university of Al’-Azkhar in Egypt and teaches at the S. Daitova Islamic University in Khasavyurt — established Arabian Secrets, the company that produces this gum. According to Emeev, at the heart of the stories in the inserts are human values common to all people, not just Muslims: respect, devotion, mutual assistance, and social cohesion (Krainova 2015). Indeed, certain comics contain neutral phrases, such as “happiness in a family is respecting elderly parents,” or “happiness in a family is caring for your spouse when she is sick,” however, alongside these one can find prescriptions exclusively for Islamic believers, such as “happiness in a family is getting up together before sunrise for the *Tahajjud* prayer.” The appearance of the characters in these comics is also interesting. Fuad is depicted with a beard, but no mustache; Samira and Raikhana are in hijabs, while everything is in the same stylistics as the drawings from the “Love Is” gum wrappers. The business owners emphasize that their product is halal, discussing its ingredients in detail, defending the permissibility of depicting living creatures with the goal of Islamic propaganda, and taking on their critics with the assistance of the opinions of authoritative ulema (Islamic scholars) and the experience of Arab countries (Krainova 2015). In addition to this chewing gum, which its creators market as a product primarily for children, teenagers, and young people, the company also produces Siwak Plus, a gum based on the extract of the *siwak* (the traditional Islamic chewing stick), which is likewise marketed as a halal product (Kachabekova 2015).

Islamic clothing stores also try to be fashionable and imitate Western brands. As an example, let us take the chain of women's clothing boutiques Girl in Hijab. The name of the store is written in English, and on the sign is the spirited slogan in Russian, "Just cover up!" (*Prosto pokroisia!*). However, on the other side is a banner with a Qur'an citation that conveys the necessity for women to wear modest clothing that covers them: "O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Qur'an 33:59). And this is not the only example of this bizarre combination of Islamic rhetoric and Dagestani glamour, with its imitations of famous Western brands of clothing and its use of Latin letters and English store names. The stores Abaya Style¹⁰ and others like it delight the eyes of consumer and researcher alike by means of this combination.

Advertisements for products often contain references to sacred texts and are associated with religious holidays, events, or sites. For example, an advertising booklet for a store that sells dates mentions the hadith in which the Prophet praised the quality of dates' flavor. The display might have indicated only the dates' origin, such as "Medina dates," where Medina would have undoubtedly referred to the story from the life of the Prophet, rather than to any unique quality of the dates from that particular city. On packaging for a toothpaste with *siwak*, the Russian text will mention the desirability of using *siwak*, as recommended in the hadith. On close examination the original packaging of this toothpaste, with everything replicated in both the Arabic and English languages, reveals not a single mention of the sacred texts and not a single textual or graphic reference to Islam. An examination of similar examples suggests that the appeal here to Islam, its norms and regulations, might be taken as a marketing strategy and a mechanism for promoting one brand or another.

In Dagestan, the use of religious texts in advertisements is happening everywhere and is viewed primarily as a public demonstration of the business owners' religiosity, which shapes their positive image in the eyes of their consumers. For example, banners outside a mobile phone store (on top of which is the logo of the clothing boutique, Milano)

10. *Abaya* — a hijab-cape that covers a woman's figure to her waist.

inform the city's inhabitants: "Almighty Allah said, 'The Qur'an, a faithful guide for people, was sent down in the month of Ramadan. Fast for My sake, and I will reward [you] for it.'" When stepping away from work, the barista in the coffee shop of Risalat's shopping center puts up a sign: "Break for *namaz*, 5–10 minutes."

The use of templates from the secular sphere for the advertisement of Islamic products sometimes takes on comic proportions. For example, an interesting version of an advertisement appeared on one of Risalat's banners: "Promotional offer from the company Risalat. Buy a set of disks for 1200 rubles and receive a coupon and the chance to receive *three trips to the hajj* or hundreds of other valuable gifts from KIA Rio company." According to a teacher at the Islamic University of Makhachkala, nothing in this offer is forbidden by Islam, yet the use of trips to the hajj as a prize is closely reminiscent of companies' offers that promise their customers trips to southern resorts.

Islam tries not only to be fashionable, but also positive. In Risalat's stores, smiley emojis are put up with the slogan, "Smile, it's the Sunnah," and signs are posted on the cash register declaring, "We love our prophet Muhammad." Similar stickers, on which the name of Allah is often combined with a heart, are featured on the back windows of the cars of some residents of Makhachkala.

Yet another particularity of Islamic business is its positioning primarily as a social project. As mentioned, the holding Risalat allocates its earnings to Dagestan Islamic University. R. Emeev, who teaches at the Khasavyurt branch of that university, said in an interview with a journalist while speaking about the launch of "Family of Fuad and Samira" gum that "this is a social project for the good of society" (Krainova 2015). As further examples, we might take the aforementioned Islamic-goods stores, whose owners opened that particular business only after they had become "observant" Muslims. Business as an intangible, business as a form of religious confession is seen as a specific distinctive feature of the halal industry.

According to my data, the appeal to religion as an advertising strategy is more the initiative of business owners themselves than a reflection of the policy of those in power. In recent years, banners with hadith sayings have disappeared from the walls of homes, put up in their time with the support of DUMD. When Abdulatipov came to power in the republic in 2013, the banners were taken down. But in private trade, the use of religious trappings has grown many times over. In my view, such Islamization — being without a doubt a

marketing strategy in the competition for new customers, a certain fashion for religiosity, *and* a reflection of certain social discussions about religion — amounts to the consequence of processes connected with the search for a public ideology. The examples of the management of Islamic business examined here illustrate the dramatic rise of the business sector in Dagestan. At the same time, the market in Islamic goods is teetering between European standards and a new regional identity that views Dagestan as a territory of Islam and, hence, as part of Islamic civilization. Now, references to Islam in the urban social and economic space are not so much a sign of Islamic radicalization as they are the society's choice of a cultural orientation and the formulation of new modes of behavior, modeled particularly after the Arab-Islamic East.

The advertisement of goods that are in no way associated with Islam often appeals to the sphere of Islamic religion, and, conversely, Islamic products are advertised with the help of recognizable marketing strategies and direct copying of examples from “secular” business. The commodification of Islam in Dagestan is a new economic and social reality, which is influencing both the religious practices of the republic's inhabitants and the development of the local economy. The consumption of goods, marketed as Islamic, is becoming a declaration of a level and type of religious conduct. Along with this, a Muslim's religiosity and focus on a proper way of life are successfully “sold.” In conclusion, the urban social space in Dagestan, which is exceptionally saturated with Islamic symbolism and the exercise of Islamic consumption, is a site for the discussion of Islam and a forum of religiosity. The city discusses religion with its inhabitants through commercial sites, food establishments, and the service sector, and as a result, communities — important building blocks in the formation of modern Dagestani society — are forming around the commodification of religious practices.

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ALEXANDRA TAKOVA

“Praying Muslim Youth” as a Subculture of Kabardino-Balkar Society

Translation by Jan Surer

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This article examines a social group within Kabardino-Balkar society — the so-called “praying youth” that emerged during the post-Soviet religious revival. The article presents some distinctive features of this group — its members’ social base, their world outlook, and their behavioral patterns and markers. Special attention is paid to analysis of the reasons for the emergence of the religious conflict that divided society into those professing a “popular” form of Islam and those “praying,” with their fundamentalist agenda. Field materials illustrate how “folk” and/or “traditional” culture vanishes within the subculture of the “praying youth.”

Keywords: Islamic revival, Islamic praying youth, traditional Islam, fundamentalism, extremism, Kabardino-Balkaria, ritual, conflict.

A STRIKING phenomenon in the social life of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic (KBR) in the late 1980s and early 1990s was a religious resurgence that emerged especially prominently with respect to Islam. This phenomenon, which has currently become an accepted academic designation, signifies the process of the mass construction of mosques, the registration of religious communities, the organization of a system of religious education and enlightenment, and, broadly speaking, a sharp increase in societal interest in religion.

By the end of the Soviet era in Kabardino-Balkaria, as in other regions of the country, religion had largely been pushed to the margins

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of social life. Religious indifferentism was typical of the overwhelming majority of the republic's population. In the realm of ritual practice a unique "folk" form of Islam had become established, one characterized by the presence of a large number of elements of non-Islamic origin. The religiosity of the Kabardino-Balkar population centered mainly around the performance of a series of funeral and memorial rituals that were especially rich in these elements. The customs most clearly contradicting Islamic prescriptions were the following: the provision of food to those who come to offer their condolences during the first three days of mourning at the home of the deceased; the compilation of a list of those visitors and the sums of money they brought to the family of the deceased; the subsequent distribution of commemorative packages (*sedek'e*) to those on these lists on the fifty-second day and the one-year anniversary of the death; the giving of lavish memorial feasts on the seventh, fortieth, and fifty-second days, as well as a half-year and a year from the day of death; the purchase of new items and their distribution to the relatives and neighbors of the deceased as *deura* (atonement for the sins of the departed); the setting up of expensive memorials, often with photographs of the deceased; and the like. Moreover, in the republic a sort of competitiveness existed in performing these rituals — over the luxuriousness of the memorial meal, the value of the commemorative packets, the size and cost of memorials and so on, thereby driving families of modest means into debt that often took years to pay off. Indeed, among the people a nickname took hold for local mullahs who supported the ruinous practices described above — *khèdefyshch*, or "one who fleeces a corpse" (Mukozhev 2008, 213).

In 1986, on the threshold of the religious revival, one of the leaders of the Muslim clergy in the North Caucasus, Mahmud Gekkiev, gave a very succinct portrait of the characteristics of the religious practice that had been established in the republic by that time, noting in particular that "the funeral rituals performed by the Kabardians and Balkars are nothing but the inventions of the local effendi and mullahs" (UTsDNI, f. 1, op. 28, d. 77, l. 15). This came as no surprise, since by the end of the Soviet period there was scarcely a single cleric in the republic who possessed specialized religious education. As scholar Arsen Mukozhev rightly observed:

By this time, very few knew how to read and write in Arabic and, especially, how to interpret the Qur'an, while mullahs who prepared privately received minimal information about performing burials and memorial feasts, solemnizing marriages, and saying *namaz* [Islamic

prayers]. What is more, they memorized the suras [chapters in the Qur'an] necessary for performing acts of worship and frequently interpreted these texts as they wished. Often clerics used prayer texts written in Russian script (Mukozhev 2007, 174).

As a result, all the necessary conditions had arisen in which each cleric, to the extent of his creativity, incorporated his own ideas into religious practice. For this reason, the forms for conducting religious rituals in Kabardino-Balkaria were not standardized and at times differed markedly in various districts (*raiony*) of the republic and even in neighboring villages.

An important aspect of the religious resurgence of the late 1980s and early 1990s was the appearance of a new social group — believing youth who sharply distinguished themselves from society at large — characterized by the contextuality of its religiosity, that is, piety that appeared only in specific instances, such as funerals, weddings, and a number of major holidays. Given that the members of the new group possessed an array of highly visible external and behavioral markers, including strict observance of the prescribed practice of praying five times each day, others frequently began to call them “the praying ones.”

Young people's particular receptivity to the religious revival stemmed largely from the concurrence of their socialization with the crisis and subsequent collapse of the Soviet ideological system. Undoubtedly, the natural psychological proclivity of youth for all things new also played its own role. In this case, youth in the early 1990s perceived the Islamic religion, including its external manifestations (silver ornamentation, prayer beads, books in Arabic, light stubble beards, and so on), as a new, “fashionable” trend with elements of “Eastern exoticism.” The knowledge of Arabic and of the finer points of Islamic worship practices, the observance of *sawm* (fasting), strict adherence to dietary prohibitions, and so forth became signs of “good form” and even something of a trend.

The social base of the “praying ones” consisted predominantly of university students and upperclassmen in urban high schools, especially in the city of Nalchik. Numerous religious institutions, opened amid a wave of religious enthusiasm, carried out their work especially among the urban population in the 1990s and early 2000s. For example, representatives of the charitable organization “Salvation” (Saudi Arabia), the international organization “al-Igasa” (Saudi Arabia), the World Assembly of Islamic Youth “an-Nadva,” the Islamic charitable organization “Islamic Relief,” a branch of the International Islamic Organization “Dagwat” (Saudi Arabia), an educational-computer-

language center “Minaret,” and others were all active in Nalchik. The initiative to open these establishments belonged mainly to Arabs and Adyga [Circassian] returnees. For example, in 1992, at the initiative of Adyga returnees and with the financial support of the organization “Salvation,” the Sharia Institute opened in Nalchik; it was the first Islamic higher educational institution in the KBR, renamed the Arabic Language Institute in 1994 (Babich and Iarlykapov 2003, 197). The founders of the institute were also its first teachers: Muhammad Kheir Khuazh (who, along with Zaur Naloev — one of the leaders of the Kabardian national movement — and another returnee, Fuad Duguzh, translated the Qur’an into the Kabardian language), Shauki Balag, Abdul Vakhkhab Kankosh, and others (Babich 2008, 164). In 1996, the institute was closed. In 1997, the Islamic Institute began its work in the republic under the authority of the Muslim Spiritual Board (DUM); it was reorganized in 2007 as the Imam Abu Hanifa North Caucasus Islamic University.

In rural localities the activity of these institutions was significantly more constrained. Research indicates that over the course of the 1990s, fifty-four sites offering elementary religious instruction functioned at various times and in one form or another (Mukozhev 2008, 210); they were basically a sort of Sunday school for studying Arabic and the principles of the Qur’an, located within secular educational establishments. They did not function for long, however, and by the end of the 1990s they were already inactive. Only in the town of Baksan (the second most populous locality in the KBR) did a madrassa named after Adam Dymov function quite successfully from 1991 to 2002. The limited activity of Islamic educational organizations in rural areas was linked first and foremost to village residents’ loyalty to ideas of traditionalism and to a certain deference toward the older generation, the bearers of “folk” Islam. Nevertheless, since a significant number of rural young people had continuous close ties to the cities (they studied in the universities and schools, had relatives there, on so on), the institutional influence discussed above was scarcely weaker on them than on urban youth.

Among religious training-educational institutions, the Islamic Center, which commenced operations in 1993 and was registered by the KBR’s Ministry of Justice on July 7, 1995 (Gluboglo and Sokhroкова 2001, 238), enjoyed the greatest authority and popularity. This establishment presented itself as a cultural-educational religious organization founded to promote the revival of Islam in the KBR. A council of *jama’ats* (assemblies) and a *shura*¹ functioned under

1. A gathering for the purpose of consultation on issues affecting the group.

the auspices of the Islamic Center. Foreign charitable foundations with branches in Nalchik and Moscow financed the center (Babich and Iarlykapov 2003, 196). Of particular note among these funding organizations was the “SAR Foundation” (Berezhnoi 2006, 173).

Since 2004, the KBR’s Ministry of Education and Science has prohibited the granting of premises in educational buildings to members of a confession for conducting work with the population. Consequently, the majority of elementary religious education sites in the republic were closed. The closure of establishments for religious education was not a spontaneous event but was connected to the undertaking of an extensive campaign in the first half of the 2000s directed toward preventing the spread of Islamic radicalism. In addition to the liquidation of religious education sites, the campaign carried out a whole range of measures, including the mass closure of mosques that were not under the control of the DUM (upon the pretext that the rental term had expired for the premises they were using), the compilation of the infamous lists of “Wahhabists” (lists of individuals who were allegedly part of the radical extremist underground), and the like. The closure of religious educational programs furthered the virtually complete liquidation of official channels for introducing young people to the Islamic religion, so these channels assumed a more latent character. Only toward the end of that decade did the network of religious educational institutions gradually begin to revive. As of today in Kabardino-Balkaria, a single madrassa named “Nur” (active from 2009, licensed from 2011) is operational. In addition, twenty-five Sunday schools are functioning at village mosques in the republic, in which attendees (typically, elderly individuals) learn to read the Qur’an and, more rarely, to write in Arabic. Students there also study at least the essential rules for rituals. The Sunday schools do not provide a systematic Islamic education, but they contribute to the elevation of the congregants’ level of religious knowledge (Akkieva and Sampiev 2015). The sole Islamic higher educational institution in the KBR is the Imam Abu Hanifa North Caucasus Islamic University.

Inasmuch as the Islamic revival in the republic, as already noted above, revealed the virtually complete absence of personnel who were sufficiently competent to satisfy the growing spiritual needs of the society, the leadership of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kabardino-Balkaria (DUM KBR), founded in 1991, set out to solve this problem by sending promising young people for training at foreign religious educational institutions. As Roman Silant’ev candidly commented:

The chief criteria in selecting the educational institutions were the defrayal of travel expenses by the accepting institution, free tuition, room and board, and, preferably, the provision of a stipend. Of course, the training centers that offered such favorable conditions were not as well known as Cairo's Al-Azhar University, but they seemed suitable for furthering religious literacy and Arabic language instruction (Silant'ev 2007, 144–45).

According to data from Nadezhda Emel'ianova (2002), "in 1994–95, about one hundred students from Kabardino-Balkaria underwent training in Saudi Arabia (Muhammad ibn Saud University), Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey." From the second half of the 1990s, the number of students from Kabardino-Balkaria who received foreign religious instruction markedly decreased. On the one hand, this was due to the republic's own institution of higher religious education — the above-mentioned Islamic University — opening in 1997; on the other hand, it was attributable to a sharp decline in the amount of resources allocated by foreign foundations and charitable organizations for Russian citizens to acquire a religious education. By the early 2000s, therefore, the republic's practice of obtaining religious instruction abroad had been reduced to nil.

Yet the knowledge obtained by young people abroad often contravened the above-mentioned religious ideas then prevalent in the republic. And, in an additional, subtle aspect underlying this situation, a significant portion of the educated youth self-identified as being called to fulfill a kind of missionary purpose. Concerned about the erosion of religion in society, its marginalization, and the loss of religion's position as the regulator of social and family life, these educated youth energetically took on the reform of the existing state of things. They therefore actively set out to spread throughout the republic an interpretation of Islam more consonant with its classical, fundamental tenets but differing considerably from its "folk" form, which was professed by a large portion of the population. This became the basis for the rise of religious conflict in the republic.

The active work carried out in the 1990s by the DUM KBR with the purpose of creating a professional, experienced base of clerics did not ultimately achieve the expected results. Since the majority of the educated youth turned out to be purveyors of religious ideas that were non-traditional in the sub-region and that were essentially fundamentalist, a campaign got underway at the end of the 1990s to "squeeze them out" from the positions they had held as imams in

community mosques in the second half of that decade. This process culminated in 2004 at the Fourth Congress of Muslims of the KBR with the adoption of a resolution stipulating that the chief imams and imams of localities would begin to be appointed by decision of the DUM, in agreement with the leaders of local administrations (since the early 1990s, the community of believers in a specific locality had chosen their imams). Since the matter of staffing mosques thus shifted entirely to the jurisdiction of the DUM leadership, the opportunity for active work by purveyors of religious ideas considered to be non-traditional within the republic was out of the question. Subsequently, the following process occurred: instead of young, educated imams, members of the older generation, who did not possess specialized religious education, once again came into the leadership of local religious communities. As a result, according to data from the DUM itself, in 2003, only 10 percent of 138 officially registered Muslim clerics in the KBR had specialized training (*Kabardino-Balkarskaia pravda* 2003).

Notably, the leadership of the DUM generally recognized the validity of the “praying youth’s” criticism of the state of the republic’s religious ritual system. In the early 2000s, the leadership led an extensive effort to align the rites of the funeral and burial services with canonical religious prescriptions. In 2004, during the lead-up to the Fourth Congress of Muslims in the KBR, the DUM adopted a resolution “On the Regularization of Muslims’ Funeral Rites.” This resolution was later published as a separate booklet (*Postanovlenie* 2011, 20). In particular, most of the issues that had been the subject of debates between the “praying ones” and traditionalists in the early to mid-1990s were reflected in the publication’s contents. Many of the extravagant rites and rituals that had become part of tradition were subjected to severe criticism within the resolution. For example, the compilation of lists of those who came to pay their respects (for the purpose of distributing commemorative packets) was banned (clause 1.16), as were the feeding of visitors throughout the three days of mourning by the relatives of the deceased (clause 1.17); the holding of memorial events commemorating the third, seventh, fortieth, and fifty-second days, the half-year, and the year from the day of death (clause 1.18); the purchase of new clothing items and their subsequent distribution as if it were the clothing of the deceased (clause 1.21); and many others (*Postanovlenie* 2011, 10–14). It is conceivable that had this resolution appeared several years earlier, religious conflict in the KBR might have subsided. But in 2004, at the height of the

campaign to close mosques and religious educational institutions and to replace young imams with members of the older generation, the adoption of this resolution did not advance the reconciliation of the contending parties. Furthermore, strict implementation of the resolution in the localities did not accompany its publication. The traditions of “everyday” Islam, which had been accumulating for decades, proved quite persistent; and the opportunism of a significant number of clerics also played a role. In the end, burial rituals in the republic remained varied after the resolution’s adoption.

The emergence of the social group of “the praying ones” in Kabardino-Balkar society, as well as the group’s attainment of quite distinct group boundaries, assumed a more or less organized form as a result of the selection of a leadership core from the community of educated youth. Musa Mukozhev and Anzor Astemirov, the directors of the above-mentioned Islamic Center of the KBR, became the main leaders of the “praying ones.” In the words of scholar Ruslan Kurbanov:

Both [Musa Mukozhev and Anzor Astemirov] had training in Saudi Arabia’s Islamic higher education institutions behind them. Both possessed a broad vision of the prospects for the development of Islam’s appeal in the republic, applied the most effective means to spread that message and to exhort recruits, actively engaged in translating texts from Arabic, and sponsored an online digital presence of adequate quality: www.islaminkbr.ru (Kurbanov 2006, 75).

In the 1990s and 2000s, other synonymous terms for “the praying ones” also gained a foothold in the republic — “neo-Muslims,” “young Muslims,” “new Muslims,” “practicing Muslims” — and in academic circles, “Salafis.” Meanwhile in the late 1990s, largely due to the efforts of mass media, “Wahhabists” became something of a cliché. As Leonid Siukiainen has rightly remarked, the term “Wahhabi” in the Russian public sphere has become practically synonymous with the concept “Islamic extremism” (Siukiainen 2001). Members of this social group referred to themselves simply as Muslims. Yet, in order to demonstrate their distinction from the adherents of the “folk” form of Islam, they often added the designations “praying Muslims,” “new Muslims,” “young Muslims,” or “practicing Muslims.” They did not use the term “Salafi” to refer to themselves.

Common to individuals considered part of this group was their possession of emphatically expressed fundamentalist narratives, that is, of an exaggerated striving toward a purity of religious practice,

against a backdrop of unqualified reductionism that manifested itself primarily in rather critical attitudes toward the religious history and tradition of their own peoples. This reductionism contributed to the role played by tensions between the “praying” youth and the bearers of “folk” Islam in causing deep divisions among the Muslim clergy, as well as society as a whole. In addition, both contending parties publicly called for the consolidation of Muslims, while simultaneously excluding their opponents from this process and accusing them of apostasy (Malashenko 2001, 105). Due to a whole complex of reasons the discord between the “praying ones” and the adherents of “folk” Islam turned into a confrontation that was initially confined to theological debates and matters of ritual practice but subsequently escalated into a dispute over the fundamental question of religious leadership in the republic.

The issue of the assignment of places for prayer within the mosque serves as an example illustrating a typical manifestation of the conflicts between traditionalists and “the praying ones.” A tradition existed in the republic, according to which the places of honor in a mosque were occupied exclusively by members of the older generation. Moreover, if an older person entered a mosque and the places in question were already filled, then the youngest congregant was obliged to yield his place to the new arrival. Consequently, friction, gossip, and the chaotic movement of people constantly occurred in the republic’s mosques, which effectively distracted people from prayer. The “praying ones” sharply criticized this tradition. In particular, as the scholar Irina L. Babich (2008, 158) has noted, “young Muslims disapproved of the institution of respecting one’s elders”; they thought that those “who arrived in the mosque earlier” should occupy the best places. An actual incident that occurred in 2002, in one of the mosques of Baksansky district (*raion*) of the KBR, evoked a strong reaction. Young believers there categorically refused to allow a group of elderly worshippers, who had arrived after the young people, to occupy the places of honor in the mosque. A heated dispute broke out, the substance of which consisted of public rebukes of the older attendees for their ignorance in religious matters. The mosque’s imam got involved in the argument and supported the older congregants. The conflict ended with the expulsion of the young believers from the mosque, a decision made by the imam with the support of members of the older generation (Field material 2012, Baksan).

A complete breach between “the praying ones” and the DUM became a crucial turning point in the religious conflict in the KBR.

In the early 2000s, “the praying ones” formed the KBR Jama’at as an alternative administrative network structure. For a long time, Musa Mukozhev, the undisputed leader of the praying youth, headed this organization. A significant difference between the KBR Jama’at and similar structures that have emerged in other sub-regions of the North Caucasus where religious conflicts have also occurred was its relative unity and rather clear organizational structure. As Akhmet Iarlykapov has correctly observed, “a unified *jama’at* was not established in any other constituent member of the North Caucasus [Federal District]” (Iarlykapov 2006, 41).

By the mid-2000s, the more or less ideologically monolithic KBR Jama’at began to break apart under the influence of a series of factors, to be discussed below. Trends toward the radicalization of a significant portion of its membership became clearly apparent. An extremist wing, including the Yarmuk Jama’at as well as others, materialized as a result of this process.

For understandable reasons, scholars have studied the extremist wing of “the praying ones” quite thoroughly. With respect to this category, one can point to certain specific quantitative indicators. For example, as early as 1996, there were about six hundred Muslims in the republic with extremist tendencies “capable of creating definite problems” (*Severnyi Kavkaz* 2001). This data came from Shafiq Pshikhachev, then the mufti of the KBR, who was in turn citing a statement by Amir Kazdokhov, the self-proclaimed emir of Kabardino-Balkaria and one of the “praying ones” from the Baksansky district [*raion*], who for the record did not enjoy great authority in Pshikhachev’s circles. In the early 2000s representatives of the security agencies indicated that “more than 300 active adherents of Islam” were at work in the republic (*Severnyi Kavkaz* 2001). Sources from the prosecutor’s office in the republic, for their part, noted in 2001 that “382 adherents of the ‘new’ Islam are on file with law enforcement agencies” (*Kabardino-Balkarskaia pravda* 2001). In view of the lack of public access to lists with surnames, one can only assume that a good many of those who perished as militants during the raid in Nalchik in October 2005 were in the agencies’ files four years earlier. Individuals considered part of the radical wing were entered into these registers, many of whom were already thought to be operating illegally at the moment of the lists’ compilation. They comprised only a small portion of the general number of “praying ones,” most of whose representatives still remained within legal bounds.

The evolution of the religious conflict in the KBR, which by the mid-2000s had on the whole moved far beyond purely religious

bounds, led to the events of October 13–14, 2005, in the town of Nalchik — an attack by the extremist wing of the “praying ones” on the security agencies of the republic’s capital. It now seems possible to identify the following main causes for the bloody outcome of the republic’s religious conflict:

1. The development of the potential for conflict proceeded in the republic in the absence of any real power able to resolve or at least to mitigate the conflict.

2. Scholar Aslan Borov aptly remarked:

As a fundamental factor [in the Nalchik Raid of 2005], one must here acknowledge the loss of spiritual-ideological and moral direction by a significant portion of society. This was coupled with profound economic decay, social polarization, and glaring forms of social injustice. As a result, in social consciousness a dangerous decline in the authority and level of legitimacy of the powers of the state took place, as well as mass alienation from the state and the erosion of a legal consciousness among the country’s citizens (Borov 2006, 13).

3. The security agencies’ meddling in the religious conflict fueled its intensification. Security officials’ actions, unprecedented in their brutality, had a huge effect. Among believing youth who did not have connections with extremists, these actions fostered the formation of a sense of permanent danger of persecution by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Indeed, the authorities replaced legal measures for the suppression of the activity of real extremists with illegal actions against a wide circle of the “praying ones” (*Pravozashchitnyi tsentr “Memorial”* 2008), which in the final analysis paved the way for preachers of “armed jihad” and contributed to the radicalization of a significant number of young believers. The overreach that took place, the lack of a differentiated approach when engaged in operational procedures, and strong-arm pressure tactics led to the security agencies’ loss of legitimacy in the eyes of society. Ultimately, the number of those sympathizing with radically inclined young people who acted on religious motives increased in the republic (Apazheva and Takova 2014, 243).

4. The academic community did not possess the necessary personnel with the expertise to work on such a delicate problem. Therefore, the republic’s religious conflict proved to be one of the most discussed but simultaneously most under-studied issues in post-Soviet Kabardino-Balkaria. An exception, perhaps, was an ethnographic expedition

organized by the KBR Institute of Humanities Research, together with the Russian Academy of Science's Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, in the course of which researchers exposed "a dangerous tendency related to the discrimination against young believers on the pretext of the struggle against 'Wahhabism'" (Berezhnoi 2006, 176). A summary of the expedition was presented in the press in 2003, when an accurate predictive assessment was made of the nature of the religious conflict's expansion in the republic. The director of the expedition, Valery Kazharov, noted:

There is no doubt that the continuation of the policy of discrimination with respect to young religious adherents, having dramatically lowered the level of religious tolerance in society, may become one of the factors capable of drastically destabilizing the ethno-political situation in the North Caucasus (Kazharov 2003).

5. The complex socioeconomic situation in the republic, mass unemployment, the polarization of society, clannishness and corruption, and the lack of any definite life prospects for the majority of the residents led to the formation in Kabardino-Balkaria of a broad social base of disaffected people who, in certain situations, were adept at violating the law. The socialization of young people amid conditions such as these laid the groundwork for "the marginalization of a significant portion of the youth and for deviations in their behavior, including religious and political extremism" (Tetuev 2010, 438).

6. The formation of a radical, extremist wing from among the "praying ones," as well as the shift to a position of radicalism by Musa Mukozhev and Anzor Astemirov, the leaders of the "praying ones," resulted from the causes enumerated above. To be sure, for a long time Musa Mukozhev's position was not clear, since in all his public statements preceding October 2005, he spoke exclusively of the Jama'at's peaceful character. Some were of the opinion that he did not participate in the October attack. Only in September 2006, on the website *Kavkaz-Tsent*r (Caucasus center), did he post a message entitled, "By resorting to jihad, we obtained true freedom," in which he justified the armed action of October 13, 2005, noting that it was provoked by security officials' actions against members of the Muslim community; he also called upon his followers to continue "the tactics of October 13." He took personal responsibility and credited the entire Jama'at's leadership for the armed attack of October 13 and expressed

the view that this attack was part of an “armed jihad” against Russian rule in the North Caucasus (*Pravozashchitnyi tsentr “Memorial”* 2008).

The fighting of October 13–14, 2005, was one of the most tragic events in the republic’s recent history. During the clashes, thirty-five security agency officers, twelve innocent civilians, and ninety-five attackers perished. In the bloody battle, quite a few people with close ties to one another — relatives and neighbors, classmates and fellow university students — fought on opposite sides, which made the situation particularly tragic. Based upon the surnames on a list of those killed that was distributed by the press, the attackers of October 13–14 were generally multiethnic. Of the ninety who were identified, eighty-nine were residents of the republic. Of those eighty-nine attackers, seventy-eight were Kabardians, six were Balkars, two were Russians, and three were Ossetians. The presence of individuals not related to so-called ethnic Muslims (Russians and Ossetians) among the attackers points to a further feature of the “praying ones,” the presence among them of a special contingent — converts, whom Dmitry Prasolov (2008) has studied in considerable detail.

After October 2005, several questions repeatedly arose: “How could such a thing happen?” “Who is to blame for what happened?” And, “What should be done to prevent possible recurrences?” Conferences and roundtables took place in the republic. A succession of major religious figures and eminent scholars specializing in the topic of Islam visited Kabardino-Balkaria. Government agencies developed specialized, targeted programs aimed at the prevention of religious extremism. Common to these programs were, on the one hand, reference to the need to “divert” young people from extremist ideas, and, on the other hand, suggestions of the enormous stabilizing potential residing deep within traditional culture.

In the context of this post-2005 process in Kabardino-Balkaria, focused work began at the state level for the “diversion” of youth from fundamentalist ideas by way of cultivating their interest in their ethnic past. The effort proceeded actively with massive, staged ethno-cultural events. These included the New Year according to the Adyga [Circassian] calendar (*G”ere shchhyre shchzykhekh*), festivals in the “World of the Adyga” series (which featured the ritual branding of horses [*damyg”etedze*]), and the like.

Dances, trick riding, the consumption of *makh”syme* (the national low-alcohol drink), traditional divination with mutton shoulders,

and so forth, accompanied these entertainments. These events also directed attention to the ancient pagan system and the rites and rituals associated with it, as well as to the replication of the worship of pagan deities. Along those same lines, enterprising young people organized a series of ethnographic evenings with the purpose of introducing young men and women to the culture and etiquette of traditional dance — the so-called *Dzhegu* (young people's festive gathering). Beginning in 2006, the *Dzhegu* was held regularly in Nalchik, on Abkhazia Square, the city's central square, which leads one to conclude that the authorities were obviously interested in the popularization of this kind of event. The *Dzhegu* took place once a week and lasted from three to four hours, attended by approximately two hundred to three hundred people (Kesheva 2008, 364).

That is not to say that these events were blatantly anti-Islamic. The majority of the republic's inhabitants, who had been living under the conditions of an acute shortage of leisure activities, likely did not perceive them as such. But religiously inclined people saw in them a dangerous tendency to impose on the residents of Kabardino-Balkaria archaic pagan notions that went against the norms of the Islamic religion.

The prominent scholar and folklorist, Aslan A. Tsipinov, a member of the Kabardino-Balkar Institute of Humanities Research, served as the organizer of the ethnographic productions. Tsipinov's position, shared by part of the republic's academic intelligentsia, stood out in its perception of the Islamic religion as a distinctive superstratum that had been added onto the integral system of the *adyge khabze* (a collection of norms of common law and moral-ethical precepts for the Adyga), and had adapted to it without having changed the system's basic principles. In academic publications and newspaper articles, and in presentations at conferences, Tsipinov repeatedly articulated this position. A series of his statements have resonated widely: "Religion comes and goes, the nation remains"; "We are Adyga first and Muslims second"; "Yes, the Adyga were Muslims, but they never said *namaz*, because they would never have bent the knee to anyone"; and others (Bakova 2014).

The public and specialists alike interpreted these ethnographic productions and the *Dzhegu* variously, including both delighted and sharply denunciatory reviews. Emblematic was an article by one Zoia Dysheкова, dated October 25, 2007, which offered a bitingly negative assessment of the ethnographic events. With indignation, the author wrote:

When the whole civilized world is striving toward progress, why do these people persistently call the Kabardians to regression? Every people, having once lived in paganism, seeks to conceal this period of ignorance, . . . yet our compatriots do not hide or shy away from this period of idol-worship, but they even try to make it a matter of pride (Dyshekova 2007).

A. A. Tsipinov regularly received threats. The scholar was murdered in December 2010 by members of the extremist underground, acting from religious motives.

The events of October 2005 became a distinctive watershed for many of the republic's inhabitants in their attitude toward the social group of the "praying ones." Babich (2008, 168) rightly pointed out:

Among the majority of the population, the view arose that all young, bearded Muslims were radicals, Wahhabists, who were dangerous to society and who wanted to overthrow the existing authorities. They thought that most of them were linked to the criminal world of the North Caucasus; that the mosques young Muslims visited were extremely dangerous places for children, teenagers, and young people; and that the KBR population did not need the various forms of Islamic education organized by the young Muslims, because the Islam that they preached was incorrect.

In the period following October 2005, most of the republic's residents generally came to regard young people's interest in Islam negatively, which testifies to a radical shift in public attitudes, since that same type of interest evoked approval in the early 1990s. Scholar Arsen Mukozhev (2009, 318) remarked on this topic: "Now in everyday conversations on the street one can hear, 'Would you believe it?! Their son says *namaz*!' And in reply, one hears, 'What a shame!'" Consequently, believing young people have found themselves in an extremely difficult position and have gradually formed a rather closed subculture.

The validity of applying the term "subculture" to the "praying ones" lies in the social group's possession of all the classic indicators that would, from a sociological perspective, allow scholars to classify them as a subculture, specifically: (1) the presence of clearly defined norms and values and, more broadly, of a system of perception of the world; (2) the manner in which adherents lead a specific way of life; (3) the presence of a defined set of distinctive behavioral markers and external attributes; (4) the presence of a more or less visible,

proactive center, in this case, of a leadership core (for a specified period of time).

Accordingly, quite clear-cut group boundaries, evident both to those entering the group's membership and to society at large, set this social group apart. In addition, often the identity of a "praying one" is the result of complete resocialization; of a total change of his or her system of perception of the world, life rules, norms of behavior, and way of life; and of the rejection of a significant number of elements of national culture and secular standards. The problem of fragmented families, in which permanent conflicts take place between "praying" children and "secular" parents, has therefore become urgent for the republic. These conflicts often lead to discrimination against believers on the everyday level, including within the family. The vast majority of "praying ones" in the KBR reside in Nalchik.

The "praying ones," especially the women among them, stand out from the rest of society by way of striking external markers. For women, chief among these is the hijab, a headscarf covering the neck and hair. It must be noted that among Kabardians and Balkars over the entire period of their affiliation with the Islamic religion, women have never worn a headscarf after the fashion of the hijab. Every married Kabardian or Balkar woman has worn a headscarf but has tied it in another way, with the neck and sometimes part of the hair remaining visible. In addition to the hijab, the other clothing worn by women within the social group of the "praying ones" is quite democratic — consisting primarily of long skirts, loose tunics of heavy fabric (often brightly colored), and flat shoes. In their external appearance, these women often seamlessly fuse the hijab with clothing completely consonant with the main secular trends in fashion. The sight of young women in hijabs with a subdued manicure and make-up has become common. In 2010 or 2011, a trend toward a strict dress code began in the republic: exclusively black, baglike clothing, gloves covering women's hands, and even, at times, niqabs — head scarves in which only the eyes remained visible. But this trend did not actually take hold.

The external markers for "praying" men are not as obvious. A beard, which in the eyes of society became the main indicator of its possessor's classification in the category of the "praying ones," does not signify this in reality. At present, a beard serves mostly as a characteristic that completes the image of those individuals inclined to flaunt conventional norms and to engage in various forms of conspicuous behavior. In recent years, a beard has also come to symbolize a state

of mourning, just as a black scarf does among women. This instance represents the revival of an external marker that existed in the prerevolutionary period. To be sure, back then these signs pertained exclusively to people of advanced age. In sum, an obvious external sign symbolizing a male individual's membership in the social group the "praying ones" does not exist today.

With respect to behavior, such traits as emotional reserve, humility, modesty, marked politeness, and responsiveness to others' needs, which are evident even at the stage of superficial acquaintance, are typical of representatives of the "praying ones." But the most important characteristic distinguishing members of this social group from others is the predominance of the religious element over all others (national, state, and other elements) in the system of their self-identification.

The peculiarities of the conduct of weddings among the "praying ones" vividly illustrate this thesis. As is well-known, for Kabardians and Balkars, a wedding (one of the most important events in the life cycle) is a lavish affair overflowing with guests and accompanied by a series of ancient rituals and an abundance of national dances, in which mainly the young people participate. In contrast, when members of the "praying ones" solemnize a marriage, the wedding is subject to substantial transformation. For example, the symbolic abduction of the bride, all the rituals associated with the consumption of alcohol, the mock "beating" of the groom by his unmarried friends, and so forth, are completely unacceptable, and wedding dances are reduced to a minimum. In rare cases, dances do take place among the men after the manner of the circular dances of the East Caucasus. As Babich (2008, 158) notes, young Muslims in the KBR permit only those dances in which men alone take part, with drums and stunts on horseback. "Praying" young women do not take part in dances at all (Field material 2013, Nal'chik).

In general, at weddings among the "praying ones," the national element is vaguely present but is simplified to a minimum. Nevertheless, since the "praying ones" still objectively belong to a specific clan and family and hence by definition have a large number of relatives, families most often arrange something of a compromise version of a wedding, including a separate halal table set for the young people and their believing friends, and, when possible, even separate venues. At the same time, a traditional wedding celebration is organized for the other guests.

The characteristics of wedding rituals are only one of the examples bearing witness to the substantive transformation of the national

elements of spiritual culture among the praying youth. No less telling is their performance of the series of funeral and memorial rituals, secular holidays, and even the naming of children.

An objective analysis of these facts makes it possible to conclude that, in general, the narratives of the “praying” youth differ markedly from the less religious or non-religious part of society, among whom the emphasis lies to a greater degree on national elements. Unlike the circumstances of the mid-1990s and the early 2000s, however, when the “praying ones” undertook active steps to purge the rituals of spiritual culture of elements that were, from their point of view, contradictory to the tenets of Islam and in doing so often provoked open conflicts and exacerbated existing tensions, one observes nothing like this in today’s republic. In contrast to the negative precedents of the past, a practice has taken hold of the segregation of “praying” young people — a voluntary practice from both the religious and non-religious sides. On the one hand, this reduces the possibility of conflicts to a minimum; on the other hand, it preserves the closed nature and insularity of the members of this social group.

In the matter of employment, the “praying ones” often experience certain difficulties. For example, the circle of workplaces potentially feasible for a “praying” young person is considerably constricted. One does not find representatives of this social group working as doctors, teachers, educators, or bank employees, much less as staff members of the administrative-management organs and security agencies, because unwritten hiring rules in these sorts of professions exclude the possibility of employing members of this social group. Quite often, however, one can encounter them among the employees of private-sector establishments. Many work as retail staff and as wait staff in food establishments. A sizeable number of the men are employed in transportation and a good many as employees of taxi firms, as well as IT-technology specialists, field engineers for digital equipment, construction workers, repairmen, and interior finishers. In the republic there is also a specific cluster of small businesses in which the proportion of “praying ones” is quite high. This sector includes markets for auto body parts and equipment for auto maintenance, auto service establishments, car washes, children’s clothing shops, and, of course, the entire existing trade in Muslim clothing, perfume products, and religious objects.

On the whole, members of the “praying ones” live quite comfortably, enjoying a stable income. Many, including women, own their own vehicles, sometimes even upscale brands. The “praying ones” practice

active intra-group mutual aid with respect to employment and starting a business (through interest-free loans, help in formalizing documents, bookkeeping, and so forth). Notably the “praying ones,” with rare exceptions, conduct their businesses openly and conscientiously complete the necessary financial transactions (Field material 2014, Nal’chik). No one among them can possibly be included among the republic’s financial elite, but at the same time one does not find any in need. This does not support the current, persistent view that the unemployed and disadvantaged overwhelmingly fill this social group’s ranks.

The prospects for future employment are determined by university departments and higher education institutions, in which the share of “praying ones” as students is especially high, particularly in the economics and construction and engineering-technical departments, as well as at technical colleges that train specialists in applied fields, including laboring trades. These young people are closely monitored. All school pupils and higher education students affiliated with the “praying” social group are listed in special records. Security officials regularly conduct review measures with respect to these students according to a strictly defined program. First, they check the lists of individuals affiliated with the “praying ones,” often adding new names to the lists. Second, they analyze the students’ academic performance and attendance. Third, they record the names of individuals with whom the “praying ones” are on friendly or simply familiar terms, even if these people are not classified in the category the “praying ones.” Finally, they gather reports from instructors, classroom teachers, and tutors on each of these students, stressing the nature of their behavior, particulars of their interactions with classmates and university-level peers, and considering whether or not the given individual reveals his or her religious views, engages in propaganda, and so forth (Field material 2012, Nal’chik). In sum, all “praying ones” who are studying in schools and universities are, without exception, in the operational records of the security agencies.

The social group “the praying ones,” which emerged in the republic in the early 1990s, already has a more than twenty-year history. And while initially, entrance into the group stemmed from a distinctive kind of resocialization, eventually children were born into this environment. Unlike their parents, these children were already introduced to the worldviews and values of Islam at the stage of primary socialization. This makes it possible to speak of the sustainability of this social group and its potential tendency to expand.

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ANNA GLYANTS

Fluid Solidarity among Religious Groups in Situations of Conflict in Dagestan: A Case Study of Confrontation around the Figure of the Village Imam

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The article is fieldwork based and is devoted to the study of social cohesion in the context of the coexistence of various Muslim communities in a Dagestani village. The article explores social aspects of religious confrontations arising from the forced dismissal of a village imam accused of belonging to the Wahhabist network. The author analyzes narratives surrounding the imam, the central figure of the conflict, as well as the primary line dividing the respective religious communities and the flexibility of the boundaries between various groups/communities. The article concludes by identifying preconditions for the intensification of religious solidarity and its particular normative, cultural, and political dimensions.

Keywords: Dagestan, informal institutions, Muslim communities, religious confrontations, religious solidarity, social constructionism.

A SIGNIFICANT portion of political science research concerning the influence of religion on current political processes in the republic of Dagestan focuses on the study of armed jihad — its

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1. The Russian version of the article was published under the authorship of Anna Zaytseva. The present version reflects her current — marital — name, which is Anna Glyants.

sources, forms, and the possibilities for opposing it.² In my opinion, research into how distinct religious tendencies interact *with each other* also holds significant potential for understanding the mutual influence of religious and social processes in post-Soviet Dagestan. A multiplicity of Islamic currents is found in this most Islamized republic in Russia, despite the dominance of the Shafi'i school³ of Sunni Islam. This diversity is not limited to just the most notable groups, the Sufi brotherhoods (*tariqas*),⁴ Salafis⁵ and supporters of armed resistance who appeal to religious motives, but represents a mosaic both in religious and ideological terms as well as in terms of the degree of institutionalization in their relationships with the government.⁶ With this in mind, it is crucial to understand how in the context of coexistence of different Muslim currents, perceived belonging to one of these religious collectivities influences the formation of religious and extrareligious forms of collective solidarity at the local level. What is the degree of religious collectivity cohesion at the local level under conditions of conflict that public discourse terms "religious"? What organizational features of religious and socio-political life can intensify the meaning of *religious* identification?

2. This refers, first and foremost, to the English-language literature: Campana and Ducol 2014; Campana and Ratelle 2014; Hahn 2008; Ratelle 2013; Shterin and Iarlykapov 2011; Souleimanov 2012; Ware, Kisriev, Patzelt, and Roericht 2002; Emelianova 2015; Ware and Kisriev 2010. For Russian-language political studies on the North Caucasus, see Dobaev 2009; Makarov 2004.
3. A small number of Shi'ites live in southern Dagestan (about 4 percent of believers). The Nogais in North Dagestan follow the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence (Bobrovnikov 2000).
4. Three Sufi *tariqas* are found in Dagestan: Naqshbandi, Qadiri, and Shadhili. The Dagestani muftiate is dominated by adherents of Sheikh Said Afandi al-Chirkawi, who was killed August 28, 2012. The clannishness of the Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Dagestan (*Dukhovnoe upravlenie musul'man Dagestana*, hereafter DUMD), as well as its loyalty to the official power structures, is one of the chief accusations made by its religious detractors.
5. Salafis (from the expression *al-salaf al-salih*, pious ancestors) are followers of Sunni Islam. They believe that a return to the lifestyle practiced by the early Muslim community is required, that one should follow the sacred texts and "purify Islam" from many religious rites they consider heretical innovations. Salafism is not a monolithic movement, and this extends to their views on the legitimacy of armed jihad. In recent years the term *Salafism* has received some notoriety, but the tendency has been to identify it with Wahhabism in spite of essential doctrinal differences and disagreement with this on the part of Salafis themselves.
6. In addition to the different schools and tendencies within the Sufi brotherhoods and Salafist groups, there are other currents present in Dagestan (Hizb ut-Tahrir, Fethullah Gülen's *Nurcular* movement, etc.). For details, see Ware and Kisriev 2010; Bobrovnikov 2007; Kisriev 2004; Makarov 2004; Iarlykapov 2012.

The multiethnic lowland settlement of Stalskoe was chosen as a relevant case study. Dissent over the local imam Omaraskhab Alibekov was accompanied by social tension in the public space of the village. The demand for Alibekov's resignation as imam of the central mosque and the reaction of the village residents led to a number of incidents involving collective mobilization within the village and the framing of this conflict as a "religious schism" in the republic and federal press.⁷ It was noted that Sufis live in Stalskoe, but adherents of other Islamic tendencies live there as well, and are identified as either "Salafists" or "Wahhabists," depending on the source.⁸ After the high-profile murder of Imam Alibekov on May 16, 2014,⁹ and other murders in the area in 2014,¹⁰ the situation in Stalskoe was described as resulting from exceptional religious polarization.¹¹

7. The attempt was made in Stalskoe in 2007 to force the resignation of Omaraskhab Alibekov, who had held the post of central mosque imam for approximately seven years (author's field notes, henceforth FN), following claims that he was a "Wahhabist." According to some reports, "the basis for this appeal was the actions of DUMD representatives who wanted to replace the current imam Omaraskhab Alibekov with his protégé" (A. Magomedov 2008). In May 2008 Alibekov's opponents sent a written appeal to the government of the republic and the district as well as to the muftiate of Dagestan with a demand to "punish Alibekov." The imam's supporters responded with an open letter in support of Alibekov to the government representatives — the president of the republic, Dagestan's minister of internal affairs, and the head of the district's education department. This did not resolve tension within the community. In August 2013 at Eid al-Fitr (called *Uraza Bayram* locally, this is the Islamic holiday marking the end of the obligatory fast or *uraza* during the month of Ramadan) a large-scale fight occurred at the central mosque that required intervention by local law enforcement. A group of armed people attempted to assault Imam Alibekov in the mosque itself, but parishioners succeeded in preventing this.
8. "Wahhabis" (or "Wahhabists") as a term is usually used in the republic to refer to adherents of very different religious schools of Islam who declare themselves distinct from Sufism and do not acknowledge hierarchical submission to the DUMD. This corresponds neither to the meaning of this term in religious studies nor how believers self-designate. The term is often used in public discourse with a negative connotation to mark those who engage in religiously motivated violent acts.
9. On May 15, 2014, the imam left by car for Kiziliurt. The burned-out car with Alibekov's body was found in Buinaksky District twenty-four hours after last contact with him.
10. Several violent deaths occurred in Stalskoe in 2014. Some received special attention. Less than a month after Imam Alibekov's murder, on April 26, 2014, Gadzhi Gasanguseinov, the former chair of the Stalskoe agricultural cooperative (SPK "Ulubiia Buinakskogo") was killed. Another Stalskoe resident, the village deputy Azizov, was killed in July 2014. In addition, in January 2014 the village was sealed off by law enforcement authorities in order to conduct "special measures" in the search for members of illegal armed groups.
11. Press mention of "the Wahhabist mosque" in Stalskoe first appeared after the murder of the former collective agricultural coop chair Gadzhi Gasanguseinov. The press gave various interpretations of the religious position of the imam and his supporters. However, after May 2014 mention of a connection between Alibekov and the militant Caucasian Emirate leader Aliaskhab Kebekov became more frequent.

Thus, Stalskoe allows an analysis of the degree of solidarity in collectivities *designated* as religiously opposed groups (Alibekov's supporters and opponents). This can be done by deconstructing concepts based on *groupism*, "the tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflict, and fundamental units of social analysis" (Brubaker 2004, 164).

To be clear, I will not try to explicate the reasons for and mechanisms of the conflict's escalation leading to Imam Alibekov's death, or to untangle the conflicting views on the imam's religious position. In studying the interplay of societal and religious processes, I will be focusing on the following: Did the events in Stalskoe, characterized as a religious schism, lead to the crystallization of religious collectivities among the village's residents (Brubaker's so-called "groupism")? Which features of religious and collective life explain the manifestations of religious solidarity in the village? The study of these questions seems promising from the point of view of the sociology of Islam, as well as in examining the dynamic character of the processes of social identification, consolidation, and disintegration.

This article will attempt to clarify these questions through the prism of social constructionism.¹² It identifies narratives from Alibekov's supporters and opponents as well as organizational aspects of religious division. In addition, after noting the flexibility of religious-group boundaries, it analyzes the structural and situational preconditions (in the normative-religious and social-political dimensions) that facilitate the active and diverse manifestations of religious solidarity in the public space.

Empirical Framework: Situational Analysis of a Lowland Dagestani Village

The need to account for the causes and development of the conflict, as well as for the peculiarities of social order¹³ in this case, justifies

On July 3, 2015, a counterterror operation in Kiziliurtovsky District killed two militants, allegedly members of illegal armed groups. According to the national anti-terror committee, they were implicated in the murders of Osmarashkh Alibekov and of a madrassa teacher from the neighboring village of Nechaevka in 2014.

12. The goal of this approach is to clarify the collective ideas and processes that influence the formation of collective beliefs. Among its basic postulates is the understanding of knowledge as a social construct, the affirmation of the key role of interaction between individuals in the formation of their perception of social reality, and also stressing variability as one of the meaningful traits of social reality. See Berger and Luckmann 1966; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Hay 2016.
13. The diversity seen in the social and political legacy of Dagestan is explained not only by the ethnic variety of this most multiethnic of Russia's regions, but also by a series of

empirical analysis at the micro-level. Moreover, due to a structural feature of Islam (the absence of a clear hierarchy for Muslim clergy and of an institutionally fixed structure for membership in a community of believers) territorial belonging is often a structuring element for organizing a religious community's life in Dagestan. The study of social aspects of religious life in the context of an isolated village allows examination of how Muslims interact within a single religious collectivity, the village *jama'at*.¹⁴ A similar analysis in an urban setting would be much more problematic.¹⁵

To assist in understanding the characteristics of this particular example I will include a brief description of the village of Stalskoe and indicate the empirical basis underpinning the subsequent analytical sections of the article.

Short Description of Stalskoe and Investigative Methodology

The settlement of Stalskoe is in the Kiziliurtovsky District, forty-five kilometers from Makhachkala. It is a lowland village, founded by immigrants from different districts in the republic. The first settled area here, called Samurkent, formed in the 1920s after construction of the October Revolution Canal. In 1937 it was renamed Stalskii. The village population was composed of several waves of immigrants. The first to arrive were Lezgins and Kumyks, as well as some Germans.¹⁶ In 1957 Avars from Chechnya's Andalalsky District arrived, who were originally from Ratlub in Shamil'sky District. Avars from the Kvarel'sky District of Georgia (originally from the village of Hunzib, Tsuntinsky District) arrived in two waves — in 1968 and in the early 1990s. People from other parts of the republic are also found in Stalskoe — from the villages of Gimry, Irganai, Arakani (Tsuntinsky District), but also from Keleb in Shamil'sky District, who form their own whole microdistrict

other features rooted in the distinct historical trajectories of dozens of independent communities that have existed in Dagestan since the late Middle Ages, each with different government and political structures ("free communities," khanates, feudal structures). It is also explained by specialization in various types of economic activity, given the wide range of geographic and climatic conditions (Karpov and Kapustina 2011).

14. In this case *jama'at* is taken to mean the collectivity of believers in the village. This concept has many interpretations and often signifies the collectivity of believers attending a single mosque.
15. The methods employed in the sociology of religion, studying religious life in terms of the sociology of organizations, are not relevant for the study of institutionally "unorganized" Muslim communities. See Jeldtoft and Nielsen 2011; Jeldtoft 2011; Kühle 2011.
16. In 1941 all inhabitants of German origin were exiled from Dagestan.

in Stalskoe. The village's population has increased over the last decades and today forms a rather lively mosaic. As reported by the informants, the largest groups among the local inhabitants are from the population centers Ratlub and Keleb, or are Kumyks. Informants often repeated that "we're all from someplace else" and underscored Stalskoe's multiethnic composition. "They call our village Dagestan in miniature."¹⁷

By Dagestani standards Stalskoe is a large village, composed of several *auls*.¹⁸ Many live in Stalskoe but work elsewhere. Men travel for work to Makhachkala or Kiziliurt, taking construction jobs, or working as truck drivers (throughout Russia). Women raise fruit (strawberries, cherries) for sale on the federal "Caucasus" highway that the village is situated on. Cooperative gardens were gradually reduced with the distribution of land, and local agriculture now includes livestock, which provides work for a small number of people. There are four schools in the village, two medical clinics and six mosques (one of which is a "central mosque" or *jum'a* mosque, where Friday prayers are held, while the rest are for daily prayers).

The scope of my field data consists of interviews with Stalskoe inhabitants, mass media publications (local and federal news sites, Internet portals focusing on Islam), publically available video recordings of Omarashab Alibekov, interviews with Dagestani journalists and Muslim activists, as well as field observations made during trips to the village. The theoretical sampling was developed within the framework of Grounded Theory.

Semi-structured interviews¹⁹ were conducted to clarify religious differentiation of village residents. In pursuing this goal I analyzed

17. FN. FN are the author's field materials collected during field visits to Stalskoe and Makhachkala in April, May, and September 2015.

18. Estimates of the village's population vary by source. According to the 2010 All-Russian Population Census, it stands at 5,729; according to the village administration's webpage it is 9,785 (<http://selo-stalskoe.ru/nashe-poselenie-istorija-sela-stalskoe.html>). Inhabitants and journalists give figures significantly higher than official sources. (An *aul* is a Caucasian mountain or desert settlement. — Ed.)

19. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with thirteen local residents, either alone or with two informants present. In the case of certain informants several interviews were held. In most instances the author arranged to speak with the informant directly in their place of business. Sometimes information was garnered indirectly. Considerable material of interest was obtained from informal interactions with local residents during visits to the village, while walking around the village and during short stays with local residents (at the end of April and the beginning of May, as well as in September 2015). Conversations with the informants went beyond discussion of topics connected with the murdered imam. This was partially due to the fact that the results described in this

their views regarding a concrete example, that is their perception of the imam's belonging to this or that religious tendency.²⁰ I attempted to learn several things from the informants. How did those who supported the calls for Alibekov's resignation identify him, as opposed to those who considered such calls to be groundless? What did informants base their opinion on when it came to applying such labels? It was important to sound out the opinion of as wide a circle of people as possible, so interviews were conducted with a variety of people in religious and social life. These included members of the clergy, administrative and public-sector employees, and local law enforcement. These data were compared with the evidence from diverse sources such as publications specializing in Islamic topics, the study of religion, or the geographic area in question.

“Fluid” Identification of Religious Belonging: Duality of Narratives and Religious Practices

Was Omaraskhab Alibekov a figure who divided the *jama'at* into two communities? Did the local residents consider him an adherent of “Wahhabism,” as conveyed in some press reports starting in 2014?

At the start of the conflict Omaraskhab Alibekov, originally from the village of Teletl in Shamil'sky District, had been imam in Stalskoe for seven or eight years. Estimates of the number of his supporters and opponents were very inconsistent in both the informants' responses as well as in external sources. The version according to which the group set against him was initially relatively small, thirty to fifty people, is most likely to be true. By 2014 the number of those dissatisfied with him had increased. A portion stopped attending the *jum'a* mosque and on

article form part of a dissertation project concerning social features of the organization of religious life in contemporary Dagestan. Four expert interviews with residents from other villages were conducted in Makhachkala in spring 2015. All interviews were conducted in Russian.

20. One limitation on sampling was the complexity of identifying and obtaining access to informants who not only supported the deceased imam but were in his inner circle. Not only was the period in which information was gathered relatively short, but it was problematic to obtain access less than a year after the widely reported murder. A second methodological limitation was the impossibility of personally conducting observations in the mosques: it was not appropriate for women to visit the mosque during Friday prayers. This circumstance, as well as a lack of knowledge of the local languages on the part of the researcher, dictated field material collection by means of semi-formal interviews. The author hopes to extend her observations and conclusions based upon more comprehensive empirical materials concerning the daily life of the village's believers.

Fridays went to the *jum'a namaz* (Friday prayers)²¹ in nearby villages (Nechaevka and others). Meanwhile, the “more radicalized portion of the Salafists” went to Friday prayers in the neighboring village of Komsomolskoe.²² In fact, the village *jama'at*, that is, the entire body of believers of the individual territorial unit, was organizationally divided. Did this signify the presence of irreconcilably divergent ideological and doctrinal views with correspondingly divergent practices among the village faithful?

To answer these questions I will analyze narratives containing an evaluation of the central figure in the conflict and attempt to ascertain the ideological position of the imam and his supporters.

Duality of Narratives concerning Alibekov

Based on my material, I can fairly confidently state that Omaraskhab Alibekov neither subscribed to a hierarchical submission to the DUMD (Dukhovnoe upravlenie musul'man Dagestana or the Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Dagestan) nor allied himself with the Sufis or the Salafists. It is important to remember the diversity of religious currents among Dagestan's Muslims: not all Sufis submitted to the DUMD, nor was the Salafist element monolithic. To this day the latter are composed of three or four distinct groups which differ, among other things, in how they view the use of violence.²³ Alibekov had his own critical viewpoint on a range of topics but did not present his religious perspective in an antagonistic way.²⁴ This fact surfaces in the duality of the narratives that characterize how the village inhabitants perceived him.

Informants critical of Alibekov claimed he had an incorrect attitude toward the mufti:

[Alibekov] did not rise to his feet at the entry of the mufti, when he came to the village. He said that “in Allah's house you should rise only before the Most High.”

21. Friday *namaz* (*jum'a namaz*) is often called *ruzman* (from the Avar *ruzman* — “Friday”).

22. FN. Some information indicates this occurred while Alibekov was still alive, not just after his death (after a new imam was appointed by the DUMD).

23. FN.

24. It was known that Alibekov openly criticized instances of torture and the overall situation in the republic, however after he received some warnings he stopped publicly raising these issues (FN).

Some reports also expressed certainty that “men from the forest”²⁵ came to see the *dibir*.²⁶ As a rule, they also underscore the dual nature of the information:

People came to see him [Alibekov]. They say he gave them moral instruction regarding law enforcement personnel, that is, to kill them. I asked him about this personally and he told me that this never happened.

If none of the informants actually stated that Alibekov followed false religious teachings, in their opinion, still some were alarmed by the religious practices not of the imam himself but of a group of believers who visited the central mosque:²⁷

From the students you can tell what he [Alibekov] told them. The students preached openly. They call praising the Prophet *bid'ah* [innovation]. It is forbidden to distribute the *ṣadaqa* [charity]. You must not distribute it for the dead. [. . .] So what was he, a bad teacher or a hypocrite?

Why couldn't they remove Omaraskhab? He showed his good side from the very start. Right up to the end. But he said one thing and did another.

It is difficult to say what percentage of the villagers' views is based on actual interactions or observations. The statement that “they [the group of critical believers] don't say this openly, but only among themselves” was quite a common opinion. As the informants themselves acknowledged, their judgments were often based on others' opinions and they found confirmation when, for example, Alibekov was seen standing next to a “Wahhabist” in Kiziliurt. The man who saw this scene began to spread the corresponding judgment about the imam (FN). Many informants questioned how trustworthy such information was: “So somebody said something. One person said it and so another said it. They hear with their ears but don't see with their eyes.” This illustrates how stereotyped views were often spread, namely without being based on direct, real observation, but formed under the influence of collective representations.

25. “From the forest” is an emic expression from FN. This is how members of the armed underground are described.

26. The *dibir* is the central mosque's imam.

27. The emic terms applied to this group of believers depends upon the religious loyalty of the informant: from “Wahhabists” among DUMD supporters to “those from the *jama'at*” (*jama'at'skie*) among Alibekov supporters.

Those informants who did not think Alibekov was a “Wahhabist” typically included atheists, not just believers. Those believers who supported Alibekov quite often did not self-identity with any specific group or tendency. Instead, they stressed that they had learned their Muslim practices from their parents. Both groups emphasized the “staged” nature of the rumors spread about the imam.

Some informants were aware that the imam received his training in Syria but had been sent to Stalskoe by the Spiritual Board: “As a young man [Alibekov] was sent to Syria. They found he straddled two strains of thought. He knows both tendencies.” This two-fold position alarmed those believers who considered submission to the DUMD necessary for religious life.

In general I found no direct confirmation that Alibekov was an adherent of religiously motivated violence. In the words of one female informant, the late imam said that if somebody in his presence called him a “Wahhabist” and demanded that he resign he was willing to comply, “but that nobody had dared take such a sin upon their soul” (FN). It is worth noting that before Alibekov’s arrival, at the beginning of the 2000s, the Stalskoe central mosque’s imam (named Muhammad) was “removed” because of his “Wahhabist views” when the council of elders reached consensus in calling for his resignation.²⁸ However, even those dissatisfied with Alibekov would not allow themselves to speak about the imam in such categorical terms. After Alibekov’s death those informants who had criticized his ideological position spoke of him in positive terms, acknowledging his charisma and popularity among the villagers. As one informant said, “When they killed him [Alibekov], the local men cried.”²⁹

Overall, the narratives concerning Alibekov show not so much the existence of incompatible attitudinal norms as the presence in the village of many “doubters.” In fact, many informants, regardless of their degree of support for Alibekov, stressed that a significant number of the village’s believers had no pronounced personal opinion concerning the course of the conflict. For example, supporters of the DUMD, who considered the criticism of Alibekov to be well founded, described the fight at *Uraza Bayram* (Eid al-Fitr) in August 2013 in the following way:

28. FN. Unfortunately I was not able to obtain sufficiently detailed information about this incident.

29. This comment belonged to one of the representatives of law enforcement who thought that “forest men” paid visits to Alibekov.

Most were just ordinary people. They saw their leaders fighting. They didn't understand, they just followed along because he was in front of them. Now they follow the new imam. A lot are just indifferent, but they forget about their children.

In fact the relationship of the village faithful and the new *dibir* sent to Stalskoe by the DUMD in May 2014 has gone fairly smoothly. There were those, however, who changed their attitude toward Alibekov in a positive way (FN).

Disputed Practices

That Alibekov and his adherents hardly identified themselves as “Wahhabists” can be seen in certain rituals performed by the imam.

Funeral rituals were one reason for the earliest dissent in Stalskoe. These are a known point of division among adherents of Sufi versus Salafist tendencies. Not all inhabitants of the area agreed with Alibekov's criticism of certain traditions. In the words of an informant who numbered himself among Omaraskhab's supporters, one cause of dissatisfaction was Alibekov's negative opinion of women's *dhikr* for the dead as well as visiting the graveyard on Friday.³⁰ Nonetheless, all relatives and those close to the deceased, regardless of their ideological differences over rituals, attended village funerals. Burials at the Stalskoe graveyard were not marked by divisions based on religious tradition, as often happens in villages with clearly pronounced religious confrontation.

In addition, video recordings show Alibekov's participation in practices criticized in Salafist circles. Alibekov is seen in a video recording from 2011 participating in a *mawlid* (a celebration of the Prophet's birthday) in Kaspiysk on February 18, 2011 (Mawlid video 2011, Mawlid video 2013). This practice is condemned in Salafist circles as *bid'ah*, innovation.³¹ Moreover, the outward appearance of those attending the *mawlid* (green skullcaps) seems to indicate that there were numerous other supporters of the Sufi religious leader Said-Afandi al-Chirkawi in the mosque with Alibekov.

30. In the informant's words, the imam stressed that the rite should not be for show. (*Dhikr* is prayer involving the names or attributes of Allah. — Ed.)

31. That *mawlids* are permitted if not connected with the assumed date of the Prophet Muhammed's birth finds no dispute among the different currents of Islamic thought.

Many informants repeatedly stressed that Alibekov had a meek, non-confrontational nature and lacked any principled position on a number of religious questions. In part, it was noted that this was why certain of the “harsher” Salafists criticized him. According to one informant who belonged to Salafist circles and who was well informed concerning events in the village, Stalskoe’s population was not so religious that ideological debate would lead to real polarization (FN).

Overall the “flexible religious boundaries” as described by V. O. Bobrovnikov apply to the situation in Stalskoe: “With the exception of individual intolerant leaders who preach ‘the purification of Islam’ from Wahhabists or from Sufis, most of the *jama’at* changes its religious orientation on an ad hoc basis, now joining one faction, now another” (Bobrovnikov 2012).

Dissatisfaction with Imam Alibekov found expression in the fragmentation of Stalskoe’s religious life and a division of the residents during *jum’a* prayer. This one fact, however, does not allow us to draw the conclusion that the collective identity of the faithful crystallized in a way that clearly led to the formation of two distinct religious groups holding irreconcilable ideological and doctrinal attitudes. A significant portion of the population characteristically had no clear position on the imam, contrary to the external view (“framing”) of the situation as a religious schism.

The Normative-Religious and Situational-Political Premises of Religious Solidarity Manifestations in the Public Sphere

I will now analyze the organizing features of religious and collective life in which the perception of a *dibir*’s religious belonging may trigger processes of religious identification at the village level.

The Question of the Efficacy of Religious Rituals

Above all, the value of the central mosque’s imam is to be found in the religious rites that he participates in. Recall that the imam’s status was repeatedly contested by a particular portion of the *jama’at* through their refusal to participate in the collective festive Friday prayer led by Alibekov. Yet, in contrast to afternoon prayer, Friday (noon) prayers must be performed as a collective, by the entire community, in the area’s “cathedral” (central) mosque. An exception is permitted only when it is overcrowded. The efficacy of the *jum’a* prayers is seen as requiring a quorum of celebrants in the mosque. This might be from

three to forty men, depending on the scholar's legal opinion. These men must have mastered *makhraj* (the ability to properly pronounce the sounds and recite the prayer). In Stalskoe, after the unsuccessful attempt to remove Alibekov, part of the faithful conducted Friday prayers in a new mosque:

The mufti refused to explain the reasons for his actions, and his supporters afterward opened a new mosque in the village. Among other things, they held Friday prayers there, which is considered a significant violation of Islamic law (Administrative District in Dagestan 2008).

For both the faithful who supported Alibekov, as well as for those who advocated his "resignation," the collective performance of the Friday prayers under the leadership of the imam they supported became an important factor in self-identification and affirmation of their religious solidarity in the public space.

In addition to Friday prayer, criticism of the religious affiliation of the imam was directly tied to the perceived efficacy of important collective life-cycle rituals he performed (weddings, burials, etc.).³² Some information indicates it was the mufti of Dagestan himself who characterized all religious acts by Alibekov as unlawful (Magomedov 2008).³³ For those who believed that the imam followed faulty religious laws, the rituals that he performed were of no effect.³⁴ This weakened the integrating and regulatory function of rituals and rites at the level of village society, which, in turn, triggered a need to affirm anew religious identification at the village level.

The Source of the Imam's Legitimacy: The *Jama'at* or the DUMD?

The conflict was also motivated by the presence of diverging interpretations of the question of appointing the imam. At the heart of the competing ideas on this matter in Dagestan lie differing attitudes

32. I note that life-cycle rituals in Dagestan have a sharply pronounced mass character. A wedding or "expressing condolences" for a single family will draw, as a rule, hundreds of people.

33. However, the mufti himself denied that he forbade praying for Alibekov.

34. From the point of view of Islamic scholars, even if there are certain religious differences the proof that a ritual's performance is "unlawful" cannot be established without serious theological analysis. From the layman's point of view differences in religious practices are often perceived in more absolute terms (FN).

concerning the administrative leadership that the DUMD has over other Muslim organizations.

The first view acknowledges that the DUMD legitimately appoints the imam:

The procedure for appointing the imam occurs with the consent of the highest authority, which is the DUMD. Mufti Ahmad-Haji Abdulaev presides over it; he's elected by the ulema and the imams of the Dagestani Republic. Sharia law and generally accepted principles dictate that one must submit to him. The DUMD and the mufti either appoint the imam themselves, or they nominate a candidate and then confirm him later. But if the *jama'at* has a candidate, they have the right to request his confirmation. [. . .] The clergy can also propose their own candidate, but cannot in any case force him on the *jama'at*. Everything is done by consent and it is a joint decision.³⁵

This is not a view universally held by those who perceive the DUMD's decisions as a manifestation of "appointment politics" by the "official" clergy, an attempt to enhance the position of those who follow Sheikh Said al-Chirkawi (see A. Magomedov 2008; M. Magomedov 2008). Thus, at the start of the conflict in Stalskoe a rather large portion of the villagers called for Alibekov's stay:

The local population, dissatisfied that the imam of the village mosque could be replaced without their concurrence, registered their protest. A petition was addressed to the republic's authorities with approximately 700 signatures in support of Alibekov. A certain person influential in the Dagestani Republic (head of one of the district administrations) even spoke with Mufti Abdulaev (M. Magomedov 2008).

The importance of the village residents' collective decision as the chief factor conferring legitimacy on a cleric in the post of *dibir* stands out:

Indignant parishioners declared that they hired the imam and that he suits them well — and that if he had to be removed from the position they would decide the matter without any outside interference. They asked the mufti to state his case in public (Administrative District in Dagestan 2008).

35. From an interview with the imam of the Makhachkala central *jum'a* mosque Mukhammadrasulom-khadzhi Saaduev (A. Magomedov 2008).

The dominant role the DUMD plays in the religious life of the present-day republic is not supported by the institutionally fixed mechanisms and practices for appointing an imam. The DUMD argued for the expediency of Alibekov's departure in the following way:

Gadzhiev³⁶ also explained that the Dagestani mufti Akhmadkhadzhi Abdullaev personally stated during a conversation that he had never gone on record concerning Alibekov's removal from his post. "I prayed behind him at the time, so how can I say that it was forbidden for others to pray for him? The villagers were divided in two over Alibekov, so it was suggested that he leave his post because he couldn't unify them all" (Administrative District in Dagestan 2008).

It was still worthwhile for the imam to secure the support of the community or the most important of its representatives. One would imagine that the reverse would also be true, that in order to remove the imam from the post it would be necessary to apply pressure on the *jama'at* and/or important players in society. In the 2000s similar disagreements led to conflicts not just in Stalskoe, but also in other locations in Dagestan of different sizes, and with different ethnic compositions and types of social organization (for example, in the city of Derbent, the populated mountain area of Sogratl, the lowland area of Komsomolskoe, and even the conflict in Makhachkala in November 2015).

And so the conflict that broke out in Stalskoe was, among other things, motivated by the presence of different attitudes concerning the role of believers in the formation of the institution of the central mosque imam, as well as by the role of the DUMD as an institution claiming to be the highest religious authority. The conflict's duration was related to the absence of a consensus and an effective mechanism to resolve such a situation.

The Role of the Imam in the Public Life of the Local Society

Finally, disagreements over the role of the *dibir* can become a trigger for collective mobilization when he is included in the various processes involving resource distribution and the maintenance of social status in the village. What were the relevant social, religious and cultural practices?

36. Magomed Gadzhiev was the Kiziliurtovsky District administrative chief in 2007.

Important village affairs are usually discussed on Friday after collective prayer. Any matter could be raised in the presence of the *jama'at*, including who would be the best candidate in elections. As far as the choice of topic for discussion or the Friday sermon (*khutba*) itself, if the imam had been appointed by the DUMD the agenda might partially be set based on its recommendations (FN). Regardless of the religious loyalty of the imam and his position vis-à-vis the DUMD, the imam often directed the *khutba* topic toward a discussion of specific socially meaningful incidents that had occurred in the village (FN). The degree of politicization of the topics, the influence that the imam had on the *jama'at* and his interference in secular matters varied greatly by context, and the factors determining the imam's authority (his age, degree of familiarity with village problems and methods of solving them) (Kapustina 2012; Karpov and Kapustina 2011). When the conflict arose Alibekov had been village imam in Stalskoe for about seven years, however his age (under 40) and origin (not a Stalskoe native) did not garner him great authority. Nonetheless, according to one informant, he was very charismatic and, although he could afford to be critical, was generally noted for his peaceable nature.

Another instance accentuating the imam's importance was his inclusion in the informal institutions that governed the village's social life. In Stalskoe, the imam is invited to formal and informal collective meetings in which the residents participate. For example, each quarter there are three or four meetings of the village council at which most of the *jama'at* members gather. Important announcements are made at the village councils and villager misconduct might be discussed. The village deputies invite the imam to their meetings, as does the council of elders.³⁷ It follows that the central mosque imam plays an important role not only in religion but also in the life of the village as a whole.

How significant is the imam's authority and how is it balanced with other local authorities? In the final analysis the imam's influence on social processes depends on a complicated set of factors — upon the distribution of social roles among local influential players. In the event of religious dissent in the community the imam can decide to abdicate his post in order to avoid escalating the conflict and causing a village

37. About five men from different *tukhums* (family-clan groups) are in the Stalskoe council of elders: "mature men that know everything, who have worked and are active in labor" (FN). While gathering field material (May through September 2015) the council consisted of three men (the other two had recently passed away) and was awaiting local elections to fill its ranks in September 2015.

schism.³⁸ If the people with authority in the village, however, support the imam, he can remain even with continuing dissent.³⁹ This is not so much a question of the imam's ratio of supporters to detractors as of the authority of certain actors and whether they support or oppose him.

In Alibekov's case, the imam still enjoyed the support of the "elders," although according to some accounts, over time their relations became somewhat tense. As noted above, the previous *dibir* Muhammad was "ousted" as a result of his "Wahhabist views" precisely because of the consolidated position of the council of elders.⁴⁰ However, in the following years people listened to the elders less than before, with those who had achieved material success holding most authority. From field notes and the press it is known that certain "situational authorities" (influential people) in Stalskoe were set against the imam. However, according to one of the female informants, in 2013 the elders supported Alibekov and did not trust the repeated rumors. "We know our imam" (FN). Nonetheless, to understand the balance of power, another characteristic of the elders must be pointed out: "They may decide little, but they know a lot" (FN). Overall, the opinion was that those with administrative resources had excessive leverage over complicated situations like the one in Stalskoe. It is apparent that compared to the 1990s the role of the traditional institution of elders had weakened.

It is also important to clarify the features of Stalskoe's social structure as a multiethnic lowland village. Stalskoe has less community solidarity than highland settlements and villages with more homogeneous populations. This explains the reduced authority of informal traditional institutions and/or the existence of a more complicated means of balancing the interests of diverse groups.⁴¹ One informant's comment concerning a neighboring village in

38. FN. According to press accounts, Alibekov offered to abandon his post on his own initiative, if the faithful could find a compromise figure that they could agree on.

39. Informants included among their number some of those who enjoyed respect in the village either due to age and knowledge or because of their economic and/or administrative resources.

40. The situation here pertains mostly to the early 2000s.

41. My hypothesis concerning this situation is this. Traditional institutions more quickly lose their power in lowland immigrant villages because it is more difficult to preserve the elders' influence when the village's composition is much more diverse, with a greater number of *tukhums*. At the same time, they are relatively close to towns, which somewhat augments the tendency toward individualized life strategies and the possibility of forming other, situational, authority types.

Kiziliurtovsky District, Kirovaul, is telling: “They don’t have this kind of mess there. They’re all from Tsumandinsky, from the same district. We have a multiethnic village here.” A competitor in terms of group solidarity might not be a person from another ethnicity as much as a person who comes from a different district. For Stalskoe residents, the place of origin is as important as ethnic origin in how the village is divided.

So the *dibir* acts as a significant contributor to the informal regulation of social processes. This, in turn, increases the merit of appointing a consensus figure to that post. At present many lowland villages have a multi-leveled system of loyalty, and the means of resolving controversial issues through traditional representative organs (the council of elders) is undergoing change.

Below it becomes clear that the public display in Stalskoe of religious solidarity in particular was possible due to specific situations involving conflict.

Situational-Political Context

First, an important source of conflict is the general process of securitizing religious issues.⁴² This refers to the elevation of religious belonging to the rank of a security problem in the context of the long-term struggle on part of Russian authorities against an armed underground, coupled with a recent rallying of its members to the side of the so-called Islamic State (IS). The latter has been acknowledged by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation to be a terrorist organization. In the Kiziliurtovsky District counter-terrorist operations (CTO) have been carried out repeatedly in recent years, and the “Kiziliurtovsky band” is considered one of the most active organizations of this extremist underground (Rybina 2015). Operations to neutralize militants have been repeatedly conducted in and around Stalskoe.

Together with ongoing CTOs in the republic, increased monitoring of those who follow Salafism has been accompanied with numerous human rights violations (Human Rights Watch 2015). Against this backdrop, a subset of the faithful find it especially problematic to have any affiliation with a religious community not declaring loyalty to the DUMD. This is due to the Russian authorities’ practice of “too broad

42. The concept of “securitization” was developed by the Copenhagen School for the field of international security. For more details see Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998.

an approach” when Salafists are suspected of religious extremism. The discourse formed in the public space against religious “members of the opposition” and their actual equivalence with Wahhabists and militants in certain instances simplifies a partition into “us” and “them,” thereby intensifying the religious divide. By contrast, many village residents are distrustful of the official interpretation of events (for example, the official version of Alibekov’s murder by militants who were members of the “Kiziliurtovsky band”). One way or another, the scale, form and length of the struggle with the armed underground sets the tone for societal life and enables a more active manifestation of religious solidarity in the public space.

Secondly, the imam’s authority can serve as capital in the battle for resources that constitute influence. Omaraskhab Alibekov’s critics included influential village residents. It is extremely likely that at first there was just a small group of people actively opposing Alibekov,⁴³ who were supported by influential people at the local level as well as by religious authorities outside of the village who supported the DUMD’s line. This group’s actions produced or deepened already existing religious disputes in the village. A similar view is expressed in an article about Stalskoe published in the social-political weekly *Molodezh’ Dagestana* (Youth of Dagestan) from December 6, 2013:

There are virtually no grounds for interethnic or intrareligious conflicts [in Stalskoe], but from time to time friction is artificially created (by ambition or out of a thirst for power by those who desire some office or another).

Some information indicates that the “active propaganda campaign to remove the imam of the local mosque, O. Alibekov” was staged with the support of people who at one time enjoyed access to the village’s administrative resources (Moscow Helsinki Group 2009). Information published in the republic newspaper *Chernovik* leads to the conclusion that the inability of the *jama’at* and imam to come to an agreement thwarted the political ambitions of some authority figures at the local level (who, in turn, denied such an interpretation) (for details, see Akhmedov 2013). It is important for my analysis to note that a certain portion of the village inhabitants held the conviction not only that Alibekov had influential opponents but that these opponents actively worked to “discredit the local imam”

43. Some sources indicate this group was dominated by people from Ratlub.

(Akhmedov 2013). The informants judged these types of activities to be provocations, serving only to intensify the division between supporters and opponents.

Finally, I must mention land, one of the most important sources of conflict in contemporary Dagestan (Adiev 2010, 153; Kazenin 2012; Kazenin 2015; Starodubrovskaya et al. 2011). The distribution of land parcels has in recent years become an important issue in Stalskoe. "In the last year [2014] they dispensed more than 2000 land parcels because the population increased" (FN). I do not have detailed information on this process, nor on Alibekov's position on the land question or his participation (or lack thereof) in resolving land issues. This topic merits separate investigation and lies beyond the scope of this article. Nonetheless, I think it important to point out this possible nexus of interests leading to conflict. The imam's authority and his membership in one particular religious community might be perceived as yet another, additional social resource for advancing their own interests. Judging by the press publications and the field material I gathered, a solution to the land question in this case, as in many large lowland Dagestani villages, is quite complicated. Among the reasons for this complexity is a lack of congruence in the interests of individual players.⁴⁴

Conclusion

An analysis of the situation in Stalskoe revealed several features in the structuring of religious life when different Muslim currents coexist. Further, it allows an investigation of how these are connected with local conflicts.

The first conclusion paradoxically involves specifying the nature of the religious schism during conflict in the religious sphere (at the microlevel) and against the background of the securitization of religious belonging (at the macrolevel). In examining the village inhabitants' religious narratives concerning the late imam Alibekov, it became clear that conflict does not necessarily lead to a crystallization of religious identity in an antagonistic way. Religious division might involve an institutional character, reflecting in particular one's attitude to the DUMD, but not necessarily be related to any mutually exclusive

44. In this connection, one cannot overlook the July 27, 2014, murder of a Stalskoe land commission deputy who dealt with parcel distribution in the administration. See "Ob ubiistve deputata" 2014.

set of starkly pronounced ideological goals and/or religious practices. The active parties to conflict might form a relatively insignificant portion of the group. Meanwhile, a significantly large stratum of the population may have no obvious, pronounced opinion, meaning that it can adopt attitudes in an ad hoc fashion.

Framing the Stalskoe situation as a religious schism, as a confrontation between “Wahhabists” or “Salafists” versus DUMD supporters, does not reflect the multifaceted nature of how religious division arises. This reflects the importance of the deconstruction of religious markers when choosing categories for social analysis, which permits a more precise determination of the actors in a community’s religious life and a consideration of the sociological features of Islam (i.e., the absence of a “church” structure, flexibility of cultic and ritual practices). Furthermore, this helps to reveal the real correlates of socio-religious attitudes and a more precise identification of the active actors in socio-political processes.

The second conclusion is that acknowledging the situational nature of religious identification and exposing how the religious authorities (in this case, the imam of the central mosque) are integrated into the distribution of symbolic and material resources indicates more than just the possibility of instrumentalizing religion to further the interests of one player or another. *Belonging* (individual or collective) to a particular religious tendency within Islam undergoes instrumentalization in the context of modern Dagestan. This is facilitated by official discourse and practices that perpetuate the dichotomy between “traditional” and “Wahhabist” Islam. Categorization of the religious sphere has social significance. For “religious entrepreneurs” this creates an impetus to invent “religious boundaries” (and to control them) — boundaries that counterpose collective identities based on religion.

Further research will include expanding views on mechanisms of religious socialization at the local level as well as identifying different modalities in which believers are involved in particular types of loyalty (e.g., how social roles are distributed in a village relative to division into *tukhums*, client networks, etc.). Work in these two areas will yield a more precise view of the mechanisms influencing the formation of religious identity. It will further the understanding of the set of informal authorities that determine competing and complementary types of group solidarity at the local level. Lastly, it will foster comprehension of the form and stages of consolidation in Muslim communities.

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GEORGI DERLUGUIAN

Islamism and the New Disintegration of Empires

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In this interview, Georgi Derluguian discusses the reasons for Islamism's popularity in the context of the collapse of two great projects of the West — liberalism and communism. He pays special attention to an organizational feature of Islam that allows this religion to wage successful wars against powerful empires. People who find this ideology attractive are not “new barbarians”; on the contrary, they are modern, socially active people, whose access to social advancement has been blocked. Islamism allows both men and women to realize strategies that give them a chance to succeed in an environment that no longer provides the opportunities their parents enjoyed. At the end of the interview, Derluguian analyzes the perspectives of the so-called Islamic State, which is banned in Russia and elsewhere: he shows how this organization will inevitably be involved in the dynamics of the contemporary world system.

Keywords: ISIS, Islamism, Wahhabism, Islam, World-Systems Analysis, Dmitry Furman, North Caucasus.

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Islamism and the New Disintegration of Empires

R *To what do you attribute the rise of Islamism? Is it really about any of its unique features?*

Georgi Derluguian: Islamism has already existed for about two hundred years. People who claim that it is necessary to return to fundamentalist Islam have existed for a very long time. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab laid the foundation for Wahhabism back in the eighteenth century, and before him were Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyyah. But the question is, how many readers did those thinkers have in their own time? They have become popular recently. They were marginal back then, but they are more in demand these days.

To what do you attribute this new popularity?

To the disintegration of empires. What is more, this has happened once before. After the Wahhabists emerged in the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire quickly suppressed them. One side had firearms and the other did not. The Turks shot the Wahhabists for being sectarians. But when the Ottoman Empire became the “sick man of Europe,” when the Persian Empire was falling apart, when the Great Moguls fell under the power of the British, when there were no Islamic empires left, who seized the initiative? In the nineteenth century, jihads broke out on the periphery of the Islamic world, directed against both local “feudal” rulers and European colonialism, such as Usman dan Fodio’s uprising in northern Nigeria, Samori Ture in Guinea and Senegal, Emir Abdelkader in Algeria, the Sufi movements in Afghanistan, the Senussi in Libya, the Mahdists in Sudan, and, of course, the Wahhabists in Arabia. In this context, the significance of the whole saga of Imam Shamil in the northern Caucasus becomes clearer.

And what parallels would you draw with the events of today?

A new era of imperial disintegration. By the mid-1990s, the twentieth century had proven to be truly exhausted. What we are witnessing in the Middle East right now is an exhaustion of the hegemony of not one, but two great Western projects: communism, which was undoubtedly

a Western project, and liberalism, which is also a Western project. Each of these projects offered an answer to the question of how to create a strong state capable of opposing anyone in the world. What is modernization, after all? In his essential biography of Stalin, Stephen Kotkin puts it bluntly: modernization is a geopolitical imperative.¹ It is not the common humanist norms and principles of some community of modernity. Modernization in the period of the Great Divergence between East and West had a brutally narrow meaning: either you have a steel industry and engineers who can run it, or you're going to have some uninvited guests on your lands who do. If you don't have modern military industry and engineering schools, you're barbarians, a backward country. Justice and progress are on the side of those who have machine guns, telegraphs, and locomotives. The Leninist, Bolshevik interpretation of Marxism offered a convincing answer to the question of how to create a strong state, which is why it became so popular in the twentieth century. Leninism enabled China to modernize while retaining its national pride, and promised to do the same for India, Vietnam, Cuba, Yemen, and Ethiopia.

In other words, a new state of clarity was reached in the twentieth century: are you with the communists or the capitalists? In that state of clarity, the issue of fundamentalism never even arose. Go back and watch the Soviet comedies from the '70s and '80s, like *Kidnapping, Caucasian Style* (*Kavkazskaia plennitsa*) or *A Necklace for My Beloved* (*Ozherel'e dlia moei liubimoi*) about Dagestan, where religion simply doesn't come up; that issue was settled long ago. There are a few vestiges of the past (such as the expression, "We will judge him by the law of the mountains!"), but they had already become comical. Basically, the same thing happened in the Middle East. In the twentieth century, the Islamists seemed politically marginal compared to the Kemalists, Nasserists, Ba'athists, and other "progressive colonels" who were adopting and transplanting successful Western models. By the end of the twentieth century, however, the Ba'athists, Nasserists, populists, socialists — all those modernizers of the East — had suffered political and moral defeat and economic bankruptcy. Just like the USSR itself.

And here, an obvious question arose: what could they do? What is left? They were left with what had preceded them. As the anthropologist Sergey Alexandrovich Arutiunov wisely observed, "When the electricity

1. See Stephen Kotkin, 2014, *Stalin*, vol. 1, *Paradoxes of Power, 1878–1928* (New York: Penguin Books).

in your house goes out, all that remains is to go down to the basement and get out your grandfather's oil lamp."

But this is not just the breakdown of two modernizing projects, it is also the widespread destruction of the states that emerged in the course of that process of modernization. Iraq, Syria, and Libya are disappearing before our very eyes, and there is a sense that this is only the beginning.

Yes, to some extent, this is a worldwide trend toward discrediting and destroying the modern bureaucratic state. Nobody was ever much enamored of bureaucracy, but how can we do without it? The consequences of "liberation" from the dictatorship of accelerated development have been quite terrible. Nineteenth-century imperialism sought to create modern states everywhere, which meant that there would be police forces and missionary schools and hospitals. All of that is falling apart. It was the imperialists who created the current borders of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan; they are the fruits of the Franco-British division of the Middle East after the First World War.

In some sense, those same imperialists have destroyed everything today —

The imperialists proved incapable of supporting those states. It was too expensive, because the rapidly growing population of those colonies developed excessively modern aspirations to civil rights, modern professions, incomes, and a political identity as sovereign nations. The paradox lies in the fact that it was necessary to withdraw from the former colonies not because they rejected capitalism and its associated institutions, but rather because the "colored" peoples and their leaders accepted the goals of modernization and began to want the same. After 1945, the Algerians, Indians, and Senegalese could either be given the same voting rights, wages and pensions as the French and British people themselves, or Algeria, Pakistan and Senegal could be given sovereignty and independence, leaving the local governments of the newly liberated countries to worry about all of that, while their citizens would now come to France and Great Britain with their national passports to earn money. Decolonization was a successful maneuver, on the whole, but it came at a great cost for the West, both in the military realm (one word: Vietnam) and

in the realm of retaining effective control over world geopolitics (consider how much it cost, financially and diplomatically, to stop Saddam Hussein when he dreamed of becoming the Arab Bismarck). States in the third world that were too strong and too sure of themselves were a challenge to the West, but countries that were too weak and collapsing created floods of drugs and migrants. Slums are hardly suitable for capitalist exploitation. After 2000, American neoconservatives launched a very ambitious effort to overcome the dilemmas of global disorder; they set out to remake the states that were simultaneously the most problematic and the most promising (beginning with Iraq and Afghanistan, to be followed by Iran and Pakistan) while they were anesthetized by the drug of military occupation. The post-1945 reconstruction of Japan, Italy, and Germany was meant to serve as a model, but this time, it didn't work. The patient died on the operating table.

And that's where Islamism comes in, as a reaction to that demodernization? As the oil lamp ready to be taken out of the basement?

Let's consider the other possible reactions people could have in response to the breakdown of their countries' modernization. One reaction might be, "Well, to hell with the whole country! We have some money, we'll use that money to create elite private schools, private hospitals, gated communities with private security, and our own private swimming pools, since the government can't provide us with any of that. We'll create our own Rublyovka.² In 'Rublyovka,' we'll create communism, but only for the rich." We can see this trend toward self-isolation by the elite not only in Russia, but also in many, or rather, in the overwhelming majority of countries. The second possible reaction to the experience of losing hope that one's country will grow is quite familiar for contemporary Russians: "It's time to hit the road. Everything's falling apart around here. We can at least give our children an education in a normal country; we'll go to Sweden or something." But these two reactions are not remotely possible for everyone. For the rest of the people, all that remains is the third option: "The Western way isn't for us," and, as people always say in such situations, "It's soulless. We'll create our own way, bring it back from oblivion." So they attempt to create their own way, something more spiritual, usually based on what they have ready to hand.

2. A prestigious residential area in Moscow's western suburbs.

Islam and the Matrix of a Partisan Camp

So far, we have been discussing purely structural issues: there was a modernizing project, but it collapsed, and it became necessary to resort to things that had been down in the basement for many long years. Is there something about this that is specific to Islam per se? Or would everything be exactly the same if it were not Islam, but some other religion, such as some kind of local paganism, for example?

Grandfather's oil lamp could be any tool, depending on one's ancestors, so long as it works. At the same time, each of the world religions has its own unique history and structure. Unfortunately, few people today are studying them in a systematic way. The problem with Islamic Studies, and with Religious Studies as such, if I may permit myself to engage in a little criticism, is that they are still a continuation of theology. Educated people study sacred texts. In the past, they approached them as sacred texts, now they approach them as traditional texts. The experts put most of their effort into producing masterful interpretations of texts that garner prestige, and, likely, professional satisfaction. Less effort goes into understanding the organizational foundations of those texts. Why did those texts become sacred? They became sacred because enough people acknowledged them as sacred. The works of Soviet-Russian scholar Dmitrii Efimovich Furman play a huge role here. In the post-Soviet intellectual world, he is primarily remembered for his serious journalistic writings during perestroika, but now two volumes of Furman's articles on religious studies and the political transformations of the former Soviet countries are finally being translated into English. The famous British historian Perry Anderson, who knows Russian, among many other languages, helped with publication. He read all of Furman's work in sequence and was stunned to discover a researcher doing work of that scope. In the summer of 2015, the *London Review of Books* published two extensive articles by Perry Anderson that offered an overview of Furman's main ideas. When Furman was alive, we jokingly said that he was our very own Weber, but then it turned out he really was in the same league.

The thing is, after Max Weber, conducting a comparative analysis of religions in the West became somewhat embarrassing and dangerous

for one's reputation — you would instantly be accused of being biased, politically incorrect, or perhaps of insufficient scientific rigor, or, more likely in this age of postmodernist misgivings, of using a “totalizing metanarrative.” There are very few people pursuing comparative religious studies, that is, making systematic comparisons between Islam and Buddhism, or Christianity and Islam. We have been lucky in Russia; it was precisely our relative backwardness that made Dmitrii Furman possible. He was not constrained by convention, by pressure from his professional community, or by publication ratings. Ultimately, he did not read Max Weber until late in his career, which required him to get there himself, but he rose to the occasion. Furman was truly a homegrown Soviet genius, like Bakhtin before him.

What does Dmitrii Furman's work have to offer for the purposes of our conversation?

Furman insisted that whenever any religion arises, it inevitably resolves a specific set of organizational problems. Christianity, let's say — that's a religion with a unique and central organizational problem in that its founder did not leave behind any sacred texts. Jesus Christ did not write anything, and he did not leave behind any direct record, unlike the Buddha and Muhammad. There are only stories and accounts about him from alleged eyewitnesses, but Jesus himself was a person who wrote absolutely nothing and was possibly even illiterate. An enormous problem arises: how can the legacy of this person be codified? When it finally was codified (mainly in the Middle Ages), the problem of ossification soon arose, along with that of the resultant emotional breakdown of that hierarchical ecclesiastical codification. That is how Protestantism emerged. There was an imperative to reverse that codification: “After all, this isn't what the original form of Christianity was like!” The first fundamentalist reaction was, of course, the Protestants.

How does the organizational aspect of Islam work? Which organizational problems does it solve?

Islam precisely lays out the matrix of a guerrilla camp. It is the religion of a protracted military campaign. Prayer, and collective prayer at that, five times a day, is a way of maintaining discipline in the camp, from reveille to lights out. Consuming wine is forbidden. Drinking

before prayer is forbidden, and since there are five prayers every day, that essentially means that alcohol is not allowed. Violence and theft within the camp is also forbidden. By the way, that is probably also the origin of the requirements of modesty, like hijabs for women. Women inside a military camp must not dress extravagantly; they must not provoke jealousy and competition among the warriors. But beyond the bounds of the camp, it's another matter entirely. There is the *Dar al-Islam* (the House of Islam) and the *Dar al-Harb* (the House of War). The warzone has completely different laws. You can take slaves, take concubines, and pillage for three days — but once you're back inside, sorry, that's it. Pay your taxes, give alms to the poor, become civilized again right away, rein in your warlike nature. Think about it, that really is an ingenious adaptation. How better to direct the aggressive energy of the “homeless warriors” (as they were called in the nineteenth century) outward, but prohibit it within the camp.

And boy, did it work! Note that Islam is the only world religion that formed beyond the bounds of the ancient empires. Buddhism, Christianity and Judaism formed within empires, hence “render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and render unto God what is God's.” That distinction does not exist in Islam because it originated in the context of the ancient states of Arabia collapsing around the seventh century CE. Whether due to a climatological disaster or in connection with the general collapse of the Roman Empire, the regulatory and normative organizations of Arabia collapsed. As a result, the religion that formed specifically as a religion for a tribal community was preserved. Furthermore, it conquered empires. The empires were not able to defeat it; it defeated the empires. The Byzantine and Sasanian Empires wore each other out through more than a century of war, and as soon as Islamic forces struck at them, they began to fall apart, first the Sasanians and then the Byzantines. That particular episode is something of a miracle, which technological determinists cannot explain; for them, such unexpected success must involve some kind of new weapon. Camel cavalry isn't exactly a new, invincible weapon. So it was not a new weapon playing the decisive role, but rather the old problems that Perry Anderson described in his explanation of the fall of the Roman Empire.³ Why is an empire successful? It draws all its subjects into the empire, into its cosmopolitan culture, through

3. Perry Anderson, 1974, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (London: New Left Books). The original article cited the 2007 Russian translation of this Perry Anderson classic.

military force, commercial advantages, or participation in a much larger world. The empire “civilizes” the elites of its periphery in its own way; they adopt its customs and thereby become imperial. It is at that point, precisely due to this success, that major problems begin to emerge; after all, the successful elites have more children. Demographics begin to play a role. What will happen in three generations, once their children’s children start having children and all of those children lay claim to their grandparents’ status and income as something they’ve expected all their lives? The children’s children will do what their grandparents did. They will be the elite; they will not work, but they will collect taxes. But the peasant can no longer support that many generals. Perry Anderson called this becoming “top-heavy” in the context of the late Roman Empire. The demographic overload of elites also apparently explains why the Sasanian state collapsed so quickly, and why the Byzantine provinces fell to the Muslim onslaught so quickly.

In time, the same problem arose for the Muslims as well. After three hundred or four hundred years had gone by, there were too many descendants of the original warriors. How many could the peasantry feed, considering the ecological limitations on the land’s fertility? The Islamic Caliphate itself collapsed in the face of the Turkic and Mongol onslaughts. New waves of steppe people who were tougher and less spoiled kept seizing the centers of imperial civilization.

The Search for New Role Models

Earlier on, we were mostly talking about global shifts and organizational forms, but in the final analysis, we’re talking about actual people making a choice in favor of an ideology that does not appear especially attractive, from an outside perspective. What do young people see in Islamism?

It’s very simple. The Soviet Union provided a persuasive answer to the question of how a man should be a man and how a woman should be a woman — the reproduction of traditional roles in a new and prestigious modern context. Men, even if they were not supervisors, would prefer jobs dealing with something manly, something made of hard metal, be it truck drivers, police, or soldiers, while women would

be part of the modern Soviet home, with a kitchen, hot water, and a refrigerator. Go away to the city to become a doctor or an engineer and become an important leader in your village, or even not return. Marry a Russian or Ukrainian girl from far away instead of a local. That worked great in the 1950s and 1960s, went on working in the 1970s, but began to derail in the 1980s and fall apart in the 1990s. What was there to do?

In 1994, when enthusiastically naïve journalists wrote that the Dudayev movement in Chechnya was Islamic, everyone who knew anything about Dudayev laughed at them. Just consider his proud confession from that time: “As a Muslim, I secretly prayed three times a day all through my years of Soviet military service.” But by 1995, the internationalist insurgent al-Khattab had appeared in Chechnya. Nonetheless, even in 1997, I remember Shamil Basayev in a mink hat and a white scarf saying that he was planning to become a computer programmer in peacetime. In 1998, he walked away from that plan; the new Shamil did not manage to become a computer programmer, nor did he manage to be a convincing government minister. He probably experienced his failures as humiliations. Then what else did he have left?

In a deeper sense, that is the real tragedy of the era. Here’s a story from the 1990s, when things were falling apart and people had absolutely no money. I took one of my friends from the Caucasus to a restaurant, and I said, “So, tell me, how are things?” He replied, “How do you think?! My son comes home in this little white hat with a Koran and tells his mother, ‘I’m going to fast on Eid al-Fitr.’ My son is fifteen years old. I take him to his room and say, ‘Listen, son, let’s sit down and talk about this. What’s the deal? You couldn’t have gotten that from our family. That isn’t our tradition. You couldn’t have gotten it from me. I’m a scientist, a graduate of Leningrad University. Your grandfather was the chairman of a collective farm. In the 1950s, he even blew up the mosque in a mountain village.’ He answers me, ‘Don’t you get it, dad? Grandpa blew up the mosque and became the chairman of a collective farm. You went to Leningrad and came back as a well-known scientist. But when I finish school, where will I go and what will I become? The way people make money these days is dealing drugs. But what if I want something pure in my life? What can I do here in our town? What’s left?’” By the way, I met that same friend from the Caucasus a few years ago and asked how his son was doing. His answer made me stop and think: “He’s okay. He got married and has his own apartment. He’s working as a counterterrorism investigator.”

So, jihad is about social mobility?

It isn't just about social mobility. It allows you to feel like you are part of something extremely important, to feel that you mean something in this world.

Just who are these people? How would you characterize them?

Islamists are very well adapted to the modern era. They are perhaps the most modern subset of society, people who would have been activists in any environment. They are the activists of any society. If a 1930s-style Soviet society still existed in the North Caucasus, they would have been young activists, including the women. These are the activists who set themselves up against the authority of their elders. As an insightful Kabardian acquaintance once told me in the context of comparing tradition and fundamentalism: "Do you know what tradition is? Tradition is when a guy from the North Caucasus, around forty years old, decides — and it is a decision, make no mistake — to become an old man. He gets himself a cane and a sheepskin hat, grows a beard, stoops a little when he walks, starts going to the mosque, drinking tea, and playing backgammon with old men, talking like an old man. The man becomes an elder. Then all of a sudden, in the 1990s, he goes to the mosque to find that there are some really young guys there who have taken some courses or other and now they're saying that he knows nothing about Islam. The eggs are lecturing the chickens, as we say. These upstarts think they can correct the old men!"

A generational conflict begins, accompanied by the very powerful attraction to new, charismatic preachers, which the old men can do nothing to counter, since they are not engaged in preaching, but rely instead on the authority of old men, on the authority of religion as part of the way things have always been. For old men, religion is just tradition, just a way of doing things the way you always have.

So it turns out they are people who cannot find their place in this new reality? And who, for one reason or another, are not prepared to walk the path their parents did?

They are people to whom the attractive modern roles are closed. They are actually quite often people who are central to their communities. It's

awful. If you conduct a survey in Nalchik, for example, of people who have known dead terrorists since they were children, you'll hear — and not in a situation where people are likely to lie, either — something like, "You know, I don't understand how something like this could have happened, but it's such a pity . . . You see, he was a really nice guy. He helped my grandmother cross the street. He was an okay student in school. He was so polite." The dead men were not hooligans or marginal people.

I can offer another observation. I once asked an Irish sociologist, "Could you please tell me who makes up the Irish Republican Army? What kind of stuff are those people made from?" Surely Irish terrorists would be a completely different from their Islamic counterparts. "You know," my Irish colleague said, "there is a specific type that becomes an IRA fighter. They're guys who would have made excellent constables under different circumstances." But they couldn't become constables, so they became terrorists. In other words, a guy who was capable of being and would want to be a pillar of order in his community. A sort of Uncle Styopa⁴ character who couldn't find a job with the police.

So these are not new barbarians who hate everything modern, as one often hears?

We have to dispense with that entire discourse about barbarism. Islamists are all too happy to use European technology. There is an excellent book by Olivier Roy, where he writes that when Muslims in France open up a fast food place, they don't sell falafel; it's the same old hamburger and cola, it's just halal.⁵ They are already fully Western people. This is their way of entering into capitalism. It is their way of "taming" modernization — modernization on their own terms, not on anybody else's terms.

It's more or less clear what Islamism gives men, but what makes those role models attractive for women? Why do they consciously impose these limitations on themselves, when one would think they would naturally want to throw them off as decisively as possible?

4. A character in children's verses by Sergei Mikhailov; Uncle Styopa is a helpful and kind policeman.
5. Olivier Roy, 2004, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press).

I think that Islam gives women just as much as it gives men, if not more. It is difficult for us to find women researchers who would be able to understand this from an inside perspective, but they do exist. For example, there is Iwona Kaliszewska, a Polish anthropologist who conducted some striking participant research in Dagestan and Chechnya. Her Polish book “Matryoshka in a Hijab” recently appeared in English.⁶ What did Iwona do? She travelled from Poland to Dagestan on a Russian train; moreover, she made most of the journey in regular coach seats. And on one occasion, Mrs. Iwona also took her ten-month-old daughter with her. When the OMON [a special Russian police force active in the North Caucasus] officers stopped her at a checkpoint, they were obviously baffled. This blonde lady clearly wasn’t a local, though she spoke Russian almost fluently, yet she wasn’t Russian (at one point they looked at her passport and asked “what region of Russia is ‘Poland’ in?”) — she seemed like a European, but not a Westerner. Then suddenly her child started crying; it was time to feed her and change her diaper. That’s when female solidarity and Caucasus hospitality kicked in. Dagestani women who didn’t even know her started shaming the police officers (“she has to change the baby!”) and brought Iwona home with them. A Polish woman anthropologist achieved a level of embeddedness in an environment that I, for example, as a man, could never have achieved. As the mother of a child, Iwona was brought into a Muslim household on the women’s side, through the kitchen.

Kaliszewska astutely gave her book of her travel notes a bold title, “Matryoshka in a Hijab.” By the way, the documentary *Silaczka*, which was shown at the Cannes Film Festival, was filmed using her screenplay.⁷ Once the veil of exoticization falls away, we can see readily recognizable collisions in the realm of family and gender. The old village women are matryoshkas, but in hijabs.

Traditional society is different everywhere. For example, the Arab kinship system assumes, say, that a young man can marry his uncle’s daughter. Traditionally, this is a world of armed clans, a world of strict, proud customs and blood vengeance, an extremely masculine world. But it isn’t such a dreadful thing for an Arab girl to end up married within a large Bedouin family, since she is leaving her own family

6. See Iwona Kaliszewska and Maciej Falkowski, 2016, *Veiled and Unveiled in Chechnya and Dagestan* (London: Hurst).

7. *Silaczka*, <http://sub.festival-cannes.fr/SfcCatalogue/MovieDetail/895c1b6b-b1cc-4098-bea4-9f7376d205a>.

for the family of her own uncle, people she already knows. That is, nobody will treat her like a slave girl. But in the old days, a Russian peasant girl faced a difficult ordeal; she would often be given away to an unfamiliar family in another village, where her husband's father was the master of everything, which meant that he was her master as well. She was expected to become the servant of her mother-in-law, at least until she gave birth to a son. Her one hope was to raise that son so that he would marry and her daughter-in-law would become her servant in the next generation. It is essentially the female equivalent of *dedovshchina* [the practice of older servicemen and officers hazing new recruits in the Russian army]. Note that such things do not happen in a traditional Arab family.

Now imagine what is happening to families in the Caucasus; for example, the kinds of collisions happening today due to polygamy, which is, after all, an innovation barely regulated by tradition. Until quite recently, it would not have been economically feasible for the average Chechen man to marry four women. And suddenly, these "New Russians" (well, New Avars and New Kabardians) began to appear in their cool foreign cars. They began to marry multiple young women. How should a woman from the Caucasus conduct herself in such times? At this point in time — and there is nothing peculiar about this — many women choose to put on a hijab and say, "I'm behaving morally, unlike you!" The hijab must often be viewed as a highly effective social protest and a form of moral pressure. Or take, for example, the phenomenon of large families. In many ways, this also constitutes a social, gender-based strategy, both on the part of entire families and on the part of individual women. It is a strategy for reaching the highest social position that is accessible to women in that kind of society. For example, to become the mother of a *shahid*, a son who sacrificed himself for the sake of his society, is to earn a great deal of admiration in the Palestinian community. We need systematic sociological and ethnographic research on such strategies.

Does Islamism Have a Future?

How realistic is the alternative that the Islamists propose? What should we expect — the emergence of another alternative project, like communism in the twentieth century?

It is merely the illusion of an alternative, which persists solely because its wings were not clipped in season, with the exception of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which, paradoxically, may be the most secularized country in the East today. There is much evidence that suggests that what is going on in Iran now is the same thing that happened to Catholicism in Spain during the decades-long Franco dictatorship. Iran has been an Islamic Republic for thirty years now, so it brings to mind the Soviet Union of the Brezhnev era. But many people and social groups in the Arab countries retain their illusions and hopes for a righteous government, which will bring back the prosperity of yesteryear and the golden age of the Baghdad Caliphate.

Can you plot a trajectory for how to get rid of that illusion? Specifically, in regards to ISIL.

We Russians are no romantics; we know what will happen next. We know, because we've experienced life under communism. After all, the first transnational movement of the modern era was the Second International, men and women from different countries brought together by a common socialist ideology. We know that if an antisystemic state were to appear, a corresponding Central Committee would appear, with internal factional contradictions (*mestnichestvo* [localism], *kumovstvo* [cronyism], etc. Soviet language had all kinds of words for this sort of phenomena!) along with a mounting bureaucracy (and once again, we recall our own homegrown lexicon: *volokita* [red tape], *ochkovtiratel'stvo* [window-dressing], *tsitatnichestvo* [quotemanship]). That is the best-case scenario, however, there are scenarios that are much worse . . . For some reason, people these days have forgotten that North Korea, China, and Albania are disastrous cases of Stalinism, failed Stalinism. In China, for example, they starved 45 million of their peasants to death, and they didn't even manage to industrialize. They're only industrializing now.

So the best thing that awaits the Islamists is their own version of the Soviet Union's perestroika. In the worst-case scenario, however, their antisystemic projects may lead to something like Kampuchea under Pol Pot. What can they realistically do? How will the neo-Caliphate look if they manage to hold it and stabilize it? Even an antisystemic state will need to have a foreign policy; since it cannot conquer the entire world, a state of "hostile encirclement" will set in. It will have to create its own armed forces, and they will be professional armed forces. What they [ISIL] have right now are partisans, and there aren't that

many of them, and they fight on a purely tactical level, with no more than a few hundred fighters who are much like Makhno's soldiers,⁸ except that they have their machine guns mounted on Japanese pickup trucks instead of hay wagons. They were successful against the utterly corrupt and demoralized official troops of post-occupation Iraq. But as soon as they have to create their own regular army, they will face all the same problems that armies always entail. They will have to create a tax system, impose conscription, train commissioned officers, and no matter how you look at it, they will have to conduct foreign policy, because without diplomacy, they will have to fight on every front.

So they are making the transition from Lenin to Stalin?

If ISIL really is a nascent state, then no matter how much they resist it, they will have to act in accordance with the rules of the modern world-system. Wallerstein made that same argument about communist states long ago, and he was quite right.⁹ It's the same as when workers seize a factory during a strike and proclaim that capitalism is at an end there. But if the factory continues to operate according to the market principles of the market environment around it, that means that it will be compelled to operate at a profit. This means that managers will appear at the factory, and manage it in accordance with the external, rational market. At some point — it would take time — the managers would be able to tell the rest of the staff, "Let's face it; socialism didn't work, and we are actually ruling you." Then they would privatize the factory. In other words, exactly what happened in the USSR in 1991.

Interviewed by Alexander Agadjanian and Dmitry Uzlaner

8. Nestor Makhno (1888–1934) was a Ukrainian anarchist revolutionary and head of the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine (a.k.a. the Black Army) during the Russian Civil War.
9. See I. Wallerstein, 1997, "Social Science and the Communist Interlude, or Towards an Explanation of the History of Modernity," *Polis*, no. 2; I. Wallerstein, 2003, *The End of the World as We Know It: Social Science for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. B. L. Inozemtsev, Centre for Research on Post-Industrial Societies (Moscow: Logos).



Curriculum vitae: Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions

Review of: Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions. Vol. 1 / Ed. S. Filatov. Moscow: Letnii Sad, 2014. — 620 pages.

Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions. Vol. 2 / Ed.

S. Filatov. Moscow, Saint Petersburg: Letnii Sad, 2016. — 512 pages.

Introduction

The second volume of the Russian-British project *Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions* appeared in March of 2016. It is the eleventh work to be published through the joint efforts of representatives of the Russian academic community and the Keston Institute under the auspices of a foundational research project entitled the “Encyclopedia of Contemporary Religious Life in Russia.” Since they began working together in 1997, this international team of authors has released published works such as: *Religion and Society: Essays on Contemporary Religious Life in*

Russia (Moscow, Saint Petersburg, 2002); *Contemporary Religious Life in Russia: An Experiment in Systematic Description* (vols. 1–4, 2003–2006); *An Atlas of Contemporary Religious Life in Russia* (vols. 1–3, 2005–2009); *Religion and Russian Diversity* (Moscow, Saint Petersburg, 2012); and *Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions* (vol. 1, 2014).

This team’s work in the 2000s consisted of an effort to “familiarize the reader with the aspects of religious life in our country which are not well known or are not known at all,” and its published works were largely designed to provide reference information on religious organizations (full names, number of members, leadership, address, contact information,

The Russian version was previously published in: *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov’ v Rossii i za rubezhom*, 2016, 34 (2): 357–372.

etc.).¹ Their published works in the 2010s, however, are aimed at presenting historical and analytical information, and specifically describing the main trends in religious and social life in the Russian regions. According to the participants in the project, this shift in emphasis from the informational to the analytical was primarily conditioned by the spread of internet access in Russia. Increased high-speed internet coverage has made it easier for the population to access information on religious organizations and communities and has eliminated the urgent demand for specialized informational/reference books; that information is now just a few clicks away. Technological progress has not, however, eliminated the need to parse sources, conduct conscientious analyses and lay out the information in a compact form. The team of authors behind *Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions* have set out to overcome these obstacles and lay out the main trends in the development of religious and social life.

Structure

The structure used to present the material in the books that make

up the *Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions* project is somewhat different from the earlier design that was used in *An Atlas of Contemporary Religious Life in Russia*. While the *Atlas* grouped the regions in the same way that the Constitution of the Russian Federation does (alphabetically, beginning with the republics, then the krais and then the oblasts), the new book presents all of the subjects in a single, alphabetized list. The first volume lays out the situation in nineteen regions of the Russian Federation, from A (the Republic of Adygea) to I (the Republic of Ingushetia), while the second discusses religious and social life in fourteen more Russian regions, from I (Irkutsk Oblast) to K (Krasnodar Krai). This design was a more suitable choice for the encyclopedic nature of the project, although it does involve certain difficulties for both the writers and the reader.

First of all, arranging the subjects alphabetically required the researchers conducting interviews with local insiders to incur substantial travel costs, since regions of Russia that all begin with the letter A (the Amur, Archangelsk, and Astrakhan Oblasts, for example) might be thousands of kilometers apart. Secondly, the (often diametric) contrasts between the religious and societal conditions prevailing

1. M. Burdo and S. Filatov, eds. 2005. *An Atlas of Contemporary Religious Life in Russia*, vol. 1 (Moscow, St. Petersburg: Letnii Sad), 7.

in regions that are adjacent in this sequence might lead to confusion for the reader and make it more difficult to master the material. When presented in this format, the federal subjects are torn from their geographical, economic, sociopolitical and cultural context, which makes it more difficult to comprehend the ongoing processes in the regions and compare religious and social life in neighboring regions. It also does not facilitate explaining the multifaceted nature of the conflicts that have taken shape as a result of discrepancies between secular and religious administrative and territorial boundaries. Furthermore, after being immersed in the specifics of religious and social life in one federal subject, it is not a simple matter to switch one's consciousness over to the task of understanding the unique features of another region, which is radically different from the previous one and is practically on the other side of the globe.

In view of this factor, it might have been more logical to arrange the numerous regions of Russia by federal district, rather than alphabetically. Choosing this strategy would have reduced the logistical expenses involved in gathering materials, since the researchers would not have had to travel from one end of the country to the other while writing each

chapter; instead, they could have systematically visited neighboring regions of each federal district. At the same time, the information on each federal district could have been presented in a separate book (there are eight federal districts in the Russian Federation, not counting Crimea, and plans for this project call for the publication of seven whole volumes). Furthermore, grouping regions according to federal district would also have helped the reader categorize the information and develop a cohesive idea of religious and social life in the Russian regions, rather than a fragmented one. In this fashion, regions with relatively similar geographical, economic, and cultural conditions would have been presented as groups, which would have minimized the contrast among them and simplified the process of assimilating the realities laid out by the authors.

Another argument in favor of selecting the proposed scholarly design is the fact that the group of authors themselves did not strictly adhere to their alphabetizing strategy in how they presented the material. This principle is violated in the very first volume, in which information about the "matryoshka region" of Archangelsk Oblast, the Nenets Autonomous Okrug, which is simultaneously a federal subject of the Russian Federation and a

component of Archangelsk Oblast, is presented. Furthermore, plans call for the data on the religious and social situation in the federal city of Moscow to be presented in a way that deviates from the strategy the researchers selected.

The chapters of the published works under consideration are thirty- to forty- page informational and analytical articles that expound on religious and social life in the regions, broken down by the religious groups present there. Structurally, the text of every article is divided into several sections devoted to specific concepts: features of the historical development of religion in the region/the Russian Orthodox Church/Alternative Orthodox Churches/the Roman Catholic Church/Protestant Churches/Judaism/Islam/Buddhism/Paganism/Neopaganism. In some cases, the chapters conclude with bibliographical lists. In that event, the section dealing with the Russian Orthodox Church includes the following subsections: Organizational Structure/Features of Diocesan Life/Government Religious Policy and the Russian Orthodox Church/Membership/Educational Institutions/Monasticism.

The sections on the Russian Orthodox Church (along with those on Islam in traditionally Muslim regions) and Protestant churches are the most extensive.

There is justification for this imbalance. It lies not so much in the writers' efforts to present a detailed explanation of the relationships between regional authorities and representatives of the religious groups that are most widespread in Russia (the number of Protestants in Russia fluctuates between 500,000 and 2 million depending on how it is calculated, which significantly changes their position in any "ranking" of religious groups) but rather in their desire to reflect the real significance of specific religious communities in Russian public and political life. One can also detect a shortcoming in this framing of the question, however, which is associated with the traditional focus of Russian religious studies on Orthodoxy and Islam at the expense of expounding information on less numerous and less well-known religious groups.

Contents

It seems likely that the sections on the "Features of Diocesan Life" and "Government Religious Policy and the Russian Orthodox Church" will be most interesting for a significant portion of readers, since it is there that an analytical vision of the main tendencies shaping changes in religious and social life in the Russian regions is presented.

The sections on the “Features of Diocesan Life” provide a relatively short, yet content-rich picture of the primary features of Church life in the Russian regions and the disagreements present within the Church. The materials laid out in the book shed light on the reasons for the attempts under Patriarch Kirill to strengthen the hierarchical power structure within the Church and make Church life more bureaucratic. According to the vision presented in the book, these efforts are rooted in the determination to rein in the radically inclined element of the clergy and increase control over the enormous and poorly managed Church machine, which is being torn apart from the inside out by religious, ideological, financial, and ethical contradictions. As the writers note in the first volume of *Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions*: “the growth of Orthodox activism is paralleled by the growth of self-consciousness among the clergy and laymen who support Orthodox positions and of the diversity of positions, discussions, and ideological conflicts. The Russian Orthodox Church is becoming a field for debates not only about strictly ecclesiastical questions, but also about questions of social and political significance. Often against the

wishes of Church leadership, the Church is becoming the sphere in which ideological and moral positions collide” (vol. 1, pg. 4).

After reading the sections on “Government Policy and the Russian Orthodox Church,” one is left with a persistent desire to question the thesis being promoted by government agencies that there is unity and affinity between the Russian regions and to praise the regional studies experts who are duty bound to make sense of the complexities and vicissitudes of every region of the country. It is difficult to imagine how the information on religious and social life in the various federal subjects that became part of the published works under review could have been presented in a generalized form, since the situation that has taken shape in each region is unique in its own way, and any attempt at generalization would inevitably lead to a loss of authentic elements and repetition of the obvious.

A few points about the list of characteristics ascribed to all of the federal subjects analyzed in the books are worth noting:

1. There is no such thing as centralized religious policy in the Russian Federation. The regional authorities attempt to determine the general intentions of the federal center and copy federal practices for conducting dialogue

with religious organizations; however, due to the lack of a clearly articulated position and standardized criteria for evaluating these efforts, the form and intensity of relationships between regional authorities and religious organizations diverge significantly. A similar situation can be observed inside the religious body of the Russian Orthodox Church, where responsibility for communication between the metropolitanate and the local authorities rests entirely with the regional church hierarchs.

2. State-confessional dialogue has a place in all of the regions presented here, but the names of the institutions responsible for supporting and controlling it, their position in the staffing/organizational structure and the influence they exert on the political decision-making process vary between the various federal subjects.

3. The intensity, focus, and effectiveness of local state-confessional dialogue are directly dependent on the individual attitudes of state and Church officials making decisions, rather than their party affiliations.

The retrospectives presented in this book on the transformations of religious and social life in the regions after a new governor or church hierarch take office illustrate this point perfectly.

At the same time, the party affiliation and ideological views of a governor, mayor, or other person responsible for relations with religious organizations do not play a significant role in determining the position of regional authorities on religious questions. Thus, for the last two decades, in some regions the Communists have spoken out against proselytism and strengthening the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church (Kaluga and Kirov Oblasts), while in others they have supported the Russian Orthodox Church instead (Amur Oblast and Kamchatka Krai). In others still, the Communists have come into conflict with less powerful religious groups (the Republic of Karelia), or the governors and Church hierarchs have managed to radically reevaluate attitudes toward both religion and Soviet power during the course of their terms in office (the Republic of Altai, Bryansk Oblast). In their turn, the “democratic” forces have spoken out in favor of government neutrality on religious questions in some regions (Kaliningrad Oblast) and supported the Russian Orthodox Church in others (Astrakhan and Volgograd Oblasts, and the Republic of Karelia).

4. According to the examples described in these published works, the religious policies

of regional authorities can be divided into two types: Orthodox/patriotic and judiciously pro-Orthodox.

The Orthodox/patriotic type envisages instituting pro-Orthodox policies, allocating funds for the needs of the Russian Orthodox Church, facilitating the development of Orthodox organizations and independent activity, actively introducing representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church into the organizational structure of the armed forces and educational institutions, persecuting other religious groups (especially new religious movements and Protestant communities), etc. (Belgorod Oblast). At the same time, the implementation of this policy does not require the governor to profess Orthodoxy or hold pro-Orthodox views (Voronezh Oblast under Vladimir Kulakov, Kemerovo Oblast, the Republic of Komi under Yuri Spiridonov, Krasnodar Krai during Governor Nikolai Kondratenko's second term).

Judiciously pro-Orthodox policy is characterized by a generally positive attitude toward Orthodoxy, accompanied by a loyal or neutral attitude toward the other religious groups in a given region, and modest financial support for initiatives by the Russian Orthodox Church (the Republic of Altai, Volgograd

Oblast, the Republic of Kalmykia, Kirov Oblast, Krasnoyarsk Krai under Alexander Khloponin).

The litmus test for the religious policy being carried out by the authorities in a given region is their attitude toward the Protestant communities functioning there; if the Protestants are being persecuted, then Orthodox/patriotic rhetoric is being pursued, but if the Protestants are "overlooked" by the authorities, then the pro-Orthodox position is most likely a restrained one.

5. The primary types of work underway in the dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church are as follows: constructing an effective financial and economic system, raising the educational level of the clergy, and organizing active social work with various categories of the population. In recent decades, the Russian Orthodox Church has been most successful in precisely those areas, although the intensity and quality of the social services provided by the Russian Orthodox Church still lags far behind analogous activity by Protestant churches.

The thoroughness and detail that characterize the information laid out in the sections dealing with Protestant churches in the regions of Russia deserve special mention. The group of writers put quality work into this part of the project; they structured the

numerous Protestant groups and provided detailed descriptions of the specifics of their accommodation and relationships with the regional authorities. This part of the text will be useful and interesting for both specialists in the fields of state-confessional relations and the sociology of religion, and anyone interested in Protestantism in general and Russian Protestantism in particular. The main thesis of the sections dedicated to the status of representatives of this religion in Russia was voiced by Roman Lunkin at the presentation of the second volume at the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences: "Protestantism has taken up a strong position in Russia, though this fact has not been fully recognized in either religious or political terms."

The Authorities and the Russian Orthodox Church

Another aspect of this book's significance for the academic community lies in the fact that the materials it presents on religious and social life in the Russian regions include extensive evidence against the widespread opinion that the Russian Orthodox Church and the state authorities are united. Analysis of the retrospectives on state-confessional policy on a local level demonstrates that

the secular authorities and the Russian Orthodox Church are not so much allies as temporary fellow-travelers, each of which always expects the other to violate their arrangements and therefore attempts to maximize its own advantage at the other's expense.

For the authorities, the turn toward Orthodoxy was, in many ways, conditioned by a tactical orientation toward the "pro-Orthodox consensus" that had been established in society, a pragmatic bet on Orthodoxy as a "spiritual bond," a factor that would serve to consolidate society and minimize the consequences of post-Soviet anomie. The case studies of Belgorod Oblast, Krasnodar Krai under Alexander Tkachov, Krasnoyarsk Krai under Alexander Lebed, and Kaliningrad Oblast function as engaging examples of the construction of a new Orthodox identity binding regional communities together.

Within the Russian Orthodox Church, the warming of relationships with the authorities was perceived as a means to increase the Church's role in society, regain the property and status lost due to the revolution, and consequently facilitate their efforts to save souls. During the first stages of the Russian Orthodox Church's proselytizing efforts, the emphasis was placed on strengthening the

processes of desecularization and penetration by the Church into various institutions and spheres of society, habituating society to the presence of priests and the existence of the Church's opinions in the informational space.

Yet the common direction that the Russian Orthodox Church and the secular authorities have shared in recent decades has hidden a fundamental divergence of goals and values among the participants in this tandem structure. The secular authorities view this religious resource as a way to facilitate making society more manageable by improving its moral and psychological condition and minimizing the expenditures necessary for social services. The authorities do not need a strong and independent Church; they need a healthy, controllable society. Therefore, making the Russian Orthodox Church stronger is regarded as a measure to be taken out of necessity. This idea has been explicitly voiced by many statesmen; like the head of the Division for Communications with Public and Religious Organizations of the Department of Internal Policy of the government of Voronezh Oblast during the governorship of Vladimir Kulakov, Alexander Zaitsev, who stated that "it is difficult to say that Kulakov is truly a person of faith, since he

is, after all, a KGB lieutenant general. Kulakov is, first and foremost, a government man, but one who understands perfectly well that it is only religion that can bring moral values back to society. This religion cannot be alien to the people, it must be the one on which the entire culture was built, which the people have been genetically shaped by." From Zaitsev's point of view, it is for this reason that the primacy of the Russian Orthodox Church is recognized in the oblast. At the same time, however, the local authorities were convinced that "Orthodox churches must be built with money from parishioners and sponsors, not the budget" (vol. 1, pg. 497). Another example of the authorities' position on supporting the Russian Orthodox Church is a quotation that the authors attribute to Valeri Zubov, the governor of Krasnoyarsk Krai. According to the book: "Zubov had no goodwill toward the diocese, holding that it 'is always demanding something from the authorities, but it doesn't give society anything.' In private conversations, Zubov expressed a strong preference for Protestantism and Catholicism, which 'do a lot for other charities and hardly demand anything'" (vol. 2, pg. 478).

The Church, in its turn, pursued the independence and self-sufficiency it needed to guide

society to the right path and save people's souls. The Russian Orthodox Church is compelled to participate in an exchange of resources and legitimization with governmental structures on both the federal and the regional level; the clergy, however, fear that this unsustainable Symphony model for state-confessional relations will transform into a Cesaro-papist one, and not without reason. Events played out in precisely that way in Kostroma Oblast under Igor Slyunyayev, where the governor "actively interfered with the life of the diocese, came to diocesan meetings, and entered into conflict with Archbishop Alexander" (vol. 2, pg. 412) and "finagled" the appointment of a new hierarchy, and in Krasnodar Krai under Alexander Tkachov, where "cooperation with the Kuban Metropolitanate of the Russian Orthodox Church is taking place in the most diverse of spheres, civil servants themselves strive to involve representatives of the priesthood in many projects, encouraging the Church to pursue active public service. . . . In some cases, that cooperation exceeds the bounds of what one can properly call 'aid,' and it must be said that the government is managing the Church. For example, at the direct insistence of the administration, priests are sent to kindergartens and compelled to participate in

various public events" (vol. 2, pg. 439).

The axiological divergence between the two sides centers around the fact that the secular authorities function as a pragmatic, conservative force, while the clergy position themselves as ideological traditionalists. The authorities' conservative position is based on their efforts to preserve the established order and balance of forces in society in an unchanged state for as long as possible and to protect the interests of the groups who are entrenched in power, and they are only prepared to embrace innovation in extreme situations, when failure to reform may soon lead to the death of the established system. In short, the authorities are inclined to stick as closely as possible to the words of Edmund Burke, the founding father of conservatism, who declared that "I should be led to my remedy by a great grievance."² As it was put in a fictional film about the Russian government: "He [the governor] didn't do anything good, of course . . . but he didn't do anything bad either. . . . And that almost never happens, by the way."

At the same time, it does not matter to the authorities what

2. Edmund Burke, 1898, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 293.

methods are used to preserve the status quo and save the political body from the death of reform: cultural liberalization, democratic procedures, permitting abortion, juvenile justice, utilizing aid from non-Orthodox sources, etc. The moral content and religious sanction of the methods to be used do not matter to the authorities. This cannot be said of the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church, for whom morality and compliance with theological norms are crucial criteria for making political decisions.

For the traditionalist hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church, the established order and balance of forces in society are unacceptable. They strive to change it and unbalance it in favor of Church structures. From the clergy's point of view many of the methods used by the secular authorities are intolerable and further the moral decay of society; the authorities are accused of insincerity, dishonesty, a lack of piety, and of adhering to their own personal interpretations of religious doctrine. Thus, the hierarchs of Voronezh diocese complained about the local authorities to the researchers, reporting that "the administration attracts civil servants who call themselves responsible people, when they are nothing of the kind. We present initiatives, but the

administration ignores us, takes our ideas and conducts social campaigns independently of the diocese" (vol. 1, pg. 496). In his turn, the head of the missionary department of Ekaterinodar and Kuban dioceses, Archpriest Aleksey Kasatikov, in describing the phenomenon of "Cossack Orthodoxy," which was actively promoted by the Krasnodar authorities, noted that "it is not possible to separate out a special Cossack Orthodoxy, since the Cossacks are not a separate ethnic group, like the Viaticchi or Krivichi, and furthermore, 'they fear God so much that they don't go to church'" (vol. 2, pg. 433).

As such, there are many disagreements between the secular authorities and the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church, not only on the federal level, but also on the regional level. The interactions between secular and religious authorities are also complicated by the fact that numerous internal conflicts exist within both hierarchies, which are both systemic and personal in nature. It is noteworthy that the patriarchate's bet on lobbying for the interests of the Russian Orthodox Church on the local level through practicing Orthodox governors does not always produce the expected results — far from it. It is not unknown for non-religious or only nominally religious governors to be more

loyal to the Russian Orthodox Church than devout heads of Russian federal subjects are.

One cannot overlook the fact the representatives of the secular and religious authorities often resort to uniting their efforts and creating coalitions. Once they have formed alliances, the secular and Church leaders of a Russian region undertake quite bold attempts to lobby for their consolidated interests, including reaching out to higher authorities in both the secular and religious hierarchies. Thus, in many cases, governors have lobbied for the interests of the diocesan elites in the Synod (the Republic of Adygea, Lipetsk Oblast, the Republic of Buryatia). Specifically, “in July of 2009, President Nagovitzin of Buryatia approached Patriarch Kirill with a request to create an Orthodox diocese in the Republic, which was, to a large degree, the result of lobbying by the Orthodox priesthood of Buryatia” (vol. 1, pg. 337). In other cases, the secular authorities (the governor or mayor) obtained public support from church hierarchs when promoting their candidacies in upcoming elections and combined their efforts to actively (and, for a certain period, successfully) oppose the decisions of the federal center, explicitly speaking out against reelecting the old bureaucrats (the Nenets Autonomous

Okrug under Aleksey Barinov, Bryansk Oblast under Yuri Lodkin, Volgograd under Yevgeny Ishchenko). At the same time, the clerics continued to support their partners, even after the ex-leaders experienced political reprisals (opening criminal proceedings in which the courts render guilty verdicts). There were also cases in which religious and secular leaders organized joint economic and “sponsorship” projects, such as appropriating funds from drunk drivers apprehended by employees of the State Automobile Inspectorate to finance the construction of a church (Volgograd Oblast).

At the same time, the participants in the project themselves note that in comparison with what was recorded a decade ago, the status of state-confessional dialogue and the regulation of religious and social life in the Russian regions is improving. As Sergei Filatov, the editor of the work under consideration, stressed at the presentation of the second volume of *Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions*: “a slow process of recovery is underway. Religious life is improving, and that has nothing to do with politics. There is less and less barbarism, people are reading more and learning about other [religions]. The Church is gradually changing for the better.”

Comments

In addition to the obvious merits of the first books published through the Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions Project, it is necessary to point out several debatable issues. The lack of sections explaining the procedure for finding respondents and the method for selecting secondary sources of information raises questions.

The participants in this project have good and longstanding reputations in the academic sphere for their extensive research work and they are widely recognized as respected authorities in the field, but this fact does not obviate the need to describe the methodological element of their research. Reading the books makes it clear that in assembling the articles, they used interviews conducted by the authors with representatives of government agencies of federal subjects, managers of religious organizations and communities, and members of the expert community, as well as materials from the print and online press. These books, however, do not disclose the methods used to find and select respondents. How was the list of people to interview generated? What problems arose while compiling the list? How did the researchers approach the various government

officials? What problems arose in the course of interacting with representatives of the authorities? Did all of them agree to those conversations? What was the percentage of refusals? In which regions were they unable to interact with representatives of the authorities? Was it mostly the relatively "liberal" bureaucrats who made contact, or was it possible to prevent the sample from being skewed? Analogous questions also arise in relation to the interviews conducted with experts and representatives of the clergy.

The questions regarding the methods for selecting secondary sources of information and the associated citations are equally relevant. How were sources identified as credible? How was it established that one resource had priority over another? What kind of resources were used during the search for information? The books under consideration here do not always include citations, and the second volume contains the formulation "as some Internet resources indicate" with no reference to specific sources. Furthermore, there are not always bibliographical lists at the end of chapters, although the discussion of religious and social tendencies in each article is preceded by a historical outline of the development of religion in the relevant region.

Any discussion of the shortcomings of these books must include the relatively low level of clarity provided by the sections on neopagan communities. Thus, the article on Slavic neopaganism (Rodnovery) in Kaluga Oblast consists of references to a 1999 event and reminiscences about the work of 2005. This is despite the fact that Kaluga Oblast might be called one of the centers of Russian native faith. It is precisely in Kaluga that the annual Panslavic Veche is held, where the head of one of the most significant neopagan organizations in Russia, the Union of Slavic Native Faith Communities (USNFC), is elected. The book does not explain that several important changes took place in the Kaluga native faith community during the period under discussion. The head of the USNFC was changed in 2011. In 2014, the USNFC was registered as an interregional public organization to support and develop Slavic culture. In 2015, a major ceremonial structure, the Temple of the Fire of Svarog, was built on land owned by the USNFC in Kaluga Oblast. Furthermore, in discussing Kemerovo Oblast, the writers confined themselves to merely noting the presence of communities composed of followers of neopagan movements like “Radosteya,” “Anastasia (The Sounding Cedars of Russia),” and “The City of the Sun” without

providing any information about unique aspects of their presence in that region. For the sake of fairness, it is necessary to mention that information on these communities is presented in descriptions of other regions, specifically Kirov Oblast and Krasnoyarsk Krai; however, there is no thesis statement regarding the similarity between the status of these communities in different regions to be found in the text.

Conclusion

Despite several criticisms, the first volumes of the informational and analytical project entitled *Religious and Social Life in the Russian Regions* are examples of quality work that is colossal in volume and fundamental in scope (plans call for seven volumes to be published), performed by a group of writers who are devoted to their work. Their efforts deserve attention from various types of specialists and will occupy a place of honor not only on the bookshelves of specialists in state-confessional questions, religious scholars, sociologists and political scientists, but also everyday citizens who take an interest in the religious, societal, and political situation in the Russian regions.

M. Bogachev (Translated by Isaac Stackhouse Wheeler)

Konstantin M. Antonov, ed. 2015. *The Psychology of Religion: Between Theory and Empiricism. (Psikhologiya religii: Mezhdue teorii i empirikoi.)* Moscow: St. Tikhon's Orthodox University (in Russian). — 188 pages.

As often happens in relation to the humanities and social sciences (and at present the psychology of religion primarily falls into this category, despite somewhat successful and promising attempts to give it more of the character of a natural science), the psychology of religion has a number of theoretical, methodological, and practical problems. These stem from its very foundations, and are thus difficult to solve. The first such problem encountered by a person who wishes to know more about the psychology of religion is the uneven development of this subject both in the West and in post-Soviet countries. This situation has been brought about by Soviet scientific isolation and developmental upheavals in the countries of the former USSR, which have, unfortunately, not always promoted a sufficient measure of quality scientific inquiry and cooperation.

In this respect, the psychology of religion differs little from other scientific disciplines that are forced to exist in similar situations. In addition, the psychology

of religion does not maintain a clear status as an academic discipline. Like light, which can be described simultaneously as both a particle and a wave, the psychology of religion can be viewed simultaneously both as a discipline of religious studies and of psychology. As a branch of religious studies, it is studied in philosophy departments and taught as a rule by people with a philosophical education. As a branch of psychology, it is taught in psychology departments by psychologists to future psychologists in upper-level courses. Compilations of peer-reviewed collections show that religious scholars working in the realm of the psychology of religion focus primarily on the historical, theoretical, and analytical. Psychologists who study religious phenomena often limit their analysis to the purely empirical.

Religious scholars are dependent on their knowledge of religious traditions and on their skills in working with texts; they often lack sufficient knowledge and skills for carrying out empirical research. Because of their own limitations, psychologists rarely try to create a whole picture of religious or non-

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religious life, preferring simply to apply their expertise in empirical research to relatively new and exotic psychological topics. As a rule, psychologists consider psychology of religion as a side branch of their basic science. The fact that such authoritative classic psychologists as William James, Sigmund Freud, Karl Gustav Jung, Abraham Maslow, Gordon Allport, and Viktor Frankl have separate works on religion gives the discipline some weight. However, none of the above-mentioned psychologists was primarily interested in the psychology of religion as a subject of research.

Nevertheless, the psychology of religion's indeterminate status as a discipline can become a blessing. Its "mother" sciences of religious studies and psychology are the result of an active cooperation between representatives of various academic disciplines and directions. Religious studies are unthinkable without the work of historians, philosophers, sociologists, philologists, anthropologists, and scholars of culture studies. Psychology also cannot be imagined, especially in the context of its historical development, without the contributions of philosophy, biology, and medicine, as well as the sciences of language and mind. In the modern sciences, interdisciplinarity strengthens

rather than weakens any research project. This interdisciplinary tendency holds great promise for the psychology of religion, if representatives of different disciplines are not partitioned off from each other and instead cooperate in joint projects. The strict institutional divisions between sciences, in which publication in the journals of "another science" officially plays no role in the careers of graduate students, doctoral students, and university faculty, substantially hinders the cooperation of colleagues who represent different disciplines. Considering such problems with interdisciplinary cooperation, and the fact that Soviet psychology of religion fell behind the West, the publication of the collection *The Psychology of Religion: Between Theory and Empiricism* provides an excellent platform for religious scholars and psychologists and should be welcomed in every possible way.

The collection summarizes the work of the psychology of religion section of the 2015 Minsk conference "Religion and/or Everyday Life." It consists of four sections: The History of the Psychology of Religion, Theoretical and Applied Aspects of Empirical Research, Psychology of Religious Conversion, and Cognitive Religious Studies. The researchers who presented their papers address questions that

are relevant to the psychology of religion in the current stage of its international development.

In her article on the principles of methodological objectivism, Elena Oryel raises the question of what position researchers of religious phenomena must take in relation to the ontological status of objects of religious faith. The author, relying on psychology of religion classics by Theodore Flournoy and William James, asks if it is desirable to exclude from academic consideration questions about the reality of whatever might be beyond the physical world. Methodological objectivism is somehow juxtaposed with the engaged principles of confessionality and partisanship. The article examines the possibility of verifying value judgments while confirming that such verification is always necessarily incomplete and limited. Therefore an ultimate falsification is also not possible. Such an epistemological element is completely fitting in a methodological article, in as much as it gives boundaries to our knowledge and formulates for scholars a stance of modesty in relation to the material they study.

David Damte raises the question of religious feeling and its understanding in nineteenth-century German philosophy. His examination begins with the philosophy of Georg Wilhelm

Friedrich Hegel, however it does not end there. The article also contains a description and analysis of the views of Jakob Friedrich Fries, Johann Freidrich Herbart, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (Fichte the younger), Eduard von Hartmann, and Gustav Teichmüller. Although the publication is dedicated primarily to the history of philosophy, it broaches the subject of psychology at least tangentially. An attentive reading can provide the psychologist of religion with a range of important insights and hypotheses as well as an understanding of the background against which the early psychologists of religion developed. In particular, this series of philosophers first turned their attention to the unconscious character of mental life (Eduard von Hartmann), which later laid the foundation for psychoanalytic approaches.

In her article, Tatiana Malevich examines in detail the characteristics of the research of mysticism. For various reasons, the mystical experience is one of the most difficult phenomena for the study of the psychology of religion, because, according to the testimony of the mystics themselves, it stands outside of the realm of semiotics. It is ineffable and is therefore difficult to clearly define (is the mystical experience simply a more

intensive religious experience or something entirely different?). There is the problem of study from without or within, as well as the difficulties for scholars in interpreting the experience of adherents of non-Abrahamic religious traditions. The article examines the advantages and limitations of questionnaires and interviews, psychometric scales designed to research mystical experience, and also experimental research. It concludes that it is necessary to employ a complement of different quantitative and qualitative methods that supplement each other.

The psychologist Denis Kozhevnikov devotes his paper to appraising the effectiveness of autogenic training and centering prayer. Autogenic training was developed for secular conditions, just as centering prayer constitutes a psychological practice that arose in the Christian context for religious purposes. The author describes the design and results of psychophysiological experiments, reaching the conclusion that autogenic training exerts a large influence on a person's psychophysiological condition. This does not, however, signify that centering prayer is ineffective for religious purposes. The described empirical research can be useful for religious scholars as it demonstrates the possibilities

of empirical psychology for testing hypotheses that arise from theoretical analysis and reflection. All the same it is worth noting that comparing the degrees of influence of different psychotechnics on the psychophysiological condition of a person is indirectly tied to the problems of the psychology of religion. The question, however, remains open and it is possible to have various opinions on this matter.

The largest numbers of articles in the collection are dedicated to the question of religious conversion. Here I will allow myself to express a critical observation, which in no way, however, should cast aspersions on the high quality of material presented by the authors of the collection. It also indubitably reflects the subjective academic preferences of the reviewer. It is also clear that it is impossible to examine all the relevant and significant questions of any academic discipline in the limits of one publication or even one collection. That being said, it is important to point out that none of the four articles that examine in great detail the background, stages, and phenomenology of conversion, even tangentially raises the question of deconversion, the loss of religious faith. Such one-sidedness is inconsistent, considering both

the relevance of secularization and, as a consequence, the departure from religious faith of many people in the world, and also proceeding from purely methodological considerations. The contemporary psychologist of religion Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi maintains that “the psychology of religion is also the psychology of irreligion” (Beit-Hallahmi 2007, 301). Stated differently, the complex examination of the processes of gaining and losing faith is more informative than the exclusive emphasis on religious conversion, which is traditional for the psychology of religion. Given the availability of high-quality research on deconversion (for example, Zuckerman 2015), the absence of references to such questions is inconsistent. I do, however, make the reservation that it is not possible to expect one collection of material to examine all relevant question for any discipline, especially if it has not set such a task for itself.

Konstantin Antonov addresses the correlation between religiosity and rationality in the context of religious conversion. He ultimately examines the move from the mundane to the sacred in the capacity of a transition, which in the framework of human life never assumes a final character. Religious experience from time to time must renew itself in order not to be subsumed by the

routine of everyday life. At the same time religious experience does not exist apart from thought, but rather becomes the object of it. Reflection and experience take part in a complex interplay, not being able to manage without each other. Frequently their interaction becomes the basis for conflict. The question of the relationship between reflection and religious experience takes on a particular urgency because of the disputes that have become actualized between believers and non-believers in Western countries and also to the polarization between them in the world as a whole.

Liubov Ardasheva establishes the impossibility of creating one all-embracing model of conversion that is universal for all religious traditions and for all people. Existing models are examined in sufficient detail in the article, together with critical observation on each stage. Principally she addresses the models offered by John Lofland and Rodney Stark. However, as the author of the article asserts, no research confirms the correctness of this model. More promising are the approaches of Henri Gooren and Lewis Rambo, for whom conversion is a fairly prolonged process, the stages of which are predominately a reference point for the researcher and not strictly consecutive

phases. Ardasheva draws the conclusion that conversion is gradual; any suddenness is just a part of conversion and not conversion itself. A less rigid and more nuanced approach to such a complex process is much more relevant.

Irina Balanova offers a social constructivist approach to researching the phenomenon of conversion. The author proposes studying conversion in the context of personal changes, which owing to methodological constraints cannot be induced from the outside. As a result, it is impossible to establish cause-and-effect relationships in an experiment. However, the study of the religious language and metaphor for conversion, as not just a subjective and individual but also an intersubjective process, does not have similar limitations. Narrative analysis of a text recounting conversion shows the ways in which an individual discovers a new social identity, reappraises past experience, and gains perspective for future experiences. "A second cognitive revolution," which has supplemented the subjective emphasis of cognitive approaches with the intersubjective, has updated the narrative approach and qualitative research methods as a whole. In this respect, the approach to data and its analysis that was used in this article

is most promising. However, research of this type must be continued and expanded with samplings from representatives of other confessions and religions and also nonbelievers, who are going through or have gone through deconversion.

Tatiana Folieva examines conversion in material from the Jehovah's Witnesses, then her research focus shifts from the individual to the organization. At the same time conversion is viewed not as the action of an impersonal force on a passive object (as in the classic conversion of the apostle Paul) but as a process, initiated by the subject. The person who initiates this process actively searches for answers to philosophical and existential questions. The article's empirical research is constructed from a content analysis of materials published by the Jehovah's Witnesses. This content analysis is based on script theory, which was developed by specialists in the field of artificial intelligence. Folieva concludes that the model of conversion practiced by the Jehovah's Witnesses is related more to the rational type of conversion, even though they do not use Christian Science terms. Conversion is based on receiving clear answers to raised questions and not on turning to mystical and hidden dimensions of

Christianity, such as, for example, the doctrine of the Trinity. Such data analysis has significant potential, allowing the discovery of particularities of conversion in various religious traditions. Attention must also be given to the means employed by modern secular and atheist organizations with the goal of augmenting the number of nonbelievers. This would organically increase knowledge about the rational type of conversion because it is rather difficult to imagine deconversion having a different source.

Three articles in the collection are dedicated to the cognitive approach to research on religion that has developed in recent decades. The relationship between cognitive religious studies and the psychology of religion has been discussed, although not all cognitive religious scholars would unreservedly agree to identify themselves as psychologists of religion. Institutionally cognitive religious studies are represented by a separate association: the International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religions (IACSR), which is not a part of the International Association for the Psychology of Religion (IAPR). These organizations hold independent conferences and publish independent journals. Periodically the question of the relationship between these two

disciplines is raised, as they are to one degree or another “twins.”³

The first article in the section on cognitive religious studies, written by the coauthors Roman Sergienko, Irina Shoshina, and Irina Malanchuk, is a qualitative general review of the above-mentioned schools of thought. The article traces the development of cognitive religious studies beginning with Stewart E. Guthrie, who studied anthropomorphism and pareidolic illusions (such as seeing a “face in the clouds”); Justin Barrett, who wrote about the Hypersensitive Agency Detection Device (HADD); Pascal Boyer, who wrote about ontological categories and minimal counterintuitiveness; and other authors. Sergienko, Shoshina, and Malanchuk emphasize evolutionism, which forms the foundation of the cognitive approach, and the naturalness of the cognitive processes that make possible a person’s religiousness. The authors also emphasize the importance of the habitual and everyday, rather than the extraordinary religiousness of mystics, for representatives of the cognitive approach. The cognitive mechanisms that make religion possible are uncovered, such as

3. For example, at the 2013 conference of psychologists of religion in Lausanne. See <http://wp.unil.ch/iapr2013/congress/program>.

social perceptions and the theory of mind, and neurophysiological research, which can augment the understanding of what religion is, are briefly mentioned. The article is worth reading for those who are starting to explore cognitive religious studies, as it provides a good orientation to these materials.

Alexandra Belova addresses the topic of the cognitive approach to the study of ritual and ritualistic behavior. This topic, in comparison to the study of the particularities of the formation and functioning of religious views and convictions, is rarely encountered in general reviews of cognitive religious studies. This, by the way, does not make it any less important. The article examines the cognitive theory of ritual behavior. A considerable amount of attention is given to Robert McCauley and Thomas Lawson's theories of ritual form and also to Harvey Whitehouse's theories of ritual and memory. The survey also looks at Dan Sperber's views on ritual, as well as those of Pierre Lienart, Pascal Boyer, and several other researchers. The value of this survey is indubitable, as it not only introduces readers to the works of cognitive religious scholars who have not been translated into Russian or Ukrainian, but also demonstrates the heuristic

potential of cognitive theories that are applicable not just to the beliefs but also to the religious activities of people.

Dmitry Gorevoy raises an extremely interesting theoretical problem in his article on anthropomorphic projection. He compares the ideas of Russian ethnographers with theories that have arisen in the context of modern cognitive religious studies. Representatives of both schools share a naturalistic research aim, that is, to explain religion as a natural phenomenon, and also turn to research data on archaic religiosity and childhood. However, the views of Sergei M. Shirokogovor, Lev Ia. Shternberg, Vladimir G. Bogoraz-Tan, and other ethnographers, which are similar in many ways to those of Stewart Guthrie, Jesse Bering, and Justin Barrett, have differing theoretical and empirical sources. Cognitive religious studies depends on the modern theory of consciousness, specifically the theory of the modularity of mind by Jerry Fodor, a student of Noam Chomsky. Classical ethnography has a more empirical-inductive character and does not compare with today's theoretical apparatus. In the future it will be important to correlate the newest cognitive theories of religion with the views of classical Western anthropologists, following their possible lineage.

Having covered all the obvious strengths of this collection, it is important to point out a few lacunae and disproportions. As has been shown above, much attention has been devoted to the phenomenon of conversion. This, however, has been understandably one-sided, in the context of the transition from unbelief to faith, but not the reverse. Deconversion is not examined even obliquely, and this in circumstances of continuing secularization and an increasing number of people who live without religion. Symptomatic is the appearance of “atheist churches” (Wheeler 2013) created specifically for the socialization of people who are accustomed to church life but who have lost faith. A reader also will not find information on age and gender dynamics in religion; religious forms of coping, that is, the particularities of how people overcome life challenges and misfortunes depending on their relationship to religion; works on the theme of religion and physical or psychological health and well-being; and also examination of questions of religious motivation and the psychological consequences of such individual motivations. Meanwhile the tradition of researching the motivation of religious activity is part of classical (Gordon Allport) and

modern mainstream psychology (the self-determination theory of personality of Edward Deci and Richard Ryan [Ryan & Deci 2000]). Moreover a series of studies on religiosity, conducted in the International Laboratory of Positive Psychology and the Quality of Life at the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow, also relies on self-determination theory. The absence both of mention of their research and reference to publications by members of the laboratory, not to mention the absence of their articles in the collection, attests to the necessity of improving the quality of communication with psychologist colleagues.

These critical remarks notwithstanding, the publication of the collection *The Psychology of Religion: Between Theory and Empiricism* is a clear sign that this discipline, despite many difficulties in the post-Soviet arena, is actively functioning and developing. In this sense, not only is the actual publication important, but also the high quality of articles presented in the collection, their interdisciplinary character, and also their appeal to the works and research of Western colleagues.

*I. Yahiiaiev (Translated by
Jenny Charlton Barrier)*

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