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**THE ISLAMIC AND TURKIC  
FACTORS IN IDENTITY  
FORMATION PROCESSES AND  
DISCOURSES ON SEPARATISM**

**Dagestan and Tatarstan Compared**

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# **The Islamic and Turkic Factors in Identity Formation Processes and Discourses on Separatism: Dagestan and Tatarstan Compared**

by Heiko Schrader (Magdeburg), Nikolai Skvortsov and Boris Vina (St. Petersburg)

## **Introduction**

The dissolution of the former Soviet Union has engendered various political problems that are closely related to ethnicity. Some former republics claimed autonomy within the Russian State, others joined the follow-up union, the Community of Independent States (CIS), under the leadership of Russia, other in turn became independent states outside CIS. While as a result of transformation policy of “Russification” during the Soviet era ethnic Russians had formed the majority in many regions of the Union and dominated most spheres of public life, they have now become minorities in a number of independent states as well as some regions in the Russian borderland (Kaiser 1998). This restructuring has caused gigantic migration waves both of ethnic Russians back to Russian territory, as well as other ethnic groups into the newly emerging states.

Ethnicity, however, is not the only distinguishing feature. Both religion and cultural origin go hand in hand with ethnic identification. An emergence of a national identity is not only difficult with regard of the weakness of the state towards mastering the socioeconomic problems that have arisen in the course of transformation, or its corruptibility, but ethnic, religious and cultural labels cut across national identity. During the Soviet period ethnic and religious diversity had been suppressed<sup>1</sup> and concealed behind a uniforming ideology of “Soviet man”, while on the surface official multiculturalism took a folkloristic form.<sup>2</sup> The slackening of the strong political grip and control by Moscow during the Gorbachev and Elt’sin era had its immediate effects not only in the economic sphere, but also gave rise to processes of ethnic and religious revival and identity formation. Now under leadership of Vladimir Putin, some of the achieved greater autonomy of the semi-autonomous regions has been reversed again. Putin appointed super-governors to oversee the elected regional chiefs and also changed the way of regional representation in the Russian legislature.

Anti-Russian sentiments because of feelings of Soviet exploitation and humiliation are widespread (Robbins 1994, Kaiser 2001). Where new political states emerged, such sentiments may have importantly contributed to will of secession. However, such is only reasonable and practicable in such cases, where the newly emerging entity is

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<sup>1</sup> The Soviet Union was officially atheist and sought to stamp out religion as an identification pattern.

<sup>2</sup> Some structures of parallel Islam had been tolerated by Moscow (Abduvakhitov 1993), while forms of Sufi Islam continued to exist in the underground.

economically and politically viable. Indeed, particularly those regions dissolved, which possess large quantities of raw materials, particularly oil, copper, or gas (Wallerstein 1991, Ó Tuathail 1996, Neumann 1997). This in turn touches geopolitical interest of Russia, but also the West.<sup>3</sup> Thus, small, and politically unimportant states in the Caucasian region are now under close observation of, and competition between, Russia, the United States and Europe to have good politico-economic relations, and establish/maintain trade links.

To benefit from the wealth of natural resources in the entire region, both the West and Russia aim at political stability, but the whole Caucasus resembles a powder keg. For some time the Northern Caucasus remained under the strong grip of Russia, while the Southern Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia) had set apart. With the Chechen and Dagestan wars this pattern has been challenged. But in addition to these separatist attempts there are a number of ethnic, religious and clan conflicts that may cause an extensive fire in the entire region.

The southern regions of the former Soviet Union, however, also constitute a boundary between Christian-Orthodox and Muslim civilizations.<sup>4</sup> Russia's Muslim population is estimated to constitute approximately 20 million, and due to the Chechen as well as Afghanistan wars, and particularly the 11 September events that Moscow has since then used as a weapon in the 'joint fight against terrorism', "Muslims here have complained bitterly of a backlash or 'Islamphobia'" (The St. Petersburg Times, Sep. 17, 2002: 22)". All across Russia, Muslims have reported instances of harassment, which are often mixed with racist sentiments against 'Caucasians'. Sentiments escalated in a

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the USA projects a pipeline from Central Asia through the Caspian Sea via Georgia to Turkey. In spite of the immense cost of establishment, such a pipeline provides the advantage to bypass two ideologically and actually rather incalculable countries: Russia and Iran that in case of worsening of the political climate might stop the necessary oil flow, while Turkey has proved to be a rather reliable partner, as long as economic interests are concerned, and aims at joining the EU. Strategically it can be easily explained that the shipping harbor is not projected to be at the Black Sea, but at the Mediterranean. Russia in turn tries to prevent this project and to keep control of the pipeline.

<sup>4</sup> Not that we want to take up the hegemonic, very undifferentiated and culturalist hypothesis of Huntington (1993), who argued long before 11 September with his "Clash of Civilizations" that Islam challenges Christian-democratic civilization with its basically expansive ideology. Such a fundamentalist Islam (Islamism), which Huntington addresses, only forms the minority position in a number of secularized Islamic countries, such as Turkey or Indonesia, and democratization processes in former fundamentalist countries such as Iran show that on a whole its influence has been weakening (Waldmann 1998, Heine, Hoffmann 2001, Tibi 2001). However, the propagation of *Jihad* ideology in the Chechen or Afghanistan wars caused many Arab Muslims taking the weapons and fighting with the Chechens or Talibans against Russia. But we reject a view of latent aggressiveness of Islam.

murder of an Azeri fruit trader by skinheads in St. Petersburg, who videotaped the killing (ibid.: 1). The brisance of Muslim-Russian cultural cleavage even gets stronger when we think in terms of Pan-Islamism cutting across national boundaries.

### **Pan-Islamism**

We assume that the “Islamic factor”<sup>5</sup> plays an important role in identity formation policies and processes within the entire region of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Islamic rhetoric is taken up in separatist discourses as a unifying element against Russian (and, depending on the particular discourse, also Western) cultural and economic imperialism,<sup>6</sup> pinpointing at a joint enemy rather than ethnic or clan differences. “Islamic/Muslim culture and tradition” becomes a label of self-reliance and empowerment against domination that not only separatist movements, political parties, religious leaders, or businessmen instrumentalize to get their clientele, but also ordinary people start resisting against Russian legislation, referring to an irreconcilability of these laws with their faith and religious requirements.<sup>7</sup>

On the republic level pro-Russian governments may face a strong political opposition claiming partial or even total independence from Russia. On a higher level both Russia, and the West are afraid of an upcoming Pan-Islamism (Landau 1992, Schulze 1990). The idea of a “Commonwealth of Islamic States in the Northern Caucasus”, which Dagestan and Chechnya already articulated, has a long tradition and may attract other republics with an Islamic majority to join this discourse (Dawisha and Parrott 1997, Kloucek 2000).

### **Pan-Turkism**

There is, however, another factor, which may provide – and is activated as - a basis of identity formation cutting across national identity: Turkic<sup>8</sup>, and to a lesser degree: Turanic<sup>9</sup> ancestry, both with regard to language and culture (Evers and Kaiser 2000,

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<sup>5</sup> This “Islamic factor” in Caucasian development has already been recognized by other scholars (Ware and Kisriev 2000). See also Rau (2002), Halbach(1996).

<sup>6</sup> see e.g. Barber (1995)

<sup>7</sup> We shall later on provide an example from Tatarstan.

<sup>8</sup> Pan-Turkism was a political movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which aimed at unifying all Turkish-speaking peoples in the Ottoman Empire, Russia, China, Iran, and Afghanistan. This movement originated among the Turks in the Crimea and on the Volga.

<sup>9</sup> During the late 19th- and early 20th-century a movement emerged aiming to unite politically and culturally all the Turkic, Tatar, and Uralic peoples living in Turkey and across Eurasia from Hungary to the Pacific. It is known as Pan-Turanism or Pan-Turianism, having derived from the Persian word for Turkistan. It was popular mainly

Ignatov 1992, Kaiser 2001). Pan-Turkic ideologies and movements were suppressed in Soviet Union (Landau 1995, Landau 1995) but supported by the Turkish government during World War I. However, Kemalistic Turkey emphasized Turkish nationalism instead of Pan-Turkism (Dirgen 1994). The revival of Pan-Slavism under Joseph Stalin and the Russian threat to Turkish autonomy renewed some Turks' interest in Pan-Turkism, and the demand for a federation of Turk states continued after World War II among the Turkish-speaking Islamic peoples in the Soviet Union (Encyclopedia Britannica). With independence of the Turk republics in Central Asia movements and parties with Pan-Turkic goals re-emerged even in Turkey. They aim at uniting all the people of the Turkic language group under one flag.<sup>10</sup> To some degree Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism work hand in hand (Kaiser 2001).

### **Imagined Identities**

In the tradition of Barth (1969), Anderson (1983) or Hobsbawm and Ranger (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) we assume that ethnicity and identity are not just primordial, given facts (Bromley 1974); they can be used in a constructivist way: created, made conscious, instrumentalized, manipulated, etc., if this will provide political or economic advantages (cf. Schlee and Werner 1997). Furthermore, people may have several identities at the same time, which cover different geographical, as well as non-localized spheres, "habitats of meaning", in which different cultural symbols expand and cross-cut to cultures, ethnic groups and states (Hannerz 1996: 21-23). While such processes have always been at work in the course of migration and long-distance trade, globalization has intensified and accelerated such discourses. Our chosen terminology of "Islamic" and "Turkic factors" refers both to the national as well as trans-national level of identity formation and such "habitats of meaning".

As a matter of fact, identity formation is not just something that happens from today until tomorrow, but it is a longer, intergenerational, very complex process, depending on shared history and beliefs, historical relations and experiences, impression

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among intellectuals and developed from a now largely dropped theory of common origin of Turkish, Mongol, Tungus, Finnish, Hungarian, and other languages (see Encyclopedia Britannica). Much more important was and is the movement of Pan-Turkism.

<sup>10</sup> The Turkic languages include Azeri, spoken in Azerbaijan and northwestern Iran; Turkmen, spoken in Turkmenistan and other parts of Central Asia; Kipchak, to which the Kazakh and Kyrgyz languages belong; Tatar, spoken around the middle Volga, and in Turkey, the Balkans, Central Asia, and China; Uzbek, spoken in Uzbekistan and other parts of Central Asia; Uygur, spoken in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China, and parts of Central Asia; and a number of languages spoken in Siberia, such as Yakut and Altay (cf. Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

management, socialization and particularly education, secondary education in schools and universities or religious institutions, the mass media, and the like.

If indeed we can observe Islamization or Turkization as processes that occur in the post-Soviet states and provinces, how do they articulate themselves? Where is their base of support: located in the cities and larger towns, or more village-based? For Chechnya scholars hold with regard to Islamism that the basis of support is rural, while the religious and political climate in cities is more moderate and cosmopolitan. A demographic explanation to this supposed pattern is that due to their formerly strong economic and political position during Soviet times, ethnic Russians are predominantly living in the urban context and therefore influence the way of life and way of thinking. An ideological rhetoric that also Russian politicians and the military take is that Islam provides an anti-modern force, so that the close symbolic association of both villages and Islam with tradition, and cities with secularization is not accidental. However, we argue against this view of Islam as being anti-modern that Islamization itself is a process of modernization on own cultural grounds, in a clear-cut distinction from western modernity (Schrader 2000, Stauth 1998). An analogous argumentation can be developed for spatially diverse Turkization processes.

Supposed that Islamization and Turkization are longer inter-generational processes, we believe that the religious and education systems play an important role in identity formation and manipulation. Characteristic to Islamic religious institutions is that they set up their own education system: Islamic schools and universities, so that there is no clear-cut differentiation of religious and educational spheres. Besides, Islam engenders unique institutions such as Islamic banks, which provide an opportunity to symbolize that most Western (as well as Russian) institutions are not in line with Islamic values and Islamic law. Symbolic difference from the West helps strengthening an Islamic identity, based upon distinction. Similar processes can be observed with regard to Turkish language and culture.

In what follows, we want to discuss Islamic and Turkic discourses in two republics: Tatarstan and Dagestan. Both have a long Islamic history.<sup>11</sup> In both regions Muslims form the majority of the population. More in Tatarstan than in Dagestan we find a strong relation to Turkism. Both regions have articulated separatist ideas, however with a different intensity and directedness.

### **Tatarstan and Dagestan**

The Republic of Tatarstan and The Republic of Dagestan are very distinctive according to their geographic position, social and ethnic composition of their populations, their language composition, their economic situation and their history. Common between the

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<sup>11</sup> This is, for example, different in Chechnya, where the secession went hand in hand with Islamization.

two regions is a high degree of Muslim population and growing Islamization during recent years. The spectrum of Islamic thought is wide-ranging: from moderate secularized politicians who only draw upon Islamic rhetoric but seek close connection to Moscow, to radical Islamists who call for the introduction of the *Shari'a* and the foundation of an independent Islamic state. Moreover, investigation of the religious-political situation in these republics helps to understand better Islamic tendencies in Russia as a whole, which might cause destabilization by radical separatist movements, clashes with Moscow or even civil war.

The topic of Islamization in Russia has got certain attention during recent years and is presently upcoming in Russian scientific discourse. We found that during 1999 and 2000 scholars have published on this issue by investigating religious and political elites. However, research on the level of everyday-life is largely lacking. In our opinion, it will be decided on this level, whether or not identity formation processes will be successful.

Also the topic of Turkization and Pan-Turkism has come up particularly by scholars working on Central Asia and Turkey (Landau 1995, Zenkovsky 1996). It is probable that it has got attention in Tatarstan, which traditionally has some links to this issue, although contemporary literature on this issue is not yet available. Less probable is its appearance in Dagestan, due to heterogeneity of language groups found over there. Nevertheless, some of these language groups also belong to Turkic languages: Azerbaijani, Kumuk and Tatar fit into this category, while most other languages belong to the Caucasian language family.

We will now summarize the histories of Tatarstan and Dagestan, as well as recent research findings in these regions.

### Tatarstan

The Republic of Tatarstan is located on Volga River. Three Russian regions and four republics (Mordovia, Marii-El, Udmurtia, and Bashkortostan) surround its territory, and these in turn are adjacent to territories, which are inhabited by ethnic Russians. The contemporary Tatar state is a successor of Volga Bulgarian Kingdom (10<sup>th</sup> century - 1236), Golden Horde (the 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries), and Kazan Khanate (1438 - 1552). Ancestors of the contemporary Tatars lost their independence, when Ivan the Terrible captured Kazan. In 1920 the Bolshevik regime engendered the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Due to its large oil reserves, which Tatarstan exports to other regions of the Russian Federation and abroad, the republic is comparatively well off and of high geopolitical importance for Russia. Besides, Tatarstan has highly developed engineering, automobile, aircraft, chemical, and oil processing industries.

According to the All-Union Population Census of 1989, 5,552,096 ethnic Tatars belong to Russian territory. Of these 1,765,404 live in Tatarstan. Tatar language belongs to the Kypchak subgroup of the Turkish language group. The Kazan State University is one of the oldest Russian Universities. With regard to Oriental languages,

older people are more oriented towards Arabic, and the younger ones are more interested in Turkish (Musina 1997: 92-93).

Traditionally ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Chuvashians, Mordvinians, and Udmurts belong to the Russian Orthodox Church, and many of them are practicing as Orthodox Christians. Ancestors of modern Tatars converted to Islam during the 10<sup>th</sup> century. After the Russian conquest of Kazan in 1552, Islam and its intellectuals were severely oppressed, assassinated, deported or forced to migrate. Due to a lack of intellectual leadership Tatar Islam experienced a severe setback. More religious tolerance occurred under the rule of Katharine the Great (1729-1796) only. She legalized Islam in Russia, and involved the Tatar elite in politics. Furthermore, the region experienced economic growth. Eventually, the Tatars contributed to the restoration of intellectual Islam.

At the end of the nineteenth century Muslims and other non-Russian people became more self-consciousness and began to politically articulate themselves in movements and organizations. The Tatar religious and intellectual elites founded Tatar Islamic modernism, called *jadidism* (innovation), which aimed at a *mélange* of Islamic culture and modernism with an orientation towards Europe. It became a distinctive form of Tatar Islamic nationalism, which however did not aim at separatism from Russia but at the development of a modern democratic, multi-cultural state with equal rights for Tatars and other ethnic groups, both Muslim and non-Muslim. After the Revolution most Tatar leaders kept the former political course aiming at a higher degree of autonomy within Russia and to revive Tatar statehood on the ancient, much larger territory. However, the Bolsheviks gave them a much smaller administrative unit: the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the follow-up state of which is present Tatarstan. This new administrative unit resulted in dividing the Tatar ethnic group, whereas a number of Tatars suddenly found themselves in other republic states. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Tatarstan President Shaimiev refused to sign the Federal Treaty in 1992, but also he did not aim at secession and instead called for a fundamental reform of the Russian Federation: a decentralization of power and establishment of more rights within the regions. This is what we already saw in the old pre-Revolution political discourse. Backed by the Tatar national movement, he signed a treaty with Yeltsin in 1994, together with other regions, which gave a special, autonomous status to Republic, with the promise of Moscow not to interfere in internal affairs, and the agreement of Tatarstan to formally recognize Moscow's supremacy (Yemelianova 1999: 606-7). The Tatar Constitution of 1992 claims its own priority over the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Raviot 1998: 193).

Putin's regional policy, however, constitutes a set-back for Tatar autonomy and put Shaimiyev into a defensive with the central government. Putin has demanded the treaties to be scrapped, and Tatarstan is presently the only one of Russia's 89 regions still having such an agreement. Shaimiyev presently negotiates with Moscow concerning the follow-up status of Tatarstan.

According to survey data, in 1994, 66.6% of urban Tatars in Tatarstan are nominal Muslims. In rural areas this proportion amounts to 86%.<sup>12</sup> A small proportion of Tatars, the so-called Kriashens (about 5%), believe in the Russian Orthodox Church (Musina 1994: 92; Baltanova 1994: 89).

According to Yemelianova (1999: 611) Islam in Tatarstan is largely secularized and has not had a direct impact on politics – or more concretely: supported the course of the nationalist movement of autonomy within the Russian Federation. President Shaimiyev even encouraged the Tatarstan Islamic authorities to separate from the Federal Islamic Structures that the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims in Russia and European States of the CIS, the TSDUMR, set up. A minority has favored *neo-quadimism*, an Islamic traditionalism. There are also political attempts to revive *jadidism* as a visible idea for Tatar national identity. On the other hand, “Tatarization” also means Islamization of administration, economics and culture. Visible signs of Tatar “re-Islamization” are celebrations of Muslims holidays among broad strata of people. 700 Islamic parishes act in the republic. The republican authorities returned buildings of mosques to religious communities that were nationalized during the Soviet period, and also supported the building of new mosques. At present, there are more than 700 mosques in Tatarstan (Musina 1998: 266). Furthermore, Islamic schools (*medresses*) were introduced, and the teaching of Arabic language has become more popular. Some students go abroad to study Islam in Turkey and Arabic countries (Musina 1997: 87).

The Tatar ruling elite around President Shaimiyev was able to develop the “Tatarstan national ideology” according to the following principles: (1) an acceptance of the republican geographical borders, which were set by the Soviet Union; (2) a parity of ethnic groups; and (3) “soft entrance” into the market economy without radical economic reforms (Raviot 1998: 187-188). The political authorities try to follow a policy of parity between the main religious confessions. For example, both Christmas and Kourban-Bairam are state holidays.

Shaimiev’s reform policy and his negotiations with Moscow have increased opposition of the Tatar nationalists who have attempted alliance with the Communists and the Muslim clergy. They have taken a radical Islamic rhetoric; however, so far they received little support from the population (Yemelianova 1999: 614). Characterizing Tatar Islam, one may call it “Euro-Islam” (Musina 1997: 91).

Although the Tatars have a comparatively high level of ethnic identity, there are certain tendencies of assimilation in this group. The intermarriage level in Tatarstan between Tatars and Russians is very high, in spite of religious norms.<sup>13</sup> As a

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<sup>12</sup> These proportions are much higher than corresponding data for urban (30.4%) and rural Tatars (43.4%), collected by Musina in 1989-1990 (1997: 85), and this inconsistency is probably due to lack of quality of statistical data.

<sup>13</sup> One should keep in mind that the Russian Orthodox Church condemns marriages with non-Christians, and Islam forbids marriages with Christians for Muslim women.

consequence of these intermarriages, a number of children from these families have taken a stronger Russian than Tatar identity, as an investigation of 450 high school students in Kazan in 1991-1992 showed (Titova 1995: 14).<sup>14</sup>

Tatarstan's well-educated, young official religious leaders have broken with the old corrupt and theologically incompetent figures, who largely dependent on local semi-criminal structures and assistance from abroad. But the spectrum of Islamic movements and parties is diverse. "Tatar Public Center" (TPC) is a centrist, moderate force. Its leaders instrumentalize Islam to achieve their political goals (Musina 1997: 94). For example, TPC supports publication of religious periodicals in Tatar language, the publication of literature on Islamic philosophy, history, and culture. It also takes educational functions in schools and universities (Sharipova 1998: 149). "Ittifak" and "Milli Mejlis" are radical religious organizations, supporting the strict Islamisation of the republic (Musina 1997: 94). A part of the Muslim clergy also tries to politicize Islam. In 1996 two organizations emerged called "The Muslims of Tatarstan" and "The Union of Tatarstan Muslim Youth" (ibid: 93).

According to Yemelianova (1999: 623) also most Tatar intellectuals believe that Islam forms an important basis for their identity, and they would prefer strengthening religious aspects in policy and everyday-life. The non-Muslim intelligentsia in turn is not very much in favor of the ongoing development and argues that religion is, and should be, a private matter. Also other non-Muslims consider the development with suspicion, but have remained rather passive towards it.

While so far the ethnic composition has been described as relatively peaceful, an increasing number of clashes can be observed since 11 September. A case was reported from Tatarstan where a 64-year old Muslim woman, who applied for a new Russian passport, refused taking a passport photo where, according to the government decree, she was not allowed to wear her head scarf. She and more than a dozen other Muslim women filed suits, arguing that the new policy violated their religious freedom, but lost the case. Some Muslim women also reported being harassed on the street, their scarves being ripped off their head. Mullahs were no longer invited for opening ceremonies of political meetings with prayers. The Kul Sharif mosque that is rebuilt within Kazan Kremlin with money from the Islamic development bank, has become a symbol for resistance against Moscow. Central government officials had to investigate claims of extremism among Tatarstan's Muslims, and in Naberezhniye Chelny authorities closed a madrassa last year, saying that religious extremism was taught. And a number of teachers from Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries were replaced by government-approved teachers from the 'most progressive' universities in Egypt and Jordan (The St. Petersburg Times, 17 September, 2002: 22).

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<sup>14</sup> Such interethnic families use Russian for their conversations and borrow Russian and Western European Christian names for their children (Zalialiaeva 1989).

“It is Shaimiyev’s own fight with Moscow that has helped make Tatarstan’s Muslim renaissance into a political issue, according to government officials and religious activists here. Shaimiyev has adopted symbols of the Tatars’ Muslim heritage (...) to advance his own cause of maximum autonomy for the republic” (ibid: 22).

## Dagestan

Dagestan is situated in the east of the Northern Caucasus. The border to Chechnya is in the southeast and to Azerbaijan in the south. The Caspian Sea is located to the east. The territory of Dagestan consists of three geographical zones: the mountains, the plane, and the foothills.

Russia captured Dagestan in the course of the Russian-Persian war of 1812-1814, which was internally severely weakened by local feuds among several ethnic groups. A part of Dagestanian people (Avarians and Lakians) took part in Shamil's rebellion against Russians. The Dagestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was organized in 1921. From 1920s until the end of the Soviet period the Soviet authorities had resettled a large proportion of mountain ethnic groups from the mountains in the plane. This caused certain ethnic tensions between the old-established (Kumyks, Nogai, Russians, and others) and these resettled ethnic groups (Avarians, Darginians, Lakians, Lezgins, and others, see Ibragimov 1991) – a situation that Yemelianova (1999: 609) has called a “time bomb”. Due to its strategic location in the Caucasus Dagestan has an important significance for Moscow. It is a neighbor of Chechnya that separated from Russia and is in a process of radical Islamization.

The reaction to perestroika in Dagestan was totally different from the one in Tatarstan: desolation and frustration. The state authorities bemoaned the collapse of the Soviet System and adhered to it much longer than elsewhere. Also the Communist party maintained a strong basis. Also Dagestan was affected by the Chechen-Russian war.

Dagestan is much less industrialized than Tatarstan and remained predominantly rural. It does not have large supplies of mineral resources. It suffers a strong shortage of fertile lands. The local industries cannot employ all people who leave villages. A level of unemployment is rather high.

In contrast to Tatarstan, which took a self-reliant attitude towards Moscow due to its own resources, Dagestan depends on subsidies and consistently demonstrates her loyalty. The political authorities refused to take up elements of Islam such as *Shari'a* law, as it existed during the 1920s, or to make Fridays the free days instead of Sundays (612-3).

The ethnic composition of the republic is extremely heterogeneous,<sup>15</sup> and some of these have rigidly closed clan-structures. The internal life of these clans is regulated by patriarchal norms, *adat* law and *shariat*. Avarian, Darginian, Lezginian, Lakian, Tabasaran, Chechen, Rutul, Agul, and Tsakhur languages belong to the Nakh-Dagestanian group of the Caucasian language family. Azerbaijani, Kumyk, and Tatar are Turkish languages. Mountain Jews, Tats, and Osetians speak a language that belongs to the Iranian group. Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian are Slavic languages. Armenian language has a separate place in the Indo-European language family that includes also Slavic, Iranian, and several other language groups. Unlike Mountain Jews, Ashkenazi Jews are designated simply as Jews, and now they speak mainly Russian. A certain proportion of the local population uses Russian as their mother tongue now.

Most of Dagestanian peoples profess Islam. Historically, Islam has always been important in Dagestan, probably from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onward, while during the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century, the majority had become Islamized. They follow the Shafii madhbad of Sunni Islam. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century Dagestan had become an important Islamic center of spiritual enlightenment. In addition to highly intellectual Islam developed popular Islam, associated with Sufism, around the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Nowadays there are 40-50 Sufi tariqas, some of which are very radical in their opinions and actions, and 23 of them adhere to living shaykhs.

Sufism served as the basis for unification of the different ethnic groups, and as an anti-Russian force, which articulated itself, for example, in the 1877-1878 Islamic holy war against Russia, after its loss being incorporated into the Russian empire (Yemelianova 1999: 608-609). Ethnic Russians mainly belong to the Russian Orthodox Church. Mountain Jews have the same religion as other Jewish groups. Very often they are confused with Muslim Tats who speak the same language (Ibragimov 1991: 119).

Intermarriage is comparatively high (41%) and mainly occurs among ethnic groups and people with Islamic faith (Ibragimov 1978: 130), but also between ethnic groups of Islamic faith and Russians (Ibragimov 1978: 127). Traditionally children from mixed marriages belong to ethnic groups of their fathers.

Following Yemelianova (1999: 616ff.), Malashenko (1996: 104, 105) and Bobrovnikov (1995: 133) the increase of criminality, corruption and incompetence of

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<sup>15</sup> According to the All-Union Census of Population of 1989 the Dagestanian population amounted to 1,802,188 people. Among them 496,077 (27.53% of the republican population) were Avarians, 280,431 (15.56%) – Darginians, 231,805 (12.86%) – Kumyks, 204,370 (11.34%) – Lezgins, 165,940 (9.21%) – Russians, 91,682 (5.09%) – Lakians, 78,196 (4.34%) – Tabasarans, 75,463 (4.19%) – Azerbaijanis, 57,877 (3.21%) – Chechens, 28,294 (1.57%) – Nogai, 14,955 (0.83%) – Rutuls, 13,791 (0.77%) – Aguls, 12,939 (0.72%) – Tats, 9,390 (0.52%) – Jews, 8,079 (0.45%) – Ukrainians, 6,260 (0.35%) – Armenians, 5,473 (0.30%) – Tatars, 5,194 (0.29%) – Tsakhurs, 3,649 (0.20%) – Mountain Jews, 1,405 (0.08%) – Belorussians, and 1,195 – Osetians (0.07%) (Peoples of Russia 1994: 434).

the former Communist and now Islamic officials and their pro-Moscow orientation has engendered a strong Dagestani nationalist opposition against these developments and politics (the Avar popular movement, the Lak popular movement, and so on). Their programs include the federalization of Dagestan and autonomy from Moscow, and a strengthening of ethnic rights. Unfortunately by 1995 most of these groupings had evolved into semi-criminal mafia-like organizations, losing their support of the basis and coming into conflict with each other. Only the Ledskin Sadval has remained loyal to the federalist idea. In 1992 also the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the North Caucasus disintegrated into ethnic lines. From 1994 onward there has only been one officially recognized Muftiyat, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Dagestan (SBMD).

The relations of most of these national/ethnic organizations with Islam have been mainly instrumental, using Islamic rhetoric but having an atheistic Soviet background. Unsatisfied with both the government and these ethnic organizations also an Islamic opposition emerged, consisting of a number of Islamic organizations and parties. There are branches of all-Russian Islamic movements and parties such as the All-Russian Union of Muslims and the popular movement Nur, which became the party of Russian Muslims (PRM). The Islamic Democratic Party has changed under official pressure and taken a course of Islam and democracy, calling for a democratic-Islamic government and attacking corruption of the state bureaucracy.

The common hatred of Wahhabism has united many political, religious and national groups, but this general rejection has not been shared by everybody, both ordinary Muslims and the non-Avarian clergy. Among the radical movements and parties are the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) or Al-Islamiyya (both similar to the Muslim Brotherhood), advocating Islamization of society into an Islamic state independent from Russia and the Russian Federation. And their claims find support among a number of people. Three villages in Buynakskii district already proclaimed to be Islamic territory, which is based upon *Shari'a* law. People and groupings, which adhere to Wahhabism, also justify armed confrontation, because they argue, also such are an expression of faith. This is why it calls for Jihad. From this perspective, Wahhabism is the purest form of Islam, and it has to defend its original thoughts. But Wahhabism, which claims strict monotheism, also attacks the Sufi tariqas. The People's Assembly has tried to isolate these radical groups by putting a ban on Wahhabism on the territory of Dagestan in 1997.

In everyday-life certain villages are divided between supporters of Wahhabism and Sufism, each having their own mosque and Imam or *amir*. While they are sometimes hostile to each other, in other cases there is also some degree of cooperation. There are also supporters of Wahhabism rejecting that Wahhabism pursues fundamentalist goals.

Many Dagestani see a possibility to overcome the current state crisis by a strong Islamic leader. Non-Muslims are less enthusiastic about this view and feel afraid of an ongoing Islamization to their disadvantage.

Experts state that today in the Northern Caucasus Islamic activity in Dagestan ranks second after Chechnya. However, it is obvious that the different Islamic movements are

far from being united and mostly segregated among ethnic and/or religious lines. From the 1980s onward re-Islamization has also engendered visible symbols. At the beginning of 1994 there were about 5,000 mosques, and hundreds of them run religious schools. Many graduates of these schools are channeled into Islamic universities in Turkey and Arabic countries, later returning to Dagestan and forming the intellectual elite.

However, the Islamic revival has not spread over whole territory of the republic. It covers only its center and the north-western areas in the mountains and the foothills where a number of Darginians, Lakians, and others reside. Ethnic competition for occupying the upper positions in the religious hierarchy is high. This is similar what already happened during the Soviet period with regard to the Soviet and Communist party bureaucracies. During the 1930s Lezginians, during the 1940s Azerbaijanis and from 1950s –1980s Avarians dominated these. Nowadays Avarians support the Dagestania government. Wahhabites have certain popularity among Kumyks, Darginians, Lezgins, and Lakians. The situation in the republic has been further complicated by a Lezginian movement that strives for a unification with their co-ethnics who reside in northern Azerbaijan, and by tensions between Akkin Chechens and Lakians who was settled in Chechen villages after the Chechen deportation by Stalin.

To summarize the two country studies, Islam has got a growing influence, both in public and private life. In Tatarstan, however, Islam is much more secularized and modernistic than in Dagestan and is closely related to nationalism. On the contrary, in Dagestan Islam also gets a dimension that people congregate against the incompetence of political and religious leaders and their way of appropriating economic benefits from their positions. Spontaneous re-Islamization seems to find support from below, and a number of rivaling movements emerged in addition to ethnic movements. It seems to be rather improbable so far that these movements congregate against the pro-Russian government and call for independence of the Dagestan state or a Pan-Islamic state in the Caucasus. More probable is that the leaders of movements quarrel for the prominent positions in both politics and religion to take personal benefits. Nevertheless, in situations of confrontation with Russia such as the Chechen war, the joint enemy might be more important than the rivaling interests. And, America's anti-Islamic international politics and Russia's agreement in the war against Islamic terrorism may increase anti-Western as well as anti-Russian sentiments.

However, as already mentioned we believe that re-Islamization and the growth of Islamic institutions in religious, economic and public life (such as mosques, Islamic schools and universities, Islamic press, Islamic banks, etc.) might have a long-term influence on identity formation, so that in the longer-run the umbrella of Islam might be stronger than ethnic differences.

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