

ELENA DMITRIEVA. ISLAM IN THE REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN NORTH. *Condensed abstract*

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**Elena Dmitrieva,**  
Senior Research Associate,  
INION RAN  
e-mail: eldmi@list.ru

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1. Magomedov A.K. Sotsiokulturnye faktory vozniknoveniia i razvitiia musulmanskikh soobshchestv v arkticheskikh regionakh Rossii // *Sotsiokulturnye issledovaniia v sovremennom kulturnom prostranstve. Materialy Vserossiiskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii*. 2021. P. 95–97.

2. Shustov A.V. Ethnic Migrations, Muslim Diasporas and Security Problems in the Northern Regions of the Urals // *Vestnik sotsialno-politicheskikh nauk*. 2021. № 20. P. 122–129.

A.K. Magomedov, PhD(Politics), Moscow State Linguistic University, [1] examines one of the most least-studied issues of Islamic studies in Russia regarding labor migration of Muslim population to the northern regions of Russia. The author highlights the notion of “Polar Islam”, which has become an important component of social and cultural processes in the Russian North. Cities in the Far North are becoming more and more international, since hundreds of thousands of people from Central Asia, mainly from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, work there all year round. In addition, Azerbaijanis,

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Russian Tatars and Bashkirs have worked here since the Soviet era; there are also rapidly growing communities of internal migrants from the North Caucasus. The author describes Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District as the third most influential Muslim area in Russia after the North Caucasus and the Ural-Volga region.

The author notes that the key element of this 'new' migration wave has been massive immigration from Central Asia since the latter half of the 2000s; the immigrants took advantage of the industrial boom in the key cities of the Russian North between Khanty-Mansiysk and Novy Urengoy. The entire sectors of the urban economy that needed cheap labour force have emerged: industrial construction, civil engineering, street cleaning, public transportation, public catering and trade.

The arrival and settling of migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus have altered the urban landscape, e.g. increase in the number of mosques and houses of worship; emergence of ethnic districts featuring specialized shops, restaurants, cafes and bazaars; and new social opportunities for migrant communities who seek to establish social institutions similar to those back at home. New patterns for social self-organization and mutual support are being formed. For instance, migrants from Central Asia tend to come together by nationality or region, while Daghestanis are re-establishing jamaats (religious communities, often Sufi) against the background of increasing number of intermarriages with Russians or indigenous peoples.

The author points out that Muslim social dynamics of labour migration and communications have led to the concept of "Polar Islam", which has become an essential element of social processes and urban design in the Russian North. Today, mosques, Muslim boutiques and halal food shops are an integral part of the architectural landscape of cities in the Far North, many of which are located above the Arctic Circle. Thus, it is obvious that Islam has spread beyond the historical areas of the North Caucasus and the Volga region, becoming not only a

significant factor of Russian urban life, but also reaching the Arctic territories. The author believes that these facts challenge the established division into two traditional Muslim macro-regions in Russia: the North Caucasus and the Ural-Volga region. Nevertheless, the emergence of some kind of 'special' Islam, completely different from other Muslim regions of the country, is not the case. Most of the features of Islam in the Russian Arctic can be easily found in other regions, e.g. growth of multinational Muslim communities, competition for institutional control over Muslim communities, and clash of ideological interpretations of Islam. However, severe climatic conditions, territorial remoteness and industrial nature of the polar cities shape the social landscape for the Muslims of the region.

The author concludes that the role of Muslim communities in the critical regions of the Russian North is increasing. This means that Islam is now an integral part of the future of Russia and it can no longer be viewed as a religion of some local ethnic minorities. Islam should be seen as widespread social trend, which is intertwined with migration processes and changes in the urban social structure. The author believes that cultural adjustment of Muslim communities to their new polar identity may be worth studying. Thorough examination of those processes would help scientists highlight particular features of "Polar Islam".

The article by A.V. Shustov, PhD(Hist.), P.G. Demidov Yaroslavl State University, [2] discusses ethnic migration, formation of Muslim diasporas, security problems in the northern regions of the Urals, as well as the link between immigration and threats to national security in oil and gas producing regions. The author foresees the increase of terrorist threats and aggravation of interethnic relations, in case that uncontrolled immigration from the Asian CIS countries and the southern regions of Russia continues.

The author notes that the migration attractiveness of the oil and gas producing regions in the north of Russia prompted

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significant changes in ethnic and religious composition of the population during the post-Soviet period. The immigrants from Russia's North Caucasus, the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia have founded new Muslim diasporas. Diasporas in the North gave rise to radical Islam, which is entirely uncharacteristic for Russia. As a result, in recent years, the northern subjects of Russia have been frequently mentioned in the reports on combating terrorism and extremism presented by law enforcement agencies. Some researchers maintain that the third Muslim region in the country – after the North Caucasus and the Volga region – is being formed on the territory of the northern macroregion, which includes the northern part of European Russia, Siberia and partially the Far East. Despite depopulation caused by the 1990s economic crisis, large mining centers in the north of Russia have continued to develop. The author cites orientalists A. Malashenko and A. Starostin, who state that by the mid-2010s there were more than 400 Muslim places of worship in the Ural Federal District, including 267 mosques, 84 prayer houses and 51 prayer rooms. For comparison, there were only approximately 70 mosques across the territory of modern Russia during the Soviet period. Before the collapse of the USSR, Tatars and Bashkirs constituted the vast majority of Muslims in the Urals, and the political influence of Islam was almost non-existent.

According to the 2010 census, the number of immigrants from Central Asia to the Urals increased by 70 percent, from Azerbaijan by a factor of 2.1, and from the North Caucasus by a factor of 2.4. By then, the total number of Muslims since the post-Soviet period had increased by almost 100 thousand people. Moreover, Muslim population growth was almost solely due to the oil and gas regions: Tyumen Oblast, the Yamalo-Nenets and Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Districts.

The author highlights certain patterns in the settlement of ethnic Muslims in the northern regions of Russia: Azerbaijanis tend to settle in Murmansk Oblast, immigrants from Central Asia

head for Yakutia, and the natives of Russian Muslim regions (Bashkiria, Tatarstan and the North Caucasus) reside in the northern oil-producing regions.

People from the Caucasus and Central Asia brought along a non-traditional, more radical and politicized Islam, previously alien to the local Muslim population. Islamic fundamentalists – Salafists – also came to the Urals; their ideas have gained popularity among local young Tatars and even some Russians. Since cities were the primary destination of the migration flow from Central Asia, migrants from this region made up the majority of the parishioners of local mosques, while Tatars and Bashkirs generally attended mosques in rural areas. As a result, a large number of imams who serve city mosques came from the Asian CIS countries. Unlike the local Muslim clergy, many of the new imams received their religious education in the Middle East, which provided them a higher standing among Muslims. The spread of Salafism was most visible in regions with highest proportion of migrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia, i.e. Tyumen Oblast, the Yamalo-Nenets and Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Districts.

The author points out that the formation of the Salafi underground in the Northern Urals started in the late 1990s. Initially, it was staked by militants who fought federal authorities in the North Caucasus and arrived in the region to recuperate, heal and go legit. By the mid-2010s, the number of adherents of radical Islam was estimated at several thousand people. Hotbeds of its spread were cities that attracted migratory flows: Novy Urengoy, Gubkinsky and Noyabrsk in the Yamalo-Nenets District; Nizhnevartovsk, Raduzhny, Nefteyugansk, Megion and Surgut in the Khanty-Mansiysk District.

The author notes that immigrants from the southern Muslim regions establish their own diaspora network structures in the places of destination, which assist newly arriving migrants; this confirms migration network theory. Through these new structures they find housing, jobs, and forge business and good-

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neighbourly relations (often at mosques or halal cafes). Growing immigration to the oil and gas producing regions, which has become a major source of new members for Muslim diasporas in northern Russia, has heightened tensions and increased the threat of terrorism. The lack of control by law enforcement agencies due to remoteness of northern regions from the capitals, megacities and the European part of the country has also spurred the spread of radical Islam.

The situation in the Urals has been improved following the growing number of detentions of adherents of radical Islam. On March 23, 2021, Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Nikolai Patrushev held a meeting on security issues throughout the Ural Federal District in Khanty-Mansiysk. Patrushev said that the influx of migrants from abroad could invigorate Islamic radicals, foster the creation of Islamist sleeper cells and trigger inter-ethnic tensions. Since 2017, over 26 terrorist cells have been identified in the district; the number of extremist crimes has increased by 2.5 times.

The author also singles out the growth of nationalist and protest attitudes as an immediate consequence of the massive influx of migrants. The author attributes this to immigration from the southern regions of Russia and the Asian CIS countries; ousting of the local population from a number of areas; and escalation in the burden on education and health care.

The author concludes that the close correlation between uncontrolled immigration, increasing terrorist threats and escalating nationalist and protest moods of the indigenous population calls for a thorough analysis of the source of these problems. By the mid-2010s, the number of supporters of radical Islam in Russia was estimated at 700 thousand people, including 200 thousand supporters of ISIS, an organization banned in Russia. Free entry into Russia from the southern CIS countries, given their young, fast-growing, unemployed and radicalizing population, undoubtedly broadens the social base for radical Islam. The growing threat of terrorism and extremism and

further aggravation of interethnic relations in the northern regions of the Urals, where Russia's main oil and gas fields are located, pose not only economic and domestic political pressures, but also geopolitical risks that could potentially endanger the integrity of the country.